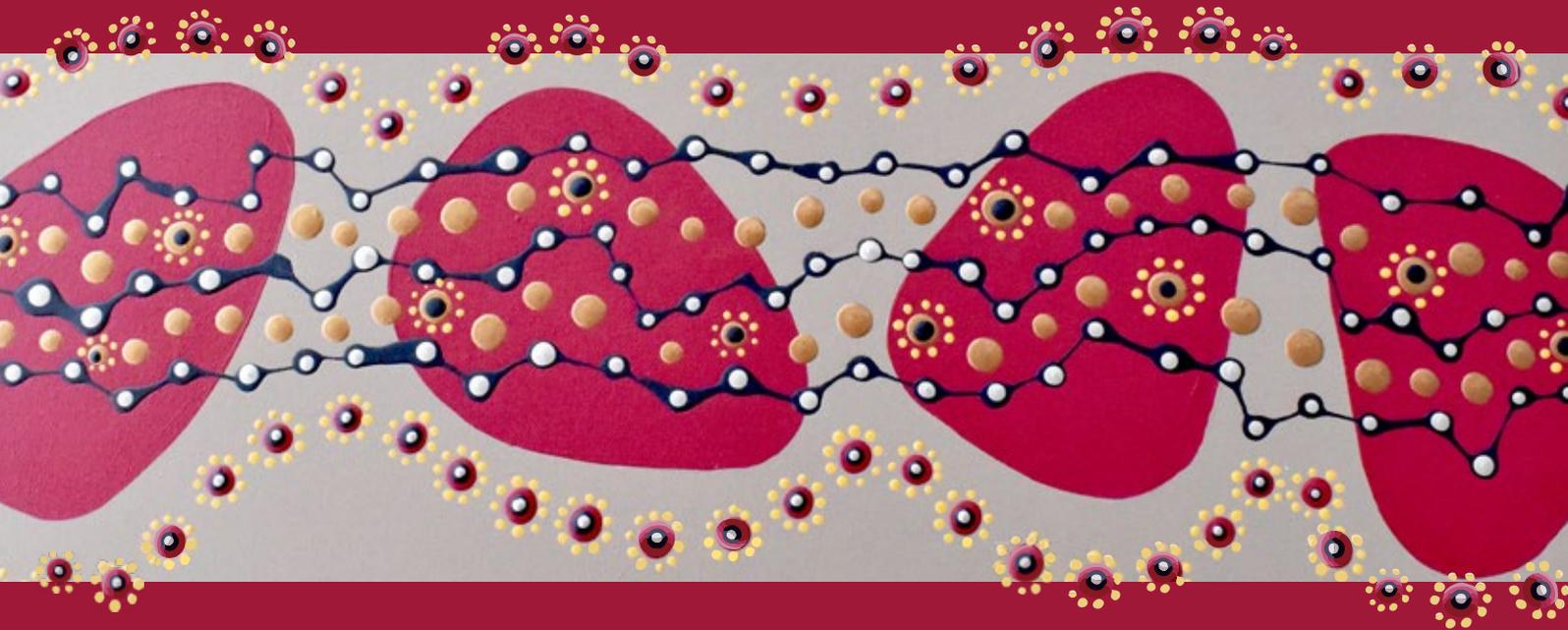




RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN  
**Progress Update**  
November 2021



# A message from our CEO

Reconciliation Action Plans outline our formal commitment to building and maintaining respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Organisations and Communities and enhancing opportunities for reconciliation.

The process of developing and actioning our inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2021-2021 was an important step in BCH's reconciliation journey, one which Reconciliation Australia describes as laying the foundations.

We are proud to signal our ongoing commitment to reconciliation through the registration and development of our next Action Plan, our first Innovate level plan, that is anticipated to be released mid-2022.

I would like to extend our thanks to members of the Reconciliation Action Group, in particular to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, external working group members who participated in the Action Group generously sharing their time, knowledge and insights to our Reconciliation journey and to all our BCH Staff who have contributed to our reconciliation progress to date.



Sean Duffy  
Chief Executive Officer

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## Our journey

Ballarat Community Health (BCH) began developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2018. A RAP Working Group was established to oversee our Reflect RAP development and implementation with representation from across the organisation. The group had external representation from local Aboriginal Communities including representatives from the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative, Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation, Merriymu Consulting, Victoria Police Aboriginal Liaison, representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

This brief report highlights the key initiatives and progress against the goals identified in our [Reflect RAP 2021-2021](#) whilst we continue to progress and expand our plans through the development of our Innovate RAP 2022-2024.



Pictured:

*ABOVE - The Aboriginal Refelctive Space at our Cooinda site. Creator of this piece, artist Josh Muir is a former recipient of the Telstra National Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Youth Art Award whose work is held in national collections including the Koorie Heritage Trust, the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.*

*LOWER LEFT - A smoking ceremony area is positioned at the entrance to the Cooinda site*

*LOWER CENTRE - Our RAP working group at the BCH Annual General Meeting 2019.*

*LOWER RIGHT - Acknowledgement of Country plaques are positioned at the entrance to all our sites incorporating artwork commissioned from prominent Aboriginal artist Josh Muir.*

# Key initiatives & progress to date

## Our people & practices

- Acknowledgements of Country are incorporated at the start of all BCH meetings and events.
- Welcome to Country ceremonies are incorporated into all significant events.
- Our position descriptions and job advertisements have been reviewed and updated to signal our commitment to diversity, inclusion and reconciliation.
- All new staff commencing at BCH undertake Aboriginal Cultural Awareness and Insights professional development training. Existing staff refresh their knowledge and signal their ongoing commitment every three years.
- In 2020 we recognised the continued controversy among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and growing awareness in the broader community about the 26<sup>th</sup> January being celebrated as the Australia Day public holiday. In response, we support staff who wish to work that day to do so and others to receive an alternative day off if they prefer.
- During NAIDOC week 2021, BCH staff were invited on a guided walk of the Mullawallah Wetlands. Led by Director of Mirriyu Cultural Consulting and proud Wadawurrung woman, Bonnie Chew and Paleoecologist Professor, Dr Peter Gell, participants learned about the cultural and environmental significance of this magnificent wetland located close to our Lucas facilities.



## Our sites

- Acknowledgement of Country plaques are positioned at the entrance to each of our sites incorporating artwork commissioned from prominent Aboriginal artist Josh Muir.
- At the Cooina Health & Wellbeing Hub our Reflective Space incorporates an original Indigenous installation artwork by Josh Muir entitled Layers of Country. The series of curved and coloured pathways symbolises the layers of country and provides a contemplative space for clients and staff.
- A smoking ceremony precinct has also been positioned at the entrance to the Cooina site and was utilised for the Welcome to Country during the official re-opening.



## Our online channels

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and Acknowledgements of Country are prominently positioned on our website to signal our respect and commitment to reconciliation.
- This is further strengthened by the publication of our Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Reconciliation that accompanies our Reconciliation Action Plan.
- We regularly promote and provide links via social media to information on significant dates, including National Reconciliation and NAIDOC Weeks to raise awareness, demonstrate our organisational commitment and enhance understanding.