



# Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

April 2022 - April 2024



**Healthy Cities. Healthy People.**

# Our vision for Reconciliation.



Cultural Connection to Healthy Cities | Artist: Lani Balzan

Our vision for reconciliation is to see meaningful health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our community. We will aim to enable this vision within this Innovate RAP by:

- Enabling a culturally literate diverse workplace, which embraces unity and supports and inspires the equal and equitable participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, students, volunteers and staff across the organisation.
- Creating stronger relationships with local Aboriginal communities and organisations to provide input and strengthen programs and service delivery at Healthy Cities Illawarra for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly the Illawarra Aboriginal Lands Council, Aboriginal Medical Service and Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation.
- Work in partnership with local Aboriginal communities and organisations to develop and deliver health and wellbeing programs that are culturally appropriate, accessible and meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.



# Our Business.

We are Healthy Cities Illawarra Inc., the 'glocal' organisation working to create healthy environments and enabling healthy choices for the people of the Illawarra-Shoalhaven, NSW.

We are dedicated to addressing underlying social, economic and environmental causes of health inequality and working in partnership with local government, health care providers and other community organisations to deliver meaningful health and wellbeing outcomes for our community.

We do this by designing, implementing and evaluating evidence-based and cost-effective programs for a range of issues and audiences. From fair food, healthy eating and cooking skills to walking programmes, after-school youth programs and age friendly initiatives – we are here to help design the infrastructure of a healthy community and sustain positive behaviour change. Our programs are tailored towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, young families, children, socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, newly arrived and former refugees, and the elderly.

Originally established by the World Health Organisation in 1987, we now have a strong regional presence and in 2003, with the support of the WHO Western Pacific Region, the AHC (Alliance for Healthy Cities) was formed. This Alliance has over 130 city members. HCI has longstanding partnerships with the four local councils (Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven), community centres, organisations (government and non-government) and schools. Additionally, HCI has partnerships and alliances with the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD), University of Wollongong (UOW), and Food Fairness Illawarra (FFI). These partnerships and alliances provide the organisation with a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the Illawarra-Shoalhaven and allow us to strategically align activities and projects to address gaps in the community.

We are inclusive, we believe in increasing individual and community control over the interactions in our communities, which impact on our health and quality of life. We have 15 employees; none of whom identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Our regional reach is the local government areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven. We are also members of the Alliance of Healthy Cities which is coordinated by the Western Pacific Region of the World Health Organisation. We have one main office in Fairy Meadow, NSW, 2519.







# Our RAP.

Healthy Cities Illawarra have reflected on the successes and challenges of the past few years and we're looking to further our commitment to reconciliation. The key challenge in the past two years has been the lack of community programs due to COVID. This has prevented Healthy Cities Illawarra from delivering, and partnering in, as many face to face programs and events with local Aboriginal organisations and community as we had planned. Face to face programs meet many barriers, meet social needs and provide important two-way learning opportunities. Recognising and understanding that Aboriginal organisations and staff have numerous competing demands and priorities is taken into consideration when working in partnership. Listening to Aboriginal community members and staff, and implementing suggestions on the health needs of, and appropriate program strategies for, local Aboriginal communities is essential for effective programs. Where possible, working with Aboriginal staff from other organisations to co-facilitate and deliver programs, strengthens community ownership, introduces Healthy Cities Illawarra staff to Aboriginal community members and develops our reputation with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Recognition of these challenges and learnings has been incorporated into this Reconciliation Action Plan.

The RAP Working Group have been the key people involved in the development of this RAP. Progressing to the Innovate RAP will help us achieve our organisation's unique vision for reconciliation. Healthy Cities Illawarra's CEO intends to lead the team, and the Board of Directors, through the steps recommended in the Reconciliation Action Plan Framework for the Innovate RAP.

Healthy Cities Illawarra's commitment to addressing the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is stated in our 2020-2024 Strategic and Business Plan. Recognising Aboriginal communities as a priority population, our plan has a stated objective to: Contribute to Closing the Gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The development and implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan is an important planned action in achieving this objective.

**Healthy Cities Illawarra's RAP Working Group consists of:**

- Healthy Cities Illawarra's CEO,
- Healthy Cities Illawarra board member, who identifies as an Aboriginal person,
- Three members of staff, who are Health Promotion Officers.

Efforts to engage up to three external Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members to be part of the RAP Working Group are continuing. The CEO is also the organisation's RAP Champion and charged with the responsibility of driving engagement with our RAP throughout the organisation.





# Our Reconciliation Journey.

Healthy Cities Illawarra started our reconciliation journey with the Reflect RAP in 2019. Even though the organisation has worked with local Aboriginal organisations for many years, the Reflect RAP solidified our commitment towards reconciliation. To start our journey, staff, volunteers, and a board member received cultural training.

Over the past 3 years, the organisation developed new partnerships and became more mindful about how projects engaged with local Aboriginal communities and how we could better engage with them. For example, our staff have participated in more events and meetings organised by external Aboriginal colleagues. In addition to extending invitations to Aboriginal community organisations and members to our own events and meetings. Important learnings which Healthy Cities Illawarra incorporates into our programs include: working with Aboriginal community organisations and Aboriginal staff to reach and introduce Aboriginal community members to programs, and taking the programs to where the community lives and venues that they are familiar with, and feel safe in. This has provided a steady and consistent presence which slowly builds relationships, trust and for Healthy Cities Illawarra to be seen as a reliable, potential partner.

As a result of great relationships built over the years, Healthy Cities Illawarra was involved in a committee with members from other NGOs and councils, which helped organise the local NAIDOC 2021 event. In 2021, we engaged Gumaraa Aboriginal Experience as part of our Playpod program and in 2022 this will be extended to the Active In-Betweens program. Following a one-day workshop with Dr Frances Bodkin (Aunty Fran), on her book "Dharawal Climate and Natural Resources", we have integrated local knowledge of the six Dharawal seasons, as the theme of our six most recent issues of the Food Fairness Illawarra newsletter. The newsletters have reached over 500 people.

As an organisation, we have shared resources with the wider community through social media on significant cultural days, such as National Reconciliation Week, Close the Gap Day and NAIDOC. Through new partnerships with local Aboriginal organisations, participants in our programs are able to learn about the local Aboriginal culture and educate their friends and family too.

In 2020, we commissioned a local Aboriginal artist, Lani Balzan, to produce a painting that symbolised Healthy Cities Illawarra's commitment/solidarity/allegiance with the local Aboriginal community. Elements of this artwork is included on staff polo shirts, resources and other forms of communication, including our Reflect RAP [https://healthycities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HCI\\_RAP.pdf](https://healthycities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HCI_RAP.pdf) By living and wearing our organisational values, we demonstrate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that Healthy Cities Illawarra is committed to reconciliation.

# 1. Relationships



Building and maintaining relationships are essential to our work. The success of our programs and coalitions we are part of, including Playpod, Cook Chill Chat, Active In-Betweens, Active Connections, 5 x 5 Walking groups, Active Holidays, Stir it up, and Food Fairness Illawarra, depends on strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. See <https://healthycities.org.au/programs/> We will commit to strengthening relationships in all our programs, which connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

## Focus area:

The table below relates to Section 4 of our 2020-24 Strategic and Business Plan – 4.1.1 Prevention and Control of Chronic Disease; 4.1.2 Participation; 4.1.4 Partnerships; 4.3 Priority Populations.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	April 2022	CEO
	Engage with Illawarra and Shoalhaven Aboriginal Land Councils, Aboriginal Community Control Health Organisations, and Employment and Social organisations to develop or strengthen relationships and identify opportunities to work in partnership.	April 2022	CEO
	Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to identify community needs and develop appropriate programs.	April 2022	CEO
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	April 2022	CEO
<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2022 and May 2023	Marketing & Communications Officer
	HCI Board and RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June 2022 and 27 May – 3 June 2023	CEO
	Encourage and support HCI staff and Board to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2022 and 27 May – 3 June 2023	CEO
	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May- 3 June 2022 and 27 May – 3 June 2023	Health Promotion Officer
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2022 and May 2023	Health Promotion Officer





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	Provide HCI staff with significant dates and opportunities to participate in external events to enable them to engage in reconciliation.	June 2022	CEO
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	May 2022	CEO
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	June 2022	CEO
	Promote the benefits of establishing a RAP within the Alliance for Healthy Cities and among partners and stakeholders.	Review April 2022	CEO and/or President of the Board
	Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.	June 2022	CEO
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	August 2022	CEO
	Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	September 2022	CEO
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	September 2022	CEO
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	September 2022	CEO

## 2. Respect



We are driven by our core values of integrity, collaboration, equity and inclusivity, which inspires us to learn about the local culture, history, knowledge and rights of Aboriginal people. By understanding this we gain an appreciation which allows us to respectfully engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

### Focus area:

The table below relates to Section 4 of our 2020-24 Strategic and Business Plan – Section 4.1.1 Prevention and Control of Chronic Disease; 4.2.2 Business Operations.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Review February 2023	Health Promotion Officer
<b>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through in our organisation through cultural learning.</b>	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	April 2022	Health Promotion Officer
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	April 2022	Health Promotion Officer
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	April 2022 and April 2023	CEO
<b>6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</b>	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	April 2022	CEO
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	April 2020	CEO
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	Review June 2022 and June 2023	Health Promotion Officer
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	Review June 2022 and June 2023	CEO
	Through team discussion develop, implement and communicate the importance of Healthy Cities Illawarra staff following engagement protocols ensuring that all programs are culturally safe and inclusive.	June 2022	Health Promotion Officer with all HCI staff





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2022 and July 2023	CEO
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	May 2022	CEO
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July 2022 and First week in July 2023	CEO
<b>8. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our local communities.</b>	Seek opportunities to meaningfully engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples to listen and better understand culture, history, knowledge, rights and issues and to incorporate these learnings into HCI programs.	Review December 2022	Health Promotion Officer with All HCI staff
	Utilise our social media channels and media platforms to communicate days of significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including:	Review June 2022 and June 2023	Marketing & Communications Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anniversary of the National Apology</li> <li>• Close the Gap Day</li> <li>• Sorry Day</li> <li>• National Reconciliation Week (Mabo Day and the anniversary of the census)</li> <li>• NAIDOC</li> </ul>	Feb 23, 24 Mar 23, 24 May 22, 23 Jun 22, 23 Jul 22, 23	
	Communicate with participants in our programs the days of significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including:	Review June 2022 and June 2023	Health Promotion Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anniversary of the National Apology</li> <li>• Close the Gap Day</li> <li>• Sorry Day</li> <li>• National Reconciliation Week (Mabo Day and the anniversary of the census)</li> <li>• NAIDOC</li> </ul>	Feb 23, 24 Mar 23, 24 May 22, 23 Jun 22, 23 Jul 22, 23		

# 3. Opportunities



Healthy Cities Illawarra are dedicated to addressing social, economic and environmental causes of health inequity, primarily through our programs. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have crucial knowledge, understanding and experiences, that when included, greatly enhance our programs. Healthy Cities Illawarra will strive to better understand how to establish and promote culturally safe employment and volunteering opportunities, making them more attractive/appealing/suitable to/for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. If HCI has more Aboriginal role models involved in our programs, it will help keep participants engaged, and broaden the opportunities for HCI to have discussions about reconciliation.

## Focus area:

The table below relates to Section 4 of our 2020-24 Strategic and Business Plan – 4.2.2 Business Operations

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	February 2023	CEO
	Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HR organisations to inform and improve our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	March 2023	CEO
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	May 2023	CEO
	Advertise job vacancies and volunteering opportunities to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	May 2023	Office Manager
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies, such as additional leave or increased provisions for leave without pay for sorry business and other community and cultural activities, to remove barriers and improve cultural support to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	March 2023	CEO
	Investigate opportunities to increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, including through traineeships and volunteering, employed by HCI.	June 2023	CEO
<b>10. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights in our organisation through cultural learning.</b>	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	February 2023	CEO, Business Manager
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	February 2023	CEO
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	May 2023	Health Promotion Officer
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	May 2023	CEO, Business Manager
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2023	CEO, Business Manager





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>11. Strengthen the programs at Healthy Cities Illawarra to better facilitate health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</b>	Consult and work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to identify, develop and implement programs that can better facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and wellbeing needs.	April 2022	CEO, Health Promotion Officers
	Review current programs to ensure they are culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	April 2022	CEO, Health Promotion Officers



# 4. Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	June 2022	CEO
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June 2022	CEO
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Jul, Oct, Dec 2022 Feb, Jul, Oct, December 2023 Feb 2024	CEO
<b>13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	Define resource needs and allocate resources for RAP implementation	April 2022	CEO
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	April 2022	CEO
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April 2022	Health Promotion Officer
	Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	April 2022	CEO
<b>14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contact are up to date to ensure we are receiving important correspondence.	June 2022, June 2023 and annually	CEO
	Follow up with Reconciliation Australia if we have not yet received our unique reporting link to participate in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2022, 2023 and annually	Health Promotion Officer
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 Sep, 2022, 2023 and annually	Health Promotion Officer
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	Jul, Oct, Dec 2022 Feb, Jul, Oct, Dec 2023 Feb 2024	CEO
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, partner organisations, and program participants, in addition to our non-Aboriginal stakeholders and partner organisations.	June 2022 and June 2023	Marketing & Communications Officer
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	June 2023	CEO
	Provide a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia to assist in the development of our next RAP.	November 2023	CEO
	<b>15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	November 2023





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**Healthy  
Cities**  
Illawarra



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

**INNOVATE**

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