



CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE
OF SYDNEY

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

March 2023 - March 2024





Acknowledgement of Countries

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney acknowledges and pays respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Nations Peoples of Australia, on whose ancestral homelands we live, serve, learn, worship and work; the homelands of Eora, Guringai, Dharawal, and Dharug peoples. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We celebrate the histories, languages, cultures and spiritualities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We respect their continuing connections to Country and Sea over thousands of generations, as the world's oldest living cultures. We seek to learn and embrace their care and love of Country.



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Message from the Archbishop of Sydney

As Pope St John Paul II famously said to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples gathered in Alice Springs on 29 November 1986: "You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others." As Archbishop of Sydney I ask all those in our Catholic community to commit to this Reconciliation Action Plan, as part of our response to that charge, and to our ongoing work of acknowledging and healing relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers. We have made great strides in our lifetime towards these goals but there is still much to do, and this plan seeks to set us on such a course. As an Archdiocese of parishes, schools, agencies, religious communities, families, clergy and individual faithful, we commit ourselves to the ongoing task of reconciliation: acknowledging past mistakes, repenting of enduring injustices, seeking forgiveness and renewed friendship. It is my prayer that you will join us in our best efforts to be the Church for all that Jesus wants us to be.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP



Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney 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 the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney 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 to the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, 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



Coming Together, To Gather as One

This art piece incorporates both Australia's Ancient Land and the Christian story, it depicts forging a path towards Reconciliation.

This visual representation offers the Christian story through a First Nations perspective utilising the above ways of knowing, doing, and being, to highlight a transformation from shedding the old ways to present the new, hence the CAS entering the phase of their intention to listen/learn and to make a roadmap for change through Reconciliation.

This one off, original creation is an uplifting representation of the Creator (Mirrigal/Biamii) symbolised by Biamii cave drawing and several creation stories, including the "Boora Birra Eel Dreaming" and the 'Whale' Dreaming stories and their importance to the Moodgingal of the Sydney basin. The clan groups of the Eora, Darug and Dharawal Nations who relied on a very close relationship to the natural, human and spiritual worlds.

The Mirrigal/Biamii image is seen more prominently in the middle of the artwork, depicting the Creator moving through Mother Earth and towards the Sky Spirits.

The artwork incorporates thousands of organic and non-linear dots that represent the 593,000 Catholics, 1200 religious, 516 priests, 9 deaneries, 137 parishes, and 150 systemic schools within the Archdiocese of Sydney.



The artwork, **Coming Together, To Gather as One**, is a collaboration between two artists, **Evis Heath** and **Richard Campbell**.

Richard Campbell

Richard Campbell is a proud Gumbaynggirr/Dhungatti man from Kempsey. He is a member of the Stolen Generation, whose search for healing is integral to his art and his commitment to the work of the Kinchela Boys Home.

Richard's artwork gained much recognition throughout World Youth Day 2008 and as well the Mary MacKillop Institute used two of his artworks, the Crucifixion and the Madonna and Child in the canonisation ceremony of Saint Mary MacKillop.

When asked what he wants Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to get from his art, he reiterates:

"We all have a spiritual connection, we're all brothers and sisters, with the animals, the trees, rivers and rocks, we all belong to one big god - call it Christ, we call it Birrigun, we are all one in God."

Richard continues to inspire and mentor young men with his art and skills in art.

Evis Heath

Evis Heath is a 2nd generation Gumbaynggirr/Birrpai artist originally from Newcastle, Australia. He has dedicated his life to creating art that expresses his soul's Dreaming path, drawing inspiration from his Dreaming stories, nature, its life and colours, and his life experiences.

Heath began his artistic career as an apprentice inspired by two of his uncles and well known Koori artists, Richard Campbell and Mini Heath.

His connection to the land and culture is a major inspiration for his artwork.

His Dreaming path is to honour and tread lightly in the footprints of his ancestors, with love and gratitude, to create a future spark for future generations.





Prayer

God of all creation,
as we journey together in this Great Southern Land,
we pray for healing, forgiveness, and unity,
creating a path of goodwill, with justice and compassion.
Jesus through the power of Your love,
You have given us the courage, wisdom and strength
to share our gifts and talents in humility.
In peace and understanding we reconcile with each other.
Great spirit, we come together in prayer and thanksgiving
for the many blessings we have received.
Allow your spirit to wash over us and give us strength,
to walk together as one.

(2014) This prayer was written by a small group of Aboriginal women Elders and Aboriginal Catholic Ministry staff.

Our Archdiocese

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney (Archdiocese) parishes and agencies exist to serve the People of God in Sydney which includes the eastern, southern, inner-western and south-western suburbs and the lower North Shore. There are approximately 593,000 Catholics, 1200 religious sisters and brothers, 516 priests, 137 parishes, and 150 system schools within the region.

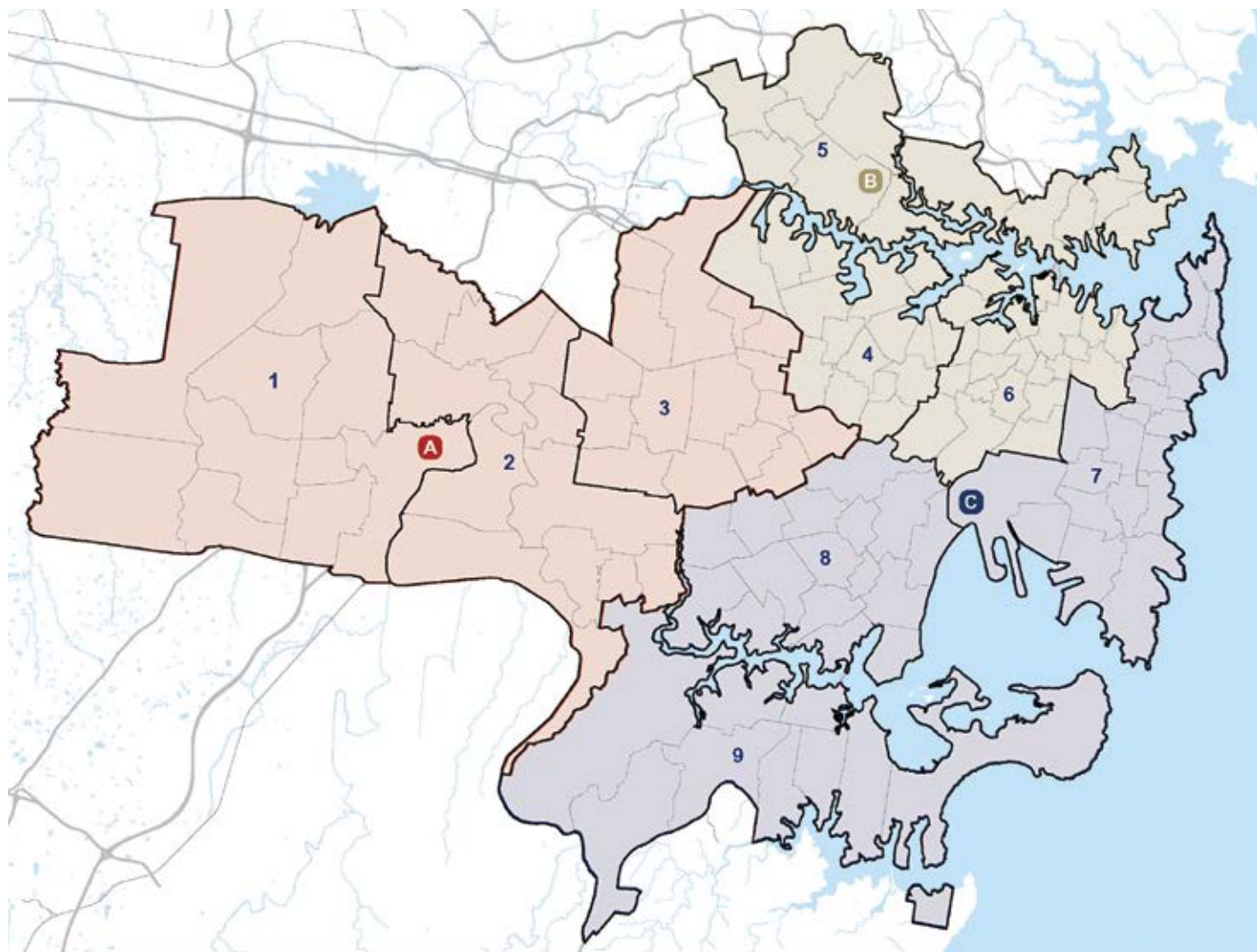
The Archdiocese is bounded to the north by Broken Bay Diocese (Guringai, Darkinjung and Dharug nations), to the west by Parramatta Diocese (Dharug, Wiradjuri and Gandanagarra nations) and to the south by Wollongong Diocese (Dharawal, Tharawal, Gundungarra and Yuin nations).

Our Agencies

The agencies of the Archdiocese include those involved in delivering the charitable and not-for-profit Catholic services across a range of sectors. The larger agencies include Sydney Catholic Schools, CatholicCare and Sydney Catholic Early Childhood Services. Together with the parishes, the Archdiocese promotes and supports its agencies to deliver critical services to parishioners, families and those in need.

Our Parishes

A parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a priest under the authority of the bishop. Parishes are a focus of prayer and worship but also places where Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, and other celebrations take place. They also serve the people's spiritual and social needs.



Our Archdiocese

Our Mission

The mission of the Archdiocese is that given by Jesus Christ to His Apostles: to preach the Good News of Salvation with love; to invite all people into unity with God through His Holy Church; and, to serve them with love and mercy by attending to their spiritual and corporal needs.

Our Vision

A Church in which the Gospel is preached with joy, the wisdom of our tradition mined with fidelity, the sacraments celebrated with dignity and welcome, and the seminaries, convents and youth groups teeming with new life; a Church in which our parishes, chaplaincies and educational institutions are true centres of the new evangelisation, our laity theologically literate and spiritually well-formed, our outreach to the needy effective and growing, and God glorified above all.



Our Archdiocese

Our Values

In keeping with the essential nature of the Church, those working within her are guided by six fundamental values:

- A personal commitment and desire to contribute to the building of God's Kingdom of truth and love.
- An abiding respect for the inherent dignity of all people and a commitment to act in accordance with that truth.
- A dedication to justice, fairness and outreach to those in need.
- A commitment to supportive, respectful and ethical behaviour.
- A willingness to share our gifts to the best of our ability in the service of Jesus' mission, and
- Above all, a determination to worship God, pray and live holy lives.

Our Schools

Conducted by Sydney Catholic Schools Limited as Trustee for the Sydney Catholic Schools Trust (SCS), the Catholic systemic schools of the Archdiocese have delivered excellence in education to Sydney school students for 200 years. SCS continues to be a thriving and growing contemporary educational community with 150 schools, more than 71,000 current students, 10,300 staff and a large alumni community.

Working in partnership with families and parishes, SCS strives to create thriving Catholic communities through excellent teaching and learning.

Our Early Childhood Services

Sydney Catholic Early Childhood Services (SCECS) is a provider of Preschool, Long Day Care and Out of School Hours Care services across the Sydney Archdiocese. SCECS is committed to providing equitable access to all services and working with families and educators in the provision of high-quality education and care programs. SCECS operates in close partnership with the local Catholic schools and Parish communities.

Our CatholicCare Services

CatholicCare Sydney (CCS), the social services agency of the Catholic Church in Sydney, provides a variety of services across the Archdiocese. CCS has a primary focus of helping people and families who may be vulnerable or in need, assisting in many different areas including relationships, parenting, ageing, disability, addiction, homelessness, and mental health concerns. CCS is increasingly broadening the reach of programs, commencing the provision of nationwide services for carers in 2018.



Our Reconciliation Action Plan

The Archdiocese intends to establish processes of reflection, truth-telling and relationship building under one RAP. This long-term commitment includes our agencies, parishes and schools in an overarching Archdiocesan expression of dedication and support for reconciliation.

Catholics concerned about social justice, community mental health and wellbeing have as individuals begun moving towards reconciling the Church's history with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Now, under the leadership of the Archbishop and the Executive Directors, this single overarching Reflect RAP has been developed to guide the agencies, parishes and schools of the Archdiocese to contribute to reconciliation.

In the next 12 months we will listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and learn and understand the role that each of our unique agencies can contribute to reconciliation. Over time, we anticipate that many of our agencies will begin to develop their own Innovate RAPs that work in collaboration and in symmetry with the Archdiocese.

This RAP will help our Catholic communities in parishes, schools and agencies acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and relationships to Country.

The Archdiocese aims to build a patient, staged and sustainable program of healing, respect and reform through an active process of truth-telling under the guidance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group. The Advisory Group will be established as part of the Reflect RAP stage, and appointed by the Steering Committee.

Our Steering Committee and Working Group is made up of a range of representatives from across the Archdiocese so that we can understand how to best support the Archdiocese in the reconciliation journey. Agency representation on the Steering Committee and Working Group is:

- The Chancery Office
- Auxiliary Bishop
- Aboriginal Catholic Ministry (ACM)
- Justice and Peace Office (JPO)
- Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS)
- CatholicCare (CC)

All members of the Steering Committee and Working Group have undergone Cultural Competency Training. The RAP Champion for the Archdiocese is Fr Peter Smith, Justice and Peace Promoter.

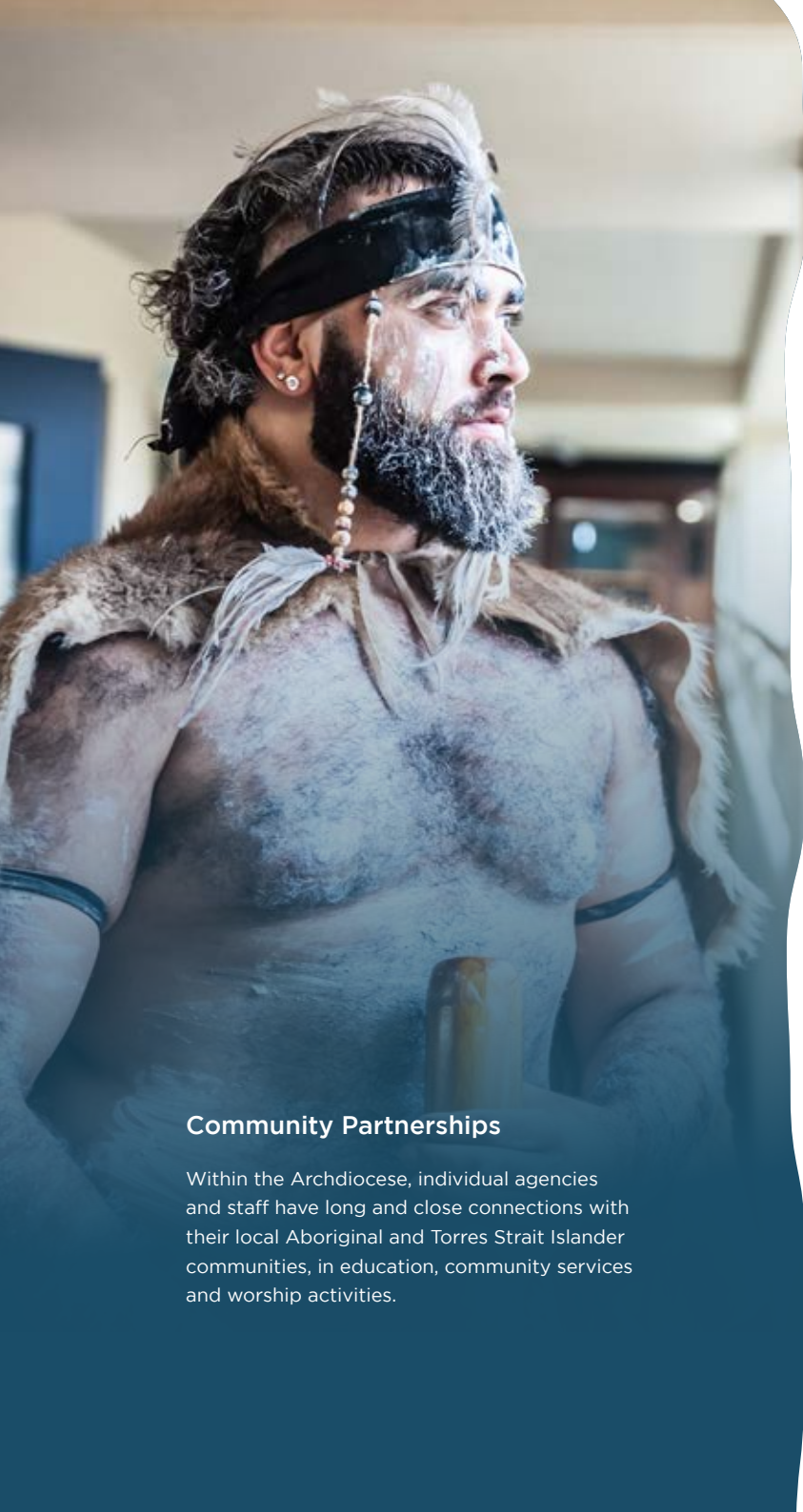
CatholicCare had its Reflect RAP endorsed by Reconciliation Australia in July 2021.



**We have dispossessed
the Aboriginal of the
soil... Alas!... The stain of
blood is upon us—blood
has been shed otherwise
than in self-defence—
blood, in needless and
wanton cruelty. Shall we
not protest again this...
by word and deed?**

John Bede Polding,
Archbishop of Sydney, 1869





Community Partnerships

Within the Archdiocese, individual agencies and staff have long and close connections with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in education, community services and worship activities.

Our Partnerships / Current Activities



The Justice and Peace Office has a lengthy background in working to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, with a particular focus on injustice and historical mistreatment, along with the need for constitutional reform to celebrate our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The early incarceration of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remains a key campaign, along with ongoing work supporting exposure of Deaths in Custody and promoting the Uluru Statement from the Heart constitutional recognition movement.



In 1988, the Archdiocese of Sydney established the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry (ACM). The purpose of the ACM is to know Jesus and make Jesus known through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of seeing and in the spirit of reconciliation. ACM promotes reconciliation, truth-telling, shared understanding, wellbeing and pastoral care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the living of our faith.



CatholicCare has completed a number of activities during the implementation of their inaugural RAP, including developing an organisation Acknowledgement of Country for use in meetings, on the website and for email signatures and undertaking cultural competency training for all staff.



Our Partnerships / Current Activities



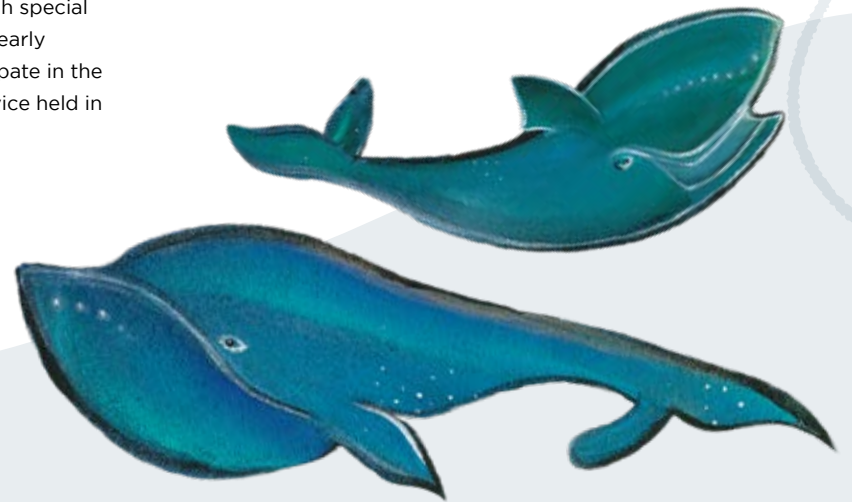
Sydney Catholic Schools

SCS has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team, within its Education & Research department. This team provides wellbeing support and mentoring to students who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

SCS has a well established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program, the Murrawadeen Goodjarga Performance Ensemble. It is formed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This Ensemble provides opportunities for teachers and students to develop their connection to culture through storytelling, dance, drama and music. Goodjarga unites people, makes connections to culture and country and links our past with our future.

Other initiatives include embedding Acknowledgement of Country as an office protocol, commencing Cultural Competency Training for the 8000 staff, Catholic Education Foundation Indigenous Bursary scheme, Membership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in SCS Workplace Equity Committee and Personalised Learning Plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students K-12.

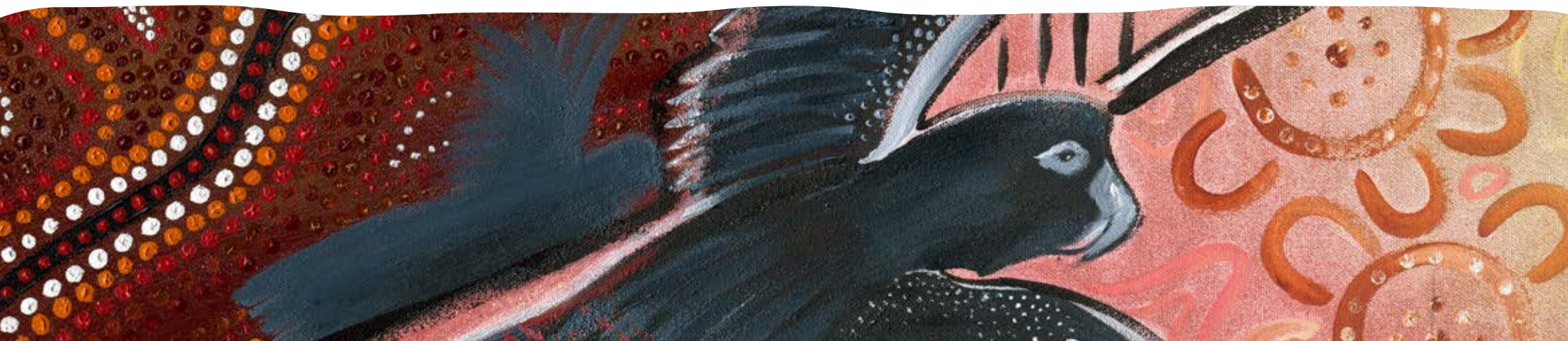
Schools engage in a wide range of activities to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as this nation's First Peoples. Acknowledgement of Country and where possible Welcome to Country is part of school culture. Some schools are actively engaged in developing their own Reconciliation Action Plans, working closely with local Aboriginal communities and families. National Reconciliation Week is acknowledged by schools through whole of week programs or through special assemblies including school liturgies. The yearly themes are celebrated. Schools also participate in the Indigenous Veterans' Commemoration Service held in Hyde Park.





Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
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.	April, 2023	Research and Project Officer, Justice & Peace Office
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	April, 2023	Research and Project Officer, Justice & Peace Office
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April, 2023	Executive Directors, SCS & Archdiocese - Administration and Finance
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS
	Encourage and support staff, senior leaders and volunteers to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June, 2023	Justice and Peace Promoter, Justice & Peace Office





Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	March, 2023	Specialist: Organisational Development, People and Culture, SCS
	Identify and meet with organisations within the Archdiocese to discuss joining the RAP journey.	March, 2023	Executive Directors, SCS & Archdiocese - Administration and Finance
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	August, 2023	Specialist: Organisational Development, People and Culture, SCS
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	August, 2023	Specialist: Organisational Development, People and Culture, SCS
	Workshop and develop our vision for reconciliation in consultation with our advisory group to guide future reconciliation initiatives for our organisation.	December, 2023	Executive Directors, SCS & Archdiocese - Administration and Finance
	Workshop and identify our sphere of influence to help shape future reconciliation initiatives.	May, 2023	Specialist: Organisational Development, People and Culture, SCS
	Implement strategies to engage our priests and seminarians in reconciliation.	September, 2023	Specialist: Organisational Development, People and Culture, SCS



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	July, 2023	Specialist: Organisational Development, People and Culture, SCS
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July, 2023	Specialist: Organisational Development, People and Culture, SCS
5. Promote Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education to our schools and early learning services.	Promote Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program to all schools and early learning services in our network, and encourage these schools to develop their own RAPs via the Narragunnawali platform.	December, 2023	Supervisor Student Wellbeing and Learning, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, SCS
	Encourage all staff in our schools and early learning centres to engage with the professional learning (including webinar) resources available via Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education online platform.	December, 2023	Supervisor Student Wellbeing and Learning, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, SCS
	Encourage all staff in schools and early learning centres in our network to sign up to the Narragunnawali News mailing list.	December, 2023	Supervisor Student Wellbeing and Learning, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, SCS
	Post appropriate links to Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education platform on our schools and early learning centres communications.	December, 2023	Supervisor Student Wellbeing and Learning, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, SCS
	Collaborate with Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali team to identify opportunities for strengthening the connections between Narragunnawali professional learning/RAP development processes and Teacher Accreditation/Quality Improvement Planning processes.	December, 2023	Supervisor Student Wellbeing and Learning, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, SCS



St Marys-St Joseph Catholic Primary School Maroubra
2022 Maroubra NAIDOC Celebrations



Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a strategy for rolling out cultural learning for all staff across our organisation.	November, 2023	Executive Officer, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	September, 2023	Executive Officer, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
	Conduct a review to understand cultural connections to land for CAS property.	August, 2023	Director of Property & Infrastructure
7. 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.	May, 2023	Executive Officer, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	January, 2024	Executive Officer, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
8. 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.	May, 2023	Executive Officer, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June, 2023	Executive Officer, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2023	Executive Officer, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	October, 2023	Executive Directors, SCS & Archdiocese - Administration and Finance
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	November, 2023	Executive Directors, SCS & Archdiocese - Administration and Finance
10. 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.	October, 2023	Director, Archdiocese, Property & Infrastructure and Director, Finance & Property SCS
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	September, 2023	Director, Archdiocese, Property & Infrastructure



**Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann in
conversation with Fr Peter Smith**

Aboriginal Catholics and Reconciliation





Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG and Steering Committee to govern RAP implementation.	March, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	March, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	March, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	March, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	March, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS
13. 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.	30 September, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contacts are up-to-date to ensure we are receiving important correspondence.	June, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS
	Follow up with Reconciliation Australia if we have not yet received our unique reporting link to participate in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	November, 2023	RAP Project Manager, SCS



CATHOLIC
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