



Art by Mary-Jane Page

Neuroscience Research Australia

# Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

*January 2024 - December 2025*







## Acknowledgement of Country

*NeuRA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.*

*We pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contributed to the development of this resource.*

**Warning:** *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this Reconciliation Action Plan contains images, artwork and names of deceased persons. The document may also contain some themes and content that could be distressing or triggering, particularly for First Nations readers.*

# Celebrating the artist

## MARY-JANE PAGE

Mary-Jane Page was a freelance-professional visual Aboriginal artist from the La Perouse community in the Eastern suburbs of Sydney, Australia.

She was a successful community arts worker, group facilitator and educator. Mary-Jane was a member of the Wodi Wodi tribe and a direct descendant of King Billy and Queen Emma of La Perouse. Having experienced domestic violence, she developed a method of art which provides therapeutic, healing and personal growth. Her artistic process was organic, and created with humour, genuine sensitivity and deep respect.

She approached her work with an attitude of telling the story in symbolic and deeply spiritual imagery, in visual art, theatrical performance, music, and dance; all of

which she accomplished with grace and intelligence.

She worked in many parts of Australia, as well as the United States of America, where she not only performed, but she was also received as a respected Elder of the Wodi Wodi People as an Indigenous Australian delegate, fulfilling protocol duties for First Nation Tribes of America.

As well as being an accomplished artist, she was also passionate about social justice, human rights and Indigenous arts, advocating for the struggle to end violence in all communities.

Mary-Jane was commissioned for her art by Neuroscience Research Australia and remained a close mentor and guide for the Koori Dementia Care Project and team.



*Image of the launch of Mary-Jane Page's painting (Trek of hope for a dementia cure 1), 2012. From left, Holly Mack, Gail Daylight, Tony Broe, Mary-Jane Page (artist), Uncle Les Davison, Sharon Wall.*



## About the Art

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Mary-Jane Page

Trek of hope for a dementia cure 1

2012

Acrylic on board

"I wondered to myself, how do you paint dementia? So I sat in quiet time and thought about it and did it in an artistic way; best way I could do with heaps of feeling. In the centre of the brain is the Eye of the Mind. It's just part of our existence; the eye will always be there. The black spot is the dementia, red represents blood flow, the tracks symbolise memory leaving, gold brings sunlight and flowers, represent hope. The black in the background symbolises loneliness and green acts like a calming."



Mary-Jane Page

Trek of hope for a dementia cure 2

2012

Acrylic on board

"The second painting is the same yarn, but a different story. The large black part is the dementia and the silver shapes are brain cells. The two serpents in our Aboriginal culture are the protectors and the healers; they also represent the medical profession. The circles embody the sadness that families feel; the purple is giving strength; the green is a healing mechanism. All my symbolisms are in colour reflecting my artistic view of dementia".

# Message from the CEO, Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Neuroscience Research Australia 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 Neuroscience Research Australia 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, Neuroscience Research Australia will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

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. Neuroscience Research Australia is part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.



KAREN MUNDINE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Neuroscience Research Australia'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 Neuroscience Research Australia on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.



# Message from Our CEO

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As the Chief Executive Officer of Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA), it brings me immense pride to introduce our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2024-2025).

This document signifies NeuRA's dedication to enhancing connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, involving our staff in the reconciliation process, and perpetuating our innovative research initiatives that contribute to the well-being of all Australians.

At NeuRA, we recognise the foundational importance of strong relationships rooted in equity and mutual respect among all individuals residing in Australia. We are committed to celebrating diversities, utilising the principles of equity and respect with our staff, research participants, and external collaborators. This approach enriches our interactions with people and fosters world-class medical research outcomes. NeuRA is cognisant of the need to amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and is focused on establishing enduring relationships based on collaboration and knowledge sharing.

For more than a decade, NeuRA has actively engaged in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and aging research, collaborating with urban and regional communities and services across NSW, as well as other stakeholders nationally. Our efforts encompass various forms of engagement, service outreach, formal partnerships, and collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The NeuRA Aboriginal Health and Ageing Program serves as our primary avenue for partnership and engagement with these communities. I express my gratitude to everyone who contributed to shaping this Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

I eagerly anticipate sharing our advancements in fulfilling the Reconciliation Action Plan's objectives and the positive impact it will have on national reconciliation, the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the ongoing realisation of NeuRA's vision to enhance the health and lives of those affected by brain and nervous system disorders.



Professor Matthew Kiernan AM

Chief Executive Officer



# Our Vision for Reconciliation

NeuRA's vision for reconciliation is where all Australians are treated equally, incorporating the principles of dignity and inclusion.

As a research organisation we aim to do this through education of our staff and students on the shared history of First Nations people and non-Indigenous peoples in Australia. We consider this knowledge and respect for diverse cultures and experiences to be an essential foundation for the reconciliation process. NeuRA is in a unique position to engage in an exchange of cultural information through our Aboriginal Health and Ageing research group that engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander communities and via staff cultural awareness training and seminars. NeuRA is able to provide a connection for all of its staff to lived experience through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members and the broader community with which they work.

In the context of our organisation, NeuRA is committed to advancing reconciliation by building a culturally safe, inclusive and respectful workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and extending this to our sphere of influence with both the research and broader community.



*Image from left: Alison Timbery, Kylie Sullivan, Uncle Terry Donovan, Aunty Margaret Anderson*

# Our Business

## Our Vision

*“To improve the health and lives of those living with brain and nervous system disorders.”*

## Our Mission

*“To discover solutions for neurodegeneration, mental health and healthy ageing through world-class medical research.”*

## Our Vision & Mission

NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent centres of research on the brain and nervous system in Australia. It is an independent, not-for-profit, medical research institute. It is affiliated with the University of New South Wales and South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. Recognised as an international leader in research, NeuRA is changing the face of research into diseases and disorders of the brain and nervous system, not just in Australia, but around the world. Our eminent neuroscientists, clinicians and outstanding research leaders relate laboratory-based research to clinical research involving patients to ensure that our discoveries are translated into health benefits for people as soon as possible.

NeuRA staff comprise 400 people, including over 200 paid staff as well as research students and conjoint or honorary staff who work in 35 research teams spread across three strategic themes: Neurodegeneration, Mental Illness and Healthy Ageing. NeuRA currently employs at least 8 staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people– making up 3.3% of the paid workforce.

NeuRA has a single location – on Barker Street, Randwick. In addition, there are some individuals and small teams who work offsite at the following locations:

- Kempsey, NSW
- Coffs Harbour, NSW
- Airds, NSW
- Canberra, ACT

Many NeuRA researchers collaborate with colleagues both nationally and internationally, so in this context our geographical reach is global.

Similarly, although NeuRA has a national staff cohort employed within Australia, the reach of our research, via scientific publications, conferences and other media, is international.



*Over 30 years of impact*

*“From advances in dementia and mental health to discoveries in chronic pain and falls prevention, Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) has been at the forefront of neuroscience for over 30 years.”*

## Our Values

Understanding the science of the brain and nervous system is our life's work. We are passionate about deepening our understanding of how the brain works, and finding better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat neurological disease, mental illness and injury. Research provides the power to cure, change and save lives.

These are the values by which we live and work:

### Impact

We do things that matter to the world

### Openness

We are outward-looking and work on projects much bigger than ourselves

### Excellence

We are rigorous and set high standards in all that we do

### Integrity

We are honest with others and with ourselves

### Inclusion

We are respectful and inclusive with colleagues and partners

# Our Research

*“Our research portfolio includes both clinical and laboratory research into neurological, psychiatric and psychological disorders.”*

For the past three decades, our scientists have been redefining the frontier of neuroscience as we know it. Thirty years on, they continue to dedicate their lives to unlocking the mysteries of brain and nervous system disorders. This continuous pursuit is driven by multidisciplinary collaborations within NeuRA, as well as externally with universities and institutes nationally and internationally.

Our research activity is organised into three themes:

## Neurodegeneration

Improving brain health through collaboration and innovation. This is achieved by deepening our understanding of brain and mind disorders through scientific discovery

## Mental Health

Researching mental health across the life course by pioneering solutions for positive mental health through collaboration and innovation

## Translational Neuroscience

Connecting research to real-world results by translating neuroscience research into solutions with real-world impact



# Our Partnerships

NeuRA's current primary channel of partnership and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities occurs through the NeuRA Aboriginal Health and Ageing Program. The Aboriginal Health and Ageing Program maintains a number of longstanding and respectful community partnerships with more than 10 years of collaboration with specific Aboriginal community controlled organisations.

Important collaborations with a number of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and Local Aboriginal Land Council in urban and regional locations across New South Wales (including La Perouse, Campbelltown, Coffs Harbour, Nambucca Heads, and Kempsey communities) are currently in place for both research and knowledge translation projects. Importantly, the Aboriginal Health and Ageing Program focuses on the priorities of the Aboriginal communities with whom we collaborate, further working with local Aboriginal health workers, Elders and other community members to determine research priorities and support existing services or programs.

In addition, the Aboriginal Health and Ageing Program is dedicated to fostering the capacity of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff and collaborators, maintaining employment for research staff recruited through Aboriginal communities to help manage, guide and run all projects being carried out.

The Aboriginal Health and Ageing Program also engages an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Steering Committee, which includes collaborators and investigators who are involved in the various projects; this Steering Committee is vital for governance and guidance of all the projects and activities of this program.

The Aboriginal Health and Ageing Program at NeuRA in collaboration with the Equity & Diversity Committee and the RAP Working Group has engaged in and led several activities to begin the journey to reconciliation. NeuRA has supported and encouraged Cultural Awareness and

Inclusiveness training for all staff, inviting a respected Elder to lead an all-staff training seminar.

Importantly, this training addressed issues around colonisation, Australian history, and intergenerational trauma whilst emphasising the importance of respecting Aboriginal cultural traditions.

The Aboriginal Health and Ageing Program is engaged in research co-mentorship and capacity building with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous staff. This includes participating in research networks and training seminars together, as well as attending academic and cultural events together.

Aboriginal Health and Ageing Program team members also regularly attend community events and present research at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous health conferences. At all of these events, the Aboriginal Health and Ageing Program team members strive to listen to the voices of Aboriginal community members, academics and organisations, reflect on their insights, and share the knowledge gained through our research (knowledge translation) in various formats to a range of audiences.

The team's commitment to disseminating research findings in ways that are culturally appropriate extends to hiring Aboriginal owned and operated design companies, Aboriginal content experts to shape our online platforms as well as employing local artists to help us incorporate artworks that illustrate the themes of our research findings and act as a further dimension of knowledge translation.

While NeuRA has achieved significant strides towards reconciliation, we acknowledge much more can be accomplished at the broader organisational level. NeuRA's next goal is to use existing frameworks for success to enhance community engagement, collaboration, and workforce development with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations across all research groups

# Uncle Terry



Uncle Terry Donovan was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia this year.

The Order of Australia and the meritorious awards recognise individuals for their distinguished service. Those recognised have consistently performed to the highest standards and made major contributions to the Australia community and to humanity at large.

Uncle Terry Donovan is an integral member of the Aboriginal Health & Ageing Program team. He has played a major role in knowledge translation activities of the team, advising and guiding many projects, and providing mentorship and support to Aboriginal and non-Indigenous team members. His tireless efforts to increasing people's knowledge of Aboriginal culture has had an immeasurable impact on the team, and NeuRA more broadly, through Uncle Terry's involvement in the Reconciliation Action Plan working group and his numerous presentations on inclusiveness in the workplace. Uncle Terry is dedicated to working for his community, and embodies this in every aspect of his work at NeuRA.

***In an interview Terrence Donovan tells us a bit about his story and his involvement with NeuRA.***

My name is Terry Donovan, and I am a Gumbayngirr / Biripai man. I am from Taree in the mid-north coast of NSW and grew up on the Purfleet Mission till I was about 16 or 17 years old. It was a large mission with about 12-24 houses, and each housed 1-2 families. The mission was managed by a white man and he had a military background. It was hard. Adults weren't allowed to participate in ceremonies or talk their language so it was tough and it was really bad. For the kids we were happy and we were able to learn about the environment we lived in. I remember vividly we had to be back home before dark – and come home with wood for the fire. We were restricted in some ways, but in others it was happy for us kids. However, the adults were treated differently.



*Housing on Purfleet Mission, c 1902. Photo courtesy of MidCoast Libraries Local History Collection.*



We learnt about racism when we went to town (Taree) with nan. We asked her, “Why are you walking up the gutter?” and she said that’s the way it is. And you had to learn if you walked in front of a white man they were allowed to punch us to move you out of the way. Most of the time in the early years you needed an exemption certificate to go to town to look for a job or to shop and you weren’t allowed to go into the shops that didn’t give permission. You also weren’t allowed to meet with other Aboriginals outside of the mission.

There was a school on the mission but it was run by the manager and he wasn’t a teacher. He had the kids out in the yard digging gardens and he talked about the Queen. When the mission school closed we went into town to the white kids’ school in Taree and bus driver would line them up, ask their names and make them sit up the back of the bus – the front seats were reserved for white kids. School was frightening in those days and over time we learnt. Most of the kids were great, but some learnt from their parents’ racism and the attitude that black kids were dirty and [they] stole. It was hard to adapt.

After a few days at school I asked nan if we could have new clothes like the white kids, but they just couldn’t afford it. Nan did buy some within the first year by bringing in washing and doing laundry.

There were only a few jobs on the mission so they needed to look for jobs elsewhere. Young men especially were not allowed to go into town to look for work. And how could you buy food without work? They gave rations at the manager’s office like flour, sugar, a pound of dripping. So, we were very reliant on the government. This meant that white peoples’ attitude towards Aboriginals was that they were lazy. But we were not given the opportunity to work. So, they would hunt for kangaroo and share with everyone.

Memories are hard to comprehend and hard to take. Memory is what makes us more resilient. But don’t wallow, get on with life, that is what I do. Our history is who we are. It has made us; made us more resilient to the atrocities and who we are today.

***Could you tell me about being Gumbayngirr/Biripi Elder?***

It is up to the community to give status as an elder, this is a sign of respect that is earned. It is the same when you are called an Uncle or Aunt, you don't just call yourself that.

An Elder or Uncle/Aunt status is earned by the person it is bestowed on, like a medal for good work in the community. It is earned by the way they have become part of the community and the wisdom they have is passed on to younger people in their community.

***What is your role at NeuRA?***

I'm a Senior Research Translation Coordinator. I started at NeuRA in 2017 as a research assistant. I help research teams to be culturally competent to talk to people about what they do in Aboriginal communities. In particular research about dementia. Aboriginal people suffer from dementia 3 to 5 times more than the white population.

Professor Tony Broe believes that trauma and low education at an early age may be part of the cause of dementia. Many Aboriginal people expect to get dementia. You have to understand that Aboriginal

people carry a lot of trauma and anxiety from an early age and then as you get older it comes out and can lead to anxiety and depression. We are trying to understand how it may translate to dementia.

I also translate to resources for the community. It may be able to help doctors, especially GPs, have a better understanding themselves about Aboriginal people and their risks for dementia.

And I give general information for staff to understand how to communicate with Aboriginal people. It is about cultural reflection. Maybe they are new to meeting an Aboriginal person. Or need to know how to speak to an Aboriginal person. We meet once a week to discuss.

***What should people keep in mind when meeting an Aboriginal person?***

Understand what happened. We were disposed of land and image, we were shot or killed for no reason at all, for just walking across a farmer's land. Some farmers offered flour that they had laced with cyanide. It wasn't because we attacked them but because they wanted to eliminate Aboriginal people. These things did happen - meat was boiled off bones and they were sent to curiosity shops. Farmers who did these killings took the scrotum off and used them as tobacco pouches.

We have to recognise that this happened. Stop the racism. Teach white Australia about Aboriginal people. We only have one way to go to be resurrected: our culture, our people. And the rest of Australia have to recognise we are human beings not black monkeys.

All we want is to become people, equal. Not have to wonder what people are thinking about as they pass us on the street. To become part of our land.



*Captive and chained Aboriginals, 1906. (Source)*

***Would you like to share anything else with NeuRA staff? Or anything about NeuRA's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group?***

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is going well. The people in it [RAP working group] are doing a great job but there have been a few drop offs and it would be great to get more people involved that are willing to prioritise the RAP. That will

get things moving. The key things that we'd like to accomplish are Aboriginal employment and retention. We want to map out ways to get more Aboriginal people employed, interested in working at NeuRA, and being researchers.

We all have priorities at work, but I'd like the RAP to be one of those priorities. So, get involved and stick to it. Change is as good as a holiday – and maybe a great thing for you! You can feel great about what you are doing and know that you are working for Aboriginal people, and the work is important. If you are interested in change this is one small way you can be a part of it.



# Our RAP Journey

Through our research and community engagement, NeuRA has benefitted from increased opportunities for building cultural awareness and inclusiveness within the organisation, beginning a journey towards reconciliation. An Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee was formed in 2017, and in 2019, this committee identified the development and implementation of a RAP as a priority activity, to formalise NeuRA's commitment to reconciliation and building a culturally safe, inclusive and respectful organisation. Our Innovate RAP builds on the work undertaken during our Reflect RAP, formalising and extending existing efforts to incorporate the principles of equity, dignity and inclusion of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures by providing a strategic framework for action, and accountability. We recognise that the development of our RAP will be an ongoing and evolving process that requires continued engagement and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples wherever we undertake our research, as well as within the broader community.

Our Innovate RAP is championed by **Prof Matthew Kiernan**, CEO and **Carole Renouf**, Executive Director Professional Services with strong support from our senior research staff.

Our RAP Working Group members represent a diverse range of research and professional services groups at NeuRA, including Aboriginal Health and Aging, Balance and Falls, Aging and Neurodegeneration, People and Culture, IT, Research Governance and Compliance:

**Dr Kylie Radford (Outgoing Chair)**

Senior Research Scientist

**Dr Louise Lavrencic (Chair)**

Research Fellow

**Dr Daina Sturnieks**

Senior Research Scientist

**Ms Deborah McKay**

Research Governance and Compliance  
Manager

**Ms Imogen Small**

People and Culture Administrator

**Mr Matthew Dodson**

IT System Administrator

**Ms Heather McCann**

Sydney Brain Bank Manager

**Ms Fiona White**

Project Coordinator

**Dr Judith Walker**

Post-Doctoral Fellow

**Ms Lauren Moore**

Philanthropy Officer

**THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
GROUP ARE ABORIGINAL STAFF:**

**Mr Terrence Donovan**

Senior Research Translation  
Coordinator

**Mrs Lauren Poulos**

Project Coordinator

**Ms Kylie Sullivan**

Research Assistant

Through 2021 and 2022 we have implemented changes outlined in the Reflect RAP. This has allowed us to consolidate our commitment to Reconciliation through:

- ✓ Identification of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait staff and stakeholders: to better understand how we can build relationships and provide support.
- ✓ Consideration of potential collaboration and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities: to facilitate improved health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the support of organisations and communities through preferential engagement of service providers and invitations to events.
- ✓ Encouragement of staff participation in the Reconciliation process by NeuRA RAP Champions.
- ✓ Provision of online cultural competency courses and face-to-face or online seminars for our staff: to enhance cultural awareness and respect.
- ✓ Prefacing every staff and committee meeting with an Acknowledgment of Country to show our respect for the traditional custodians of the land.
- ✓ Actively participating in both National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events.



We have raised awareness of Reconciliation and cultural history through with two dedicated seminars in 2021 and 2022: NeuRA National Reconciliation Week Seminar: *More than a word - time for a conversation about reconciliation*. This was hosted by the NeuRA Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. This seminar discussed Australia's history, understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and the *what, why and how* of reconciliation. It was designed to enable all NeuRA staff and students to reflect and understand what we each can do to move towards reconciliation. A second seminar featured Terrence Donovan, a Gumbaynggirr and Biripi Elder and Knowledge Translation



Facilitator at NeuRA, who spoke of his life experiences, the importance of Country and what is required to move towards Reconciliation. Terry took many questions from the audience and the staff interest was so great that he ran out of time to answer all questions. We have initiated cultural learning via two online courses, the SBS Cultural Competence course and Indigenous Cultural Awareness courses, made available and promoted for NeuRA staff to complete.

## Key learnings from our previous Reflect RAP

### Achievements

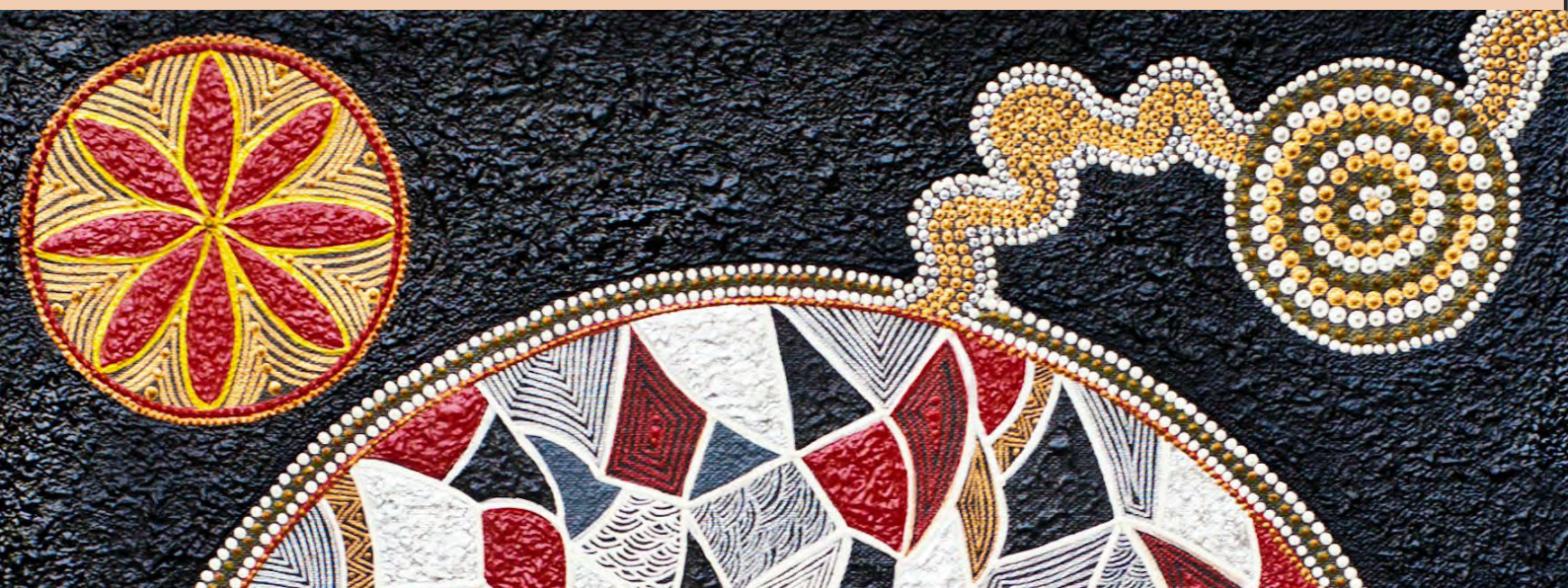
NeuRA is well placed to promote and facilitate Reconciliation through our existing collaborations with Aboriginal communities in regions in which we operate. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are highly trained and valued members of NeuRA and are integral in driving research to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for these communities.

### Challenges

We have learned that it is not sustainable for the RAP Working Group to take on all the responsibility for deliverables. To address this, we have delegated responsibilities for some Innovate RAP deliverables to those outside the RAP Working Group e.g., Financial Controller, Media & Communications staff and NeuRA CEO. Specifically, involvement of the Financial Controller would have resulted in completion of one of our two unmet Reflect RAP deliverables “Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy”.

Another Reflect RAP unmet deliverable was “Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy”. Our challenge here is to identify our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students and we will be working towards this by development of a culturally respectful and safe onboarding questionnaire.

Strategies for staff engagement were listed as a priority for the Innovate RAP. Several of the deliverables in the Relationships and Respect focus areas will allow for greater staff engagement and will be reviewed at different points across the timeline.



# The Five Dimensions of Reconciliation

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Reconciliation Australia defines reconciliation through five critical dimensions that together represent a holistic and comprehensive picture of reconciliation. These five dimensions do not exist in isolation; they are interrelated and Australia can only achieve full reconciliation if we progress in all five.



## **Relationships**

All Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous cultures, rights and experiences, which results in stronger relationships based on trust and respect and that are free of racism.

## **Historical acceptance**

All Australians understand and accept the wrongs of the past and the impact of these wrongs. Australia makes amends for the wrongs of the past and ensures these wrongs are never repeated.



## **Equality and Equity**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participate equally in a range of life opportunities and the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld.

## **Institutional Integrity**

The active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures.



## **Unity**

An Australian society that values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared national identity.

## Relationships

Strong relationships based on equity and mutual respect between all people living in Australia are of fundamental importance to NeuRA, and NeuRA aims to celebrate these diversities. We believe that using the principles of equity and respect with our staff, research participants and other external collaborators and partners serves to enrich our engagement with all people and allow world class medical research outcomes. NeuRA understands the importance of strengthening the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and we aim to continue to build strong relationships that are based on collaboration and knowledge sharing.



*Aligning with our Values of Openness, Integrity and Inclusion*

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. (e.g., AH&MRC, local communities)	Dec 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Chair of RAPWG <b>Support:</b> RAP champion NeuRA CEO
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Dec 2025	<b>Lead:</b> Chair of RAPWG <b>Support:</b> RAP champion NeuRA CEO
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024 & 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 Jun, 2024 & 2025	Chair of RAPWG
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 Jun, 2024 & 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager



	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May- 3 Jun, 2024 & 2025	Chair of RAPWG
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">NRW website</a> .	May 2024 & 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	Jun 2025	<u>Lead:</u>  Chair of RAPWG  <u>Support:</u>  RAP champion  NeuRA CEO
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly through NeuRA social media and website	March, Jun, Aug, Nov 2024 & 2025	Head of Media & Communications
	Establish an annual Reconciliation Achievement award recognising and showcasing best practice within the organisation	Jul 2024 & 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	Jul 2024 & 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations, including through the RAP Network, to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	Aug 2024	<u>Lead:</u>  Research Governance & Compliance Manager  <u>Support:</u>  RAPWG Chair
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-	Jun 2024	Director, People and Culture

discrimination strategies.	discrimination provisions, and future needs.		
	Review and update the anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	Jun 2025	Director, People and Culture
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	Jun 2025	Director, People and Culture
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	May 2024 & 2025	<u>Lead:</u> NeuRA CEO <u>Support:</u> Director, People and Culture

## Respect

It is important for all NeuRA staff to have knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and history, including past inequities. It is equally important to have a real understanding of these cultural differences and acknowledge past injustices. Without openness, honesty and a deep understanding of these issues we are unable to fully celebrate the richness and diversity of the world's oldest continuous cultures. A workforce that is open to these experiences is a valuable resource to NeuRA and also to the general community.



*Aligns to our Values of Integrity and Inclusion*

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Apr 2024 & Apr 2025	<u>Lead:</u> Director, People and Culture <u>Support:</u> RAPWG Secretary
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	Jun 2024	<u>Lead:</u> Director, People and Culture <u>Support:</u> RAPWG Chair
	Review and update the cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	Aug 2024	<u>Lead:</u> Director, People and Culture <u>Support:</u> RAPWG Secretary
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning. Establish targets for executive directors, Senior Leaders and general staff for completion of cultural competency training.	Oct 2024  Dec 2024	<u>Lead:</u> Director, People and Culture <u>Support:</u> RAPWG Chair
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	March 2024	Head of Media & Communications



peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	May 2024	<u>Lead:</u> Director, People and Culture <u>Support:</u> RAPWG Secretary
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	May 2024	NeuRA CEO
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.  Install flagpoles to the building to fly the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag alongside the Australian flag.	Monthly 2024 & 2025  May 2024	NeuRA CEO, Meeting Chairs  Facilities, Engineering & Building Services Manager
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in Jul 2024 & 2025	RAPWG Chair
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	Jun 2024	Director, People and Culture
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in Jul 2024 & 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
8. Demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by the creation of culturally safe spaces.	Consult with NeuRA staff and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to redesign an existing garden space to become an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural space for staff and visitors.	Jan 2025	<u>Lead:</u> NeuRA CEO
	Establish a native garden and cultural space, including a Yarning Circle, Reconciliation Tree and a culturally appropriate name.	Dec 2025	<u>Support:</u> RAPWG Chair
	Explore ways this garden can be promoted to the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community	Dec 2025	

## Opportunities

NeuRA is an equal opportunity employer and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are particularly important given our work in Aboriginal Health and Aging research. For the same reason, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who participate in the research are vital as they enable the outcomes that will translate to improvements in health and wellbeing. Facilitating procurement through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses (where possible) is currently occurring only sporadically and a protocol will be developed to open more opportunities for purchase through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers.



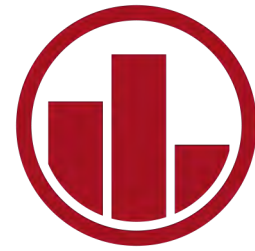
*This aligns to our value of inclusion.*

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. Addition of optional question regarding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity on onboarding forms for future staff.	Feb 2024  Apr 2024	Director, People and Culture
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Jan 2024	Director, People and Culture
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Apr 2025	Director, People and Culture
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Apr 2024	<u>Lead:</u>  Media & Communications <u>Support:</u>  Director, People and Culture

	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	Dec 2024	Director, People and Culture
	Introduction of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander PhD scholarship to study at NeuRA.	Dec 2024	Director, NeuRA Foundation
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	July 2024	Financial Controller
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	Jan 2024	<u>Lead:</u> Research  Governance & Compliance Manager  <u>Support:</u> Financial Controller
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	Jul 2024	Financial Controller
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Oct 2024	Financial Controller
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Dec 2024	Financial Controller
11. Explore ways to incorporate research principles from ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities Guidelines	Ensure ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities. Review and incorporate any changes to guidelines for researchers and stakeholders into research programs.	Jul 2024	Research Group Leaders  Chair, RAPWG



# Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Jan 2024 Jan 2025	RAPWG Chair
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG. Publish on the NeuRA intranet.	Jan 2024	RAPWG Chair
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug Oct, Dec 2024 Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug Oct, Dec 2025	RAPWG Secretary
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Jul 2024	RAPWG Chair
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Jul 2024	RAPWG Chair
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Dec 2024	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
	Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	Oct 2024	Chair of RAP working group
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and	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.	Jun 2024 & 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager

learnings both internally and externally.			
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey	1 Aug 2024 & 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 Sep 2024 & 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	Mar, May, Aug, Oct 2024 & 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	Dec 2024 & 2025	Head of Media & Communications
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2024	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	Dec 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager
15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	Jun 2025	Research Governance & Compliance Manager

### Contact details

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