



Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-2022

A message from the Chief Executive



Reconciliation is a journey for all Australians – as individuals, families, communities, organisations, and importantly as a nation. At the heart of this journey are relationships between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Every one of us has a role to play.

At MCM we are committed to walking alongside First Nations people and supporting the journey toward a brighter and more just future. The MCM Reconciliation Action Plan outlines concrete actions we are taking at MCM to support culturally responsible practices in our interactions with First Nations people we work with as clients and colleagues. This is our third Reconciliation Action Plan, and its development is supported by the work of our Reconciliation Action Group.

We look forward to continuing our journey toward respect, meaningful relationships and reconciliation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities.

Vicki Sutton
Chief Executive Officer

About the Commissioned Artwork

MCM commissioned Mandy Nicholson to create this Aboriginal piece of contemporary Art. Mandy is a custodian of Wurundjeri country of the Kulin Nation. This piece tells the story of the Wurundjeri people their connection to the land and to healing utilising traditional symbolism – the ochre circles represent gathering places and the divisions of MCM; coupled with the artist contemporary view which interfaces with the use of fingerprints as a representation of the unique interconnecting services MCM delivers on this country; leaving an everlasting imprint. It is essential that MCM continuously improves its cultural safety practices & profile in order to capacity build our ability to engage & support our First Nations People.

Reconciliation Action Plan

MCM recognises First Nations people as the Caretakers, Custodians and Traditional Owners of the lands, waterways and skies throughout this country. We recognise the diversity within our Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples, nations and communities. We acknowledge the strength of connectedness to culture which demonstrates the richness and uniqueness of each nation, tribe, clan, creation story, song line, storyline, ceremonies, rituals, dance, art, craft, tradition, customs and Lore. We pay our respects to our First Nations people for the honourable position they hold as the oldest living culture on the planet and the knowledge holders of this great land.

Our Vision for Reconciliation

MCM's vision for reconciliation is: convert sentiments into actions that create meaningful relationships, enhance respect and promote sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.

MCM is passionate about walking alongside our First Nations people and supporting the journey toward a brighter and just future. We are determined to disrupt disadvantage by working toward "Closing the Gap" and ensuring our First Nations people have the same life expectancy, health, wellbeing and opportunities as other Australians. We advocate for the right of our Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, groups, organisations and communities to lead in decision making processes

and hold the mantra of 'nothing for us without us' as our framework for ensuring success.

MCM will continuously seek opportunities to learn from, and work in respectful long-term partnerships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people. We are passionate about being guided towards the continuous learnings and quality improvement of cultural safety practices. MCM is committed to becoming a safe space for First Nations people to gather, access support and develop sustainable partnerships that build inclusive communities which will in turn support First Nations people to overcome disadvantage.

Our Business

With over 50 primary service locations and supporting offices, MCM is a leader and innovator in the provision of services to the community and has demonstrated long term commitment to supporting Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people. Established in 1854, MCM is a non-denominational organisation that provides assistance to thousands of Victorian people and communities experiencing disadvantage. We have been actively operating for over 160 years, and over this time have adjusted, adapted and evolved alongside the people we work with. We are always listening and responding to the changing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

All of MCM's work is underpinned by Human Rights frameworks, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Victorian Charter of Rights





and Responsibilities Act, 2006. As such, MCM's role as a service provider is focussed on supporting people to be the best version of themselves and to feel safe to participate fully in society and community life.

MCM's people work alongside our individual clients, their families and communities, to encourage, motivate and support the creation of pathways that lead to independence. We do this by ensuring we provide all available options and all information required to support an informed decision making process around the pathway of choice. MCM's approach to working with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, families, communities, groups and organisations is based on respect and recognition of the unique rights held by First Nations people as the sovereign owners of this land we are being nurtured on.

MCM's people are committed to infusing an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander lens into the delivery of a trauma informed healing framework, securing a culturally safe interface that works in synergy with traditional healing practices and ceremonies. MCM supports self-directed and community directed approaches that promote healing, enhance self-determination and trigger resilience. MCM's enhanced Innovate RAP will guide our work with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people and assist us with our aim to develop supportive and mutually beneficial partnerships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, with the view to sharing practice wisdoms, cultural expertise and work toward jointly developed sustainable projects that are community lead and community owned.

Our people are dedicated professionals, who are driven by social justice and have the expertise to deliver wrap-around

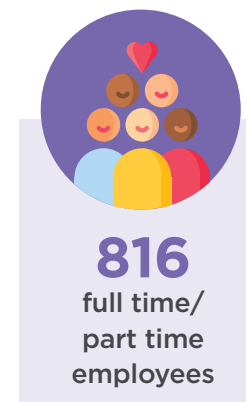
supports and an integrated services model that make a powerful and sustainable difference to people's lives. MCM supports people in our community who are experiencing disadvantage across their life stages, in a person-centred and holistic manner. MCM advocates for social and systemic change to reduce the number of people experiencing disadvantage and to demonstrate the benefits of early intervention.

Our service areas include:

- Disability
- Homelessness
- Family Violence
- Early Years
- Family Support
- Justice Programs
- Education & Employment
- Palliative Care

As of January 2020, MCM employs: **816** full time / part time employees and **369** volunteers

MCM does not currently request that employees identify as Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander. This will change in June 2020 with the launch of a new human resources management system allowing us to mark our progress towards increasing employment opportunities for First Nations people.



Our Reconciliation Action Plans

MCM is able to present our third Reconciliation Action Plan, which is our second and enhanced Innovate RAP, as a statement of our commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people in our community. Not only does this demonstrate MCM's commitment to take measurable and accountable action, our Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) are business plans that employ holistic approaches to create meaningful relationships, enhance respect and promote sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples. The RAPs are a key framework to acknowledge the strength and resilience shown by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since colonisation, and disrupt the intergenerational disadvantages, injustices and inequities still experienced.



The Innovate RAP Guides MCM to:

- Establish the foundations and tools for reflection, awareness-raising and organisational cultural change.
- Develop organisational capacity and employee capability to meet the objectives of 'diversity' in the MCM Strategic Plan.
- Build strong and enduring relationships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, communities and services.
- Become an employer of choice for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.
- Establish that the consultation processes around anything that will affect First Nations people is inclusive of our First Nations people.
- Progress our vision of reconciliation by ensuring that cultural safety is practiced and understood by advocating for systemic and social change, as one of Melbourne's longest standing community service organisations





An Outline of Our RAP Journey

The Reflect RAP has progressed in accordance to intended outcomes and deliverables. The first Innovate RAP was drafted and lodged in 2017, with commencement of roll out occurring prior to lodgement. Unforeseen challenges due to employee turnover culminated in an extension of the timelines as per discussions with Reconciliation Australia. From this lesson we have learnt to be more focused in our intentions; creating specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timebound (SMART) goals that can be effectively implemented and monitored. In addition, greater involvement from a wider spread of MCM employees will enhance the odds of overcoming unexpected obstacles. We are confident that these learnings which enhanced a collaborative and inclusive approach will guarantee our second and enhanced Innovate RAP meets its deliverables within the specified timelines. Many actions and deliverables within our enhanced Innovate RAP have commenced including:

- Reconciliation Event 2019.
- Cultural Awareness Education commenced mid-2019 and is ongoing.
- An increasing focus on the needs of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people as demonstrated in our day to day work.
- A clear increase in engagement with MCM services by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.

MCM has traditionally given Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples priority when accessing services. More recently MCM people are placing cultural learnings as a priority focus area. Our people are encouraged and expected to have open and honest discussions around improving our capabilities, skills, awareness and education in the First Nations people's space. Our people are continuously prompted to self-reflect and create a welcoming, culturally-safe space for First Nations people as colleagues and clients. The passion and desire to work with First Nations people has advanced the organisational commitment toward capability building, awareness raising and continuous quality improvement of our culturally safe best practices.

Historically, cultural awareness education has improved practitioner's knowledge of the treatment of First Nation's people and the detrimental effects of colonisation. Consultations held by MCM's Cultural Advisor with Victorian Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples and the organisation's operational leaders has evidenced that best practice frameworks, strategies, tools, resources and relationship development with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) & National Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (NACCOs) is essential for the progress of our vision. The determination to secure quality improvement of MCM's capacity to engage and retain First Nations people, their families and communities with a standard of excellence in cultural safety is an attainable goal in our not too distant future.

Our RAP 2020-2022

1.0 Relationships

Meaningful engagement with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, organisations, communities and groups is a key focus of our work, and is essential to our aim to disrupt historical disadvantage and demonstrate respect. This includes building our employees' and organisational capacity for effective engagement and the development of mutually beneficial relationships.

To create a fair and just community where people have equal access to opportunities and resources.

Action:

- 1.1 Reconciliation Action Group together with MCM staff from all divisions will host 3 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community events each year.

Deliverable:

The three cultural events per year will:

- Be held in consultation with the Victorian Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.
- Be based around the current themes for that year's celebrations.

- Demonstrate respect and commitment to maintaining the integrity of cultural protocols whilst raising awareness of First Nation's peoples culture.
- Attract an equitable mix of diverse cultural groups to the events.
- Be subject to post event evaluations, inclusive of:
 - Workshops to identify areas of success and for improvement.
 - Testimonies from First Nations people and their community leaders.
 - Surveys to gauge the participants' experience with the view to making continual improvement.

Intended outcomes:

- Build on the success of our National Reconciliation event in 2019 to further enhance community relationships.
- First Nations People demonstrate that they are engaged, and experience a welcoming and safe space at MCM, with a sense of ownership and cultural pride in the content and its delivery.
- Relationships between MCM employees, our partners, the sector and r First Nations people are developing, valued and nurtured.
- Awareness will be raised. Barriers and perceptions will be altered.





Timeline: Annually in May, July and August

National Reconciliation Week

27th May - 3rd June

NAIDOC Week

6th July - 12th July

National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

4th August

Responsibility - RAP Committee and volunteers
across all MCM Divisions

Action:

- 1.2** MCM will engage the expertise of the Reconciliation Action Group to encourage and support the development of an MCM Victorian Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples reference group

Deliverable:

Development of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Reference Group

- Improve on our relationships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community members.
- Strengthen our relationships with key National and State Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations.
- Promote the value of participating in the Reference Group.

Intended Outcomes:

The Reference Group will:

- Engage the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community members and leaders.
- Inspire cultural integrity. Be the recognised resource to endorse and maintain ethical standards in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultural safety at MCM.
- Lead and brainstorm innovative ideas and initiatives.
- Market, coordinate and support the delivery of the annual events.
- Engage potential external partnerships.

Timeline: ongoing

Responsibility: Reconciliation Action Group and all employees at MCM

2.0 Respect

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, cultures, histories and rights are at the heart of everything that MCM strives for in the First Nations people space, acknowledging and valuing First Nations people and the unique status as members of the oldest surviving culture on the planet, the ancient knowledge holders and spiritual wisdom carriers. We acknowledge the dispossession, pain, loss and grief, we can only walk with and support your chosen path, journey, dreams or aspirations. We welcome the opportunity to build on our existing dedicated services to First Nations people. MCM has an organisational philosophy of building respect and understanding through education, relationships and partnerships that assists in addressing racism, ignorance and the systemic exclusionary policies and practices. This contributes to developing inter-cultural understanding and building inclusive societies.

We will continue to build MCM's organisational cultural safety and security, bringing together our diverse insights to create solutions for those with complex needs. In doing so, we recognise and address multiple, intersecting issues and life conditions to make it as easy as possible for people to reach us, ie we minimise barriers to entry.

Action:

2.1 Cultural Awareness Education

Deliverable:

MCM has progressed its consultations with First Nations People, employees and RAG members, and has developed and commenced delivery of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness workshops. Awareness education will continue with all new recruits at MCM encouraged to register and participate in the Cultural Awareness workshops following the MCM Induction. MCM will ensure that the development and delivery of cultural awareness education are led by a cultural knowledge holder with experience in working with a range of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people and communities, to ensure accurate practice wisdom.

Intended outcomes:

- Improved confidence of our staff and enhanced understanding around First Nations people and their needs.
- Culturally competent engagement and support of First Nations people.





Timeline: Delivery to be ongoing and continuous

Development stage completed by:

May 2019

Delivery commenced:

June 2019

Action:

2.2 MCM will research, consult and gather evidence to develop a Cultural Safety Policy

Reconciliation Action Group will:

- Consult with First Nations Community.
- Conduct internal consultation strategy to gather input and critique.
- Develop an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Policy.
- Table draft for key First Nations community members for validation.
- Table for Executive consideration and final endorsement.
- Disseminate the Policy requirements through MCMs communication channels.
- Schedule a review every 2 years.

Intended Outcomes:

- The Policy will guide MCM toward developing strategies, practices and workplace cultures that address unconscious bias, discrimination and racism.
- The Policy will engage, retain and succession plan prospective Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees; including flexibility for management to consideration additional compassionate leave for “sorry business”.
- The Policy will be a live document and is the first phase of a continuous quality improvement approach and enhance our vision of culturally safe environments, services and workplaces.
- Awareness of the Policy requirements will be included and promoted during cultural awareness education sessions.
- MCM will demonstrate continuous improvement by utilising the cultural competence continuum model reviewing policy and adopting tools to reflect new practice.
- MCM will implement internal reforms to leadership accountabilities, systems, strategies, new policies, processes and procedures for delivering services to secure the integrity of the Cultural Safety Policy.
- MCM will demonstrate that cultural safety is reflected in individual practice and throughout MCM service entry points.
- Cultural spaces will be designed either by service recipients, employees and community members during our 3 yearly events at the event sites.

- Resources for the cultural spaces will be sourced from authentic First Nations people's organisations.
- MCM employees will create an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe where there is zero tolerance for assault and challenge or denial of identity; where there is a sense of shared respect, shared meaning and shared knowledge and an experience of learning together.
- Everyone at MCM welcomes the challenges that sits with the confronting nature of self-reflection which in turn drives progress toward cultural safety, requiring people to:
 - Reflect on one's own culture, attitudes, values & beliefs about 'others'.
 - Develop clear, values-free, open and respectful communications.
 - Develop trusting relationships.
 - Recognise and avoid stereotypical barriers.
 - Being prepared to engage with others in a two-way dialogue where knowledge is shared.
 - Understand the influence of culture shock.



Timeline: ongoing

Responsibility: Reconciliation Action Group



3.0 Opportunities

MCM's Strategic Plan commits to ensuring that our employee profile reflects the diversity of our clients. MCM aims to be an employer of choice for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people. We commit to creating a culturally safe and supportive workplace for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander staff, at all levels and in variety of roles across MCM. Our vision being to increase the number of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander staff and volunteers at MCM as this will improve and enrich the design and delivery of our services. The employment and professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at MCM will contribute to creating a welcoming place for clients, building inter-cultural relationships and facilitating better engagement and partnerships with community organisations and services.

MCM will invest in our staff to do their best work through the right training, technology and work practices and ensuring the safest possible workplace.

Action:

- 3.1** Develop the framework, explore partnerships and infrastructure required to secure our vision of creating an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Trainee Program

Deliverable:

MCM aims to improve our representation of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people in our work place. We will develop the framework, model and partnerships that will in the future attract Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander young people to join MCM. The vision is that MCM will develop a culturally safe traineeship program that works in partnership with the corporate sector, philanthropy and the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Intended outcomes:

- MCM will progress towards developing the framework for an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander traineeship program, including:
 - Community consultations.
 - Organisational consultations.
 - Research future partnerships and funding options.
 - Commence the development of a Traineeship Policy.

Timeline: identification of a traineeship framework by the conclusion of this current RAP - ie end 2022

Responsibility: Reconciliation Action Group

4.0 Relationships

Meaningful engagement with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, organisations, communities and groups is a key focus of our work, this includes building staff capability and organisational capacity for effective engagement and the development of mutually beneficial relationships.

Enhance our connectedness to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations, communities and groups. This includes building staff capability and organisational capacity for effective engagement and the development of mutually beneficial relationships and cultural practices.

Action:

4.1 Circle Time in Cradle to Kinder & beyond

Deliverable:

Cradle to Kinder & Early Childhood Teams will enhance the partnership with VACCA incorporating the gathering of cultural practice knowledge and implementing delivery of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander through early childhood friendly yarning, gathering & talking circle. This partnership with VACCA and Early Childhood Practitioners will ensure endorsement and practice wisdom for the authentic

delivery of the model and to build positive relationships with the leaders in First Nation's early childhood care space. The model and cultural practices will be implemented through several sites in the North West Metropolitan Regions of Victoria.

Intended outcomes:

- MCM will permit and encourage:
 - Enhanced cultural learning practices for our people.
 - The weaving of our children's stories.
 - The learnings around culturally diverse world views.
 - The contribution toward the knowledge development of each child.
 - The focus of bringing the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander perspective, culture & history into the everyday curriculum.

Timeline: To enhance practice development – implementation in January 2020 and ongoing.

Responsibility: Early Childhood Team





Action:

- 4.2 Implement “Tjungu Kulini” (Together we Learn)
Team Development Experiences

Deliverable:

Facilitated meetings to be conducted throughout the organisation with teams in which participants build on existing knowledge and are provided with specialist information relevant to their specific discipline and client needs.

Intended outcomes:

- Participants gain a greater understanding of protocols and yarning circles.
- Enhanced confidence in connecting with local community.
- Further strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled /Organisations.
- Experience and access culturally safe tools and resources.

Timeline: commence during 2020 and ongoing

Responsibility: Line Managers to coordinate via the Cultural Adviser



5.0 Tracking progress and reporting

Action:

- 5.1 Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia

Deliverable:

- Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.
- Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer.
- Develop and implement systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.

Timeline: Ongoing

Action:

- 5.2 Report RAP aspirations, achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally

Deliverable:

- Prepare a report on our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings and empower our First Nations People to share their knowledge.

- Disseminate through MCM internal communications:
 - Talking Points
 - Mission Edition
 - PQS Newsletter

Timeline: Ongoing

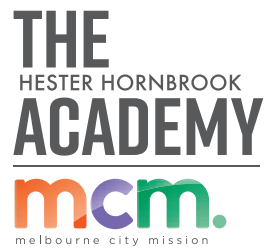
Action:

- 5.3 Review, refresh and update RAP

Deliverable:

- Reconciliation Action Group to meet by-monthly to monitor, progress and drive RAP deliverables.
- Review, refresh and update RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.
- Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement.
- Ensure that RAP actions and deliverables are placed as an agenda item for reflection and review of progress.





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This version of the MCM RAP is an abridged version of the full Agreement.