Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2016 - 2018





Our RAP Artwork



The UnitingCare West (UCW) Reconciliation Action Plan artwork has been created by Aboriginal artist Dale Tilbrook, a

Wardandi Bibbulmun woman from the South West of Western Australia.

The five main colour blocks serve the dual purpose of representing the core values of UCW and at the same time reflecting the refreshed brand for the organisation.

Within these colour blocks are Aboriginal symbols depicting the core values of UCW being incorporated into policy and actions. As these are shared with the community, they are picked up and embedded further into the community.

The "U" shapes represent people meeting. At first it is just UCW staff, a single colour. The introduction of different colours in the groups shows staff involvement with community members, who then meet with others and so on. The final groups do not include the colours used for staff members, the implication being that the values of the organisation flow through and are adopted by the community. The use of the spiral also symbolises the continuum of sharing values and influencing community outcomes, with the large dots representing community.





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Foreword

The lives of many people UnitingCare West (UCW) works with have been directly impacted by injustices, past and present, particularly experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia. Daily, we are aware of the impact on Aboriginal communities as well as individual people. We are committed to our staff becoming increasingly culturally aware and culturally competent to ensure UCW is an active contributor to reconciliation and justice.

As an agency of the Uniting Church we are proud to belong to the covenants the Uniting Church has made in opposition to all forms of discrimination and to build respectful relationships with Aboriginal people.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has been

developed by committed members of the staff and volunteers and enthusiastically endorsed by the Board. It is launched at a strategic time in the life of UCW and provides a clear and focussed direction for the next few years of the development of our services, our staff and volunteers and our leadership into the WA community.

Through the actions of this RAP it is our desire to find exciting and innovative ways to strengthen our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and community. UCW wants to be a welcoming place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel that they can belong and thrive, both as clients and staff.

We would like to thank all the members who contributed to the drafting of this Plan and encourage all staff and volunteers to embrace the opportunities this RAP provides.



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Peter Fitzpatrick AM Chair of the Board, UnitingCare West

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Sue Ash AO Chief Executive Officer, UnitingCare West





Support from the Uniting Church

The Uniting Church has from its early beginnings sought to work in covenant with the first peoples of this land. We acknowledge the rich prehistory of the first peoples and affirm their sacred relationship with the land.

At Union in 1977, the church declared in its Statement to the nation that "We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur. We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond. We affirm the rights of all people to equal educational opportunities, adequate health care, freedom of speech, employment or dignity in unemployment if work is not available. We will oppose all forms of discrimination which infringe basic rights and freedoms."

This was followed in 1994 by a Covenanting Statement wherein the Uniting Church committed to build understanding between first and second peoples in every locality, and to build relationships which respect the right of Aboriginal people to self-determination in the church and in the wider society.

We continue to recognise the injustices of the past, the deep and lasting effects of the stolen generation and commit ourselves to work towards reconciliation, healing and justice for the first peoples of this nation. We highly value Aboriginal cultures and languages and earnestly seek to learn from their deep spirituality.

UnitingCare West, as an agency of the Uniting Church WA Synod, plays a vital role in achieving these goals. It is with joy in our hearts that we fully support this Reconciliation Action Plan.

In the words of the Covenanting Statement, "we

pray that it will thus help us all to move towards a united Australia which respects this land in which we live, values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all."





Rev Steve Francis Moderator, Synod of Western Australia

Rev Sealin Garlett President, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress





Congratulations

Reconciliation Australia congratulates UnitingCare West (UCW) on developing its inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

In adopting an Innovate RAP, UCW is demonstrating its readiness to develop and test innovative approaches to reconciliation and champion reconciliation at every level of the organisation. UCW's commitments in its first RAP stands it in good stead to make progress across the key domains of reconciliation—relationships, respect and opportunities.

UCW understands the importance of building and maintaining respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and businesses in order to produce mutually beneficial outcomes. UCW drives these relationships through community engagement events and activities, such as National Reconciliation Week (NRW), in which staff are encouraged to participate. Respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures is key to UCW's core values. UCW demonstrates this by engaging its employees in culturally significant practices, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, which are incorporated into everyday meetings and events.

UCW is dedicated to creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through procurement, employment and training. Through this Innovate RAP, UCW aims to develop work experience opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to encourage them to apply for positions within the organisation.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend UCW on its inaugural RAP and look forward to following its reconciliation journey.



J.M.S

Justin Mohamed Chief Executive Officer Reconciliation Australia





Introduction

We are excited to have launched our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in July 2016.

We are committed to having respectful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community to provide Culturally appropriate service in a Respectful manner by building Relationships and providing Opportunities. This RAP will take our organisation down the journey of learning about our First peoples, and some of our staff have already started this journey of discovery and reflection over the past few years.

This RAP will play an active role in reconciliation by demonstrating empathy, respect, inclusiveness, integrity and commitment. We will reflect together what these values will look like in the delivery of culturally appropriate services. We want to be a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will feel welcome, as clients, volunteers and staff.

Commitment to the UnitingCare West RAP implementation starts with the Board of Directors and flows through to all layers of management and staff. Service Centre Managers will take an active role in place based implementation of the RAP.

We would like to thank all the members of the RAP working group and other staff who have contributed to the RAP and encourage all staff and volunteers to embrace the opportunities this RAP will bring.





Harry Thorne Co Chair of RAP Working Group, UnitingCare West



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Rev Daniel Viljoen Co Chair of RAP Working Group, UnitingCare West



Our Vision for Reconciliation

UnitingCare West will make an important contribution that will see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australian people walk side by side as equals, under the umbrella of rights and justice.

We will play an active role in reconciliation by demonstrating inclusiveness and integrity. We are committed to proactively engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve the delivery of culturally respectful services.

It is our intent to be a sought after place of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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Our Business

UnitingCare West (UCW) is a community services agency of the Uniting Church that touches the lives of thousands of WA families and individuals each year.

UCW provides a diverse range of holistic programs which enable those most in need in the WA community to belong and thrive. UCW operates over 35 community service programs from 17 sites across WA, reaching as far north as Merriwa and as far south as Great Southern.

UCW's innovative and creative services seek to work in partnership with and meet the needs of those most disadvantaged and marginalised in our community to create justice, hope and opportunity for all. UCW's work is based on the values of empathy, respect, inclusiveness, integrity and commitment.

Our programs span the areas of community and family services, disabilities and youth, mental health, independent living and accommodation

services. We also offer a range of free and confidential specialist services in the areas of substance misuse, teenage parenthood, sexual diversity and community safety and crime.

Programs include: accommodation for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness; community based recreation and respite for carers and people who are living with a disability; community engagement and social inclusion; community mental health; crisis accommodation and transitional housing; a day centre for marginalised individuals and people experiencing homelessness; financial counselling and emergency relief; family preservation and re-unification; foster care for children and young adults; food rescue and food provision; group and transition homes for adults who are living with a disability; housing support for people experiencing mental health challenges; peer support for young people; regional and rural support for young people with diverse sexuality and gender; transition and re-entry support for ex-offenders; a

women's refuge and the Warehouse Café, a social enterprise.

UCW connects with local communities through a place based service centre approach. The service centre forms a hub through which clients have access to various service providers in the local community. Current and developing service centres are in Merriwa, Inner City Service Centre, Fremantle and Great Southern.

UCW employs 398 staff and can rely on the generosity of over 400 volunteers.

UCW currently has 6 staff who have identified as being Aboriginal.

UCW is part of the UnitingCare national network of more than 400 Uniting Church agencies providing community services to over 1.8 million Australians each year.

Our RAP

UnitingCare West (UCW) recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's special and unique spiritual connection to lands, waters and country. We value the oldest continuing culture in the world and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

We also acknowledge that past policies and exclusions experienced by communities, families and their children have had negative impacts on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people past and present.

UCW will play an active role in reconciliation by demonstrating empathy, respect, inclusiveness, integrity and commitment. We are committed to proactively engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to improve the delivery of culturally respectful and appropriate services. It is our intent to be a sought after place of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. UCW is committed to reconciliation in Australia between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. We deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, yet have very limited Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff. During the duration of this RAP, UCW will be looking at ways to enhance its workforce strategy and to enhance the skills and diversity of our workforce. We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff will play an important role in our understanding of what cultural appropriate practices and procedures will look like.

We desire to deliver services in a culturally appropriate way and to be a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will feel welcome, as clients, volunteers and staff.

Commitment to the UCW RAP implementation starts with the Board of Directors and flows through to all layers of management and staff. Service Centre Managers will take an active role in place based implementation of the RAP.



The RAP Champion for the organisation is the Mission Development Leader, Daniel Viljoen with the support of Board sponsor Ian Jackson. Two members, Harry Thorne and Danny Ford are both Noongar Aboriginal men.

All directorates and service areas within UCW are represented by the members of the RAP working group. The RAP working group will oversee the implementation of the RAP and will be responsible for all reporting on its progress.

The RAP Working Group members are:

Danny Ford	Aboriginal Consultant
Harry Thorne	Aboriginal Engagement Leader
lan Jackson	Board Member
Sue Ash AO	Chief Executive Officer
Daniel Viljoen	Mission Development Leader
Glyn Davies	Executive Manager Community Inclusion
Megan Richards	Service Centre Manager for Fremantle
Misty Farquhar	Manager Inclusion
Nicky Byrne	Manager Great Southern
Nienke Rozendaal	Team Leader Marketing and Communication
Anne Maroni	Manager Community Options
Matthew Ashford	Manager Housing Services
Michelle Albanese	Support Worker Aboriginal Family Respite Service
Paul McGann	Manager People Services



Relationships

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UnitingCare West engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a manner that leads to positive relationships and greater understanding. UCW delivers services in the community and in partnership with the community, connecting people and communities to ensure that people most in need can belong and thrive.

One of the communities we wish to better connect with is our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and people. We want to establish and foster these relationships with a deep sense of respect, commitment and inclusiveness.

FOCUS area: Delivering Positive Impact: We build positive outcomes by working and developing relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal people and communities in a way that is evidence informed, integrated and meaningful.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	 RWG oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP. Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are represented on the RWG throughout the life of the RAP. 	July 2016 July 2016,2017,2018	Mission Development Leader (RWG Co Chair)
	 Meet at least quarterly to monitor and report on RAP implementation. 	September 2016, 2017, 2018 December 2016, 2017, 2018 March 2017, 2018 June 2016 2017, 2018	
	Establish Terms of Reference for the RWG.	July 2016	
2. Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities	 Organise at least one internal event for NRW each year eg. host a morning tea to raise awareness amongst staff. 	27 May- 3 June, 2017,2018	ICSC Service Centre Manager
to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Register all our NRW events via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May, 2017. 2018	Manager Marketing & Advancement
and other Australians.	Support an external NRW event.	27 May -3 June 2017, 2018	
	• Ensure our RWG participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2017 and 2018	
	• Extend an invitation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share their reconciliation experiences or stories.	May 2018	
	 Encourage staff to participate in external events to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	May, 2017,2018	
	 Host NRW events across the areas in which we operate being Inner City Service Centre, Merriwa, Fremantle and Great Southern. 	May, 2017, 2018	
	 Continue sponsorship of at least 2 NRW promotional banners in Perth CBD, as part of the street banner project ran by City of Perth. 	May, 2017, 2018	



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3. Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait	• Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	February 2017	Fremantle Service Centre Manager
Islander people, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes.	 Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations situated in area of UCW service centres to develop guiding principles for future engagement. 	April 2017	
	 Representative from UCW to attend the Yokai meetings facilitated by Reconciliation WA. 	August 2016, 2017 and 2018	
	 Consult with Reconciliation WA regarding establishment of culturally appropriate service centres. 	May 2017	
4. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business	 Implement and review a strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders. 	August 2017	RWG Chair/ Manager Marketing & Advancement
and sector.	 Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders. 	August 2016, 2017	
	• Communicate quarterly updates to all staff on RAP Progress.	October 2016, 2017 2018 Feb 2017, 2018, 2019 April 2017,2018 July 2017, 2018	
	• Develop a strategy to engage all staff in RAP initiatives.	April 2017	

Respect

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UnitingCare West embraces practices that demonstrate an organisational culture of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture. We would like to learn more about the richness of the cultures as we develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We would also like to celebrate successes on our journey together and by recognising differences we would like to embrace diversity in our service delivery.

FOCUS CIECT: UCW would like to be seen and heard as an organisation that respectfully engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5. Engage workforce in continuous cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and	 Develop and implement a cultural awareness training strategy for our staff which defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided including online, face to face workshops and/or cultural immersion. 	August 2017	Executive Manager People and Culture/ Aboriginal Engagement Leader
achievements.	 Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness training. 	May 2017	
	 Provide opportunities for RWG members, RAP champions, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in cultural training. 	April 2017	
	 Identify cultural learning requirements specific to our staff's training need. 	February 2017	
	 Investigate local cultural experiences and immersion opportunities. 	February 2017	
	 Embed cultural awareness training as part of induction for all staff and volunteers. 	August 2017	

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
6. Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such	• Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	July 2017	Mission Development Leader
as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning.	 Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships. 	July 2017	
ensure there is a shared meaning.	 Invite a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country at least one significant event including Foundation Day celebrations. 	July 2017	
	• Include Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of important internal and external meetings and events.	July 2016, 2017 2018	
	 Include Acknowledgement of Country in all corporate email signatures and on UCW website. 	July 2016	
	 Acknowledgement of Country to be included in all agendas and function planning documentation. 	August 2016	
	 Demonstrate respect for Aboriginal cultures incorporating Acknowledgement of Country at all team meetings. 	Aug 2016, 2017	
	• Develop and display signage at entrance of each Service Centre and office sites acknowledging Aboriginal heritage and paying our respect to the Traditional Owners of the land.	December 2016	
7. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with	 Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. 	July 2016, 2017 and 2018	Executive Manager People and Culture
their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	 Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week. 	July 2016, 2017, 2018	
	 In consultation with Aboriginal people, hold activities to celebrate NAIDOC Week for clients and UCW workforce. 	July 2016, 2017, 2018	
	 Develop and implement an internal and external communications campaign. 	February 2018	



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Recognise and celebrate Sorry Day as an organisation and actively promote the message of	 UCW to take part in the annual Sorry Day event in Perth organised by Reconciliation WA. UCW promotes its activity in a promotional stall. 	26 May 2017 and 2018	Manager Marketing & Advancement/ Mission Development Leader
the day internally and externally.	 Develop and implement an internal and external communications campaign. 	February 2018	
	 Create personal awareness by sharing, with permission, the stories of prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 	May 2017, 2018	
	 Encourage all staff and communities UCW works with to attend the event. 	26 May 2016, 2017, 2018	
9. Pay respect to and include Aboriginal cultures, histories, achievements and perspectives in UCW promotional materials.	 Develop culturally appropriate policies relating to photography and referencing names of Aboriginal people, in consultation with Traditional Owners. 	December 2016	Manager Marketing & Advancement
	• Develop a library of Aboriginal artworks to include in promotional materials. UCW will ensure that the artist's background is recognised and the story behind the artwork is included.	February 2017	
	 Incorporate Aboriginal culture in brand refresh of UCW. 	July 2016	
	 Promote and market the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's cultures and histories in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner. 	February 2017, 2018	
10. Foster an organisational culture of celebrating and	Celebrate Aboriginal cultures at tenth anniversary of UCW.	July 2016	CEO
embracing Aboriginal people and cultures.	 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander publications and newspapers to be made available to all staff. 	December 2016, 2017	



Opportunities

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UnitingCare West seeks opportunities to undertake practical activities to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, because we acknowledge that our current service delivery might not be culturally appropriate for diverse groups. We will provide the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have access to available services.

We will create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through procurement, employment, training and development.

FOCUS CIPCO: Being Innovative and Adaptable: We are a thriving and agile organisation, a sought after partner, collaborator and employer. Reflection, curiosity and creativity are central to our working ethos.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
11. Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention strategy. 	July 2017	Executive Manager People and Culture
employment outcomes within our workplace.	• Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.	May 2017	
	• Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities.	May 2017	
	• Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.	April 2017	
	• Develop and implement work experience opportunities for Aboriginal people within the community services we run as an organisation. We align work experience opportunities with service delivery. We provide opportunities for service learning and work experience to multiple schools across the CBD.	Nov 2017	
	 Identify and advertise positions earmarked for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 	July 2016, 2017, 2018	
	 Include Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation on recruitment and selection panels. 	October 2016, 2017	
	 Include in all job advertisements 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply.' 	May 2017, 2018	

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
12. Identify Aboriginal owned and operated companies that may be used to procure services and products.	 Review procurement policies and procedures to identify barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to supply our organisation with goods and services. 	December 2017	Executive Manager Corporate Services
	 Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services. 	February 2018	
	 Develop one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander owned business. 	March 2018	
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	March 2018	
13. Engage with Aboriginal artists to develop artworks for Service Centres and RAP.	 Identify and engage local Aboriginal artists. 	Dec 2016	Aboriginal Engagement Leader
14. Ensure all our service areas are culturally appropriate and	• Employ local Aboriginal staff to enhance our service delivery.	November 2016, 2017, 2018	Executive Manager Community Living/
accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people.	 Review and update current service delivery models and build accessibility and flexibility in the services. 	December 2017	Executive Manager Community Options/ Executive Manager
	 Form partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers to complement and enhance our service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 	December 2016, 2017	Community Inclusion



Tracking progress and reporting

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ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
15. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia.	 Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually. Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer. 	30 September 2017 and 2018 August 2016	Mission Development Leader
16. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally.	 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings. 	30 September 2016, 2017, 2018	Mission Development Leader
internally and externally.	• Report to the board quarterly on the RAP.	October 2016, 2017 2018 Feb 2017, 2018, 2019 April 2017,2018 July 2017, 2018	Leauer
	 Create procedures for staff to provide feedback to RAP Working Group. 	February 2018	
17. Review, refresh and update RAP.	 Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements. 	January 2018	Mission Development Leader
	 Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement. 		

For more information contact:

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