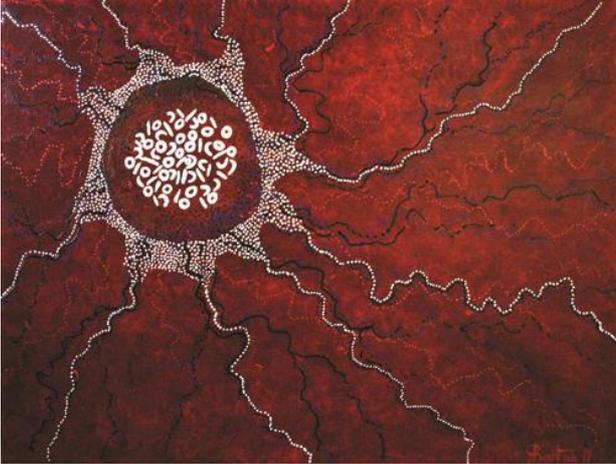


# Reconciliation Action Plan Report

2014-2015

## Acknowledgement



'We Walk Together' by Robert Barton, was commissioned by UnitingCare Queensland to celebrate the launch of our Reconciliation Action Plan. It details the many different paths that have been taken on UnitingCare Queensland's reconciliation journey. The dotted features of blue, green and white lines contrasted against the deep red ochre background symbolises the complex weave of people, stories and histories coming together through the shared vision of reconciliation.

## Our Vision for Reconciliation

To be culturally responsible and committed to social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We will be unified, positive and healthy.



## Our Reconciliation Journey Continues

UnitingCare Queensland has made significant progress in 2014-2015 toward implementing the organisation's second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP II) which was launched in May 2014. The organisation's support for reconciliation embodies UnitingCare Queensland's mission to reach out to people in need, speak out for fairness and justice and care with compassion, innovation and wisdom. RAP II builds on the foundations laid down in the first RAP which saw the organisation improve cultural understanding, knowledge and relationships. By understanding more about reconciliation and how influence is used to promote positive change the second "Innovate RAP" was developed with a view to encouraging thought and action within the organisation that will continue making a difference.

UnitingCare Queensland's RAP is driven through the Advisory Group on Reconciliation (AGR) which meets three times a year and comprises 13 members, the majority of whom are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The AGR continues to be an enthusiastic forum to drive the implementation of the RAP. In addition to developing new ideas, problem solving and giving their time to come together, AGR members are strong and effective champions for the RAP. The AGR is well supported by the Human Resources Working Group and Marketing and Communications Working Group. Service groups have also established mechanisms to support the implementation of the RAP and engage and consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff such as RAP champions, staff networks and Reconciliation Action Groups. The achievements that follow are a reflection of the hard work and dedication of these groups and all executives, managers and staff who continue to support UnitingCare Queensland's reconciliation journey.

2014-2015 saw UnitingCare Queensland increase the services it delivers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, notably through the creation of a fourth service group, ARRCs, which delivers aged care and community services in the Northern Territory. In North Queensland Blue Care Indigenous Services expanded the specialist services offered with the opening of the Cape York Child and Family Centre. Based in Cooktown, this innovative service comprises 10 self-contained family homes designed to support Indigenous families who are at risk of breakdown.

### Recognise Campaign

This year UnitingCare Queensland became an organisational partner in the Recognise Campaign which aims to achieve recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's Constitution. Supporting the campaign is an important step in reconciling Australia's past. It's the right thing to do. UnitingCare Queensland launched Recognise across the organisation in Brisbane, Cairns and the Sunshine Coast on Wednesday 29 October, 2014.

UnitingCare Queensland supports removing discrimination from Australia's Constitution and recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our nation's most important document. Australia's Constitution helps to define our national identity, our values and our beliefs. It clearly states who we are and helps create a sense of identity and belonging. As part of UnitingCare Queensland's commitment to the national Recognise Campaign and in the spirit of building a nation where everyone's story counts, staff from across the organisation shared their 'story of belonging'. Staff shared stories explaining what it means to be recognised and to belong.

### National Reconciliation Week 2015

On 28 May 2015, during National Reconciliation Week, UnitingCare Queensland held an event at Kuril dhagun within the State Library precinct. Guest speaker Dr Jackie Huggins, Indigenous Australian, Recognise campaign ambassador, author, historian and Aboriginal rights activist, spoke about the importance of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's Constitution.



More than 80 staff attended the event and each service group presented a summary of the work they have been doing to “change it up” on their journey of Reconciliation. Danny Doyle, a traditional custodian and descendant of the Yuggerable speaking peoples of Brisbane provided a Welcome to Country and Indigenous performing artist, Chris Tamwoy entertained with his extraordinary talents on the guitar. Staff ‘stories of belonging’ were also on display.

### **2015 Queensland Reconciliation Awards**

UnitingCare Queensland’s Blue Care Hollingsworth Elders Village in Cairns was highly commended in the 2015 Queensland Reconciliation Awards. The Queensland Government Awards recognise organisations and initiatives advancing reconciliation in Queensland. The dedicated staff of Hollingsworth Elders Village provide a welcoming and caring environment for its residents, many of whom are from Cape York and surrounding communities. The Village provides a culturally-appropriate home for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and staff work hard to strengthen community relations and cultural awareness. This includes taking on local students for practical placements during their aged care training.

UnitingCare Community’s Gold Coast Inclusion Support Agency was also nominated for its Journey of Discovery. The program supports and challenges early childhood educators to a better understanding of reconciliation.

### **NAIDOC Week 2014**

UnitingCare Queensland actively encourages staff to attend NAIDOC activities and many services participate in local NAIDOC activities. The Hollingsworth Elders Village of Blue Care Indigenous Services took part in the NAIDOC March and Elders tent in Cairns. UnitingCare Health hospitals held events to strengthen relationships with local Indigenous communities and staff cultural awareness. UnitingCare Community staff participated in events in Logan, Cherbourg, Bundaberg, Gladstone, and Hervey Bay and its child care centres celebrated NAIDOC Week with their children and their families.

Staff at UnitingCare Community’s child care centres spent time with children to promote openness and acceptance. Staff at the Illoura child care centre spent time with the children looking at pictures and discussing how times have changed with regard to their living conditions, clothing and lifestyles. Staff bought in Aboriginal artefacts for the children to look at, and the children made and painted their own boomerangs and learnt how these were used in the past. Some of the children also attended the local NAIDOC march and talked about it during a show and tell session. At the Forest Lake child care centre, children learnt about Indigenous history and dreamtime stories. Children and staff explored Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural similarities and differences. At the Toombul Early Childhood Centre, staff worked with the children to make Aboriginal flags and the children were taught about what NAIDOC stands for and when NAIDOC Week is held each year.

UnitingCare Queensland had a strong presence at the Musgrave Park Family Fun Day incorporating an Elders area, an activity for children, a water bottle give-away, and a service fact sheet. The Elders area was particularly successful and the day focussed on family and fun.

### **Cultural Capability Checklist**

The Cultural Capability Checklist developed during UnitingCare Queensland’s first RAP is being implemented in all service groups. Service groups are using the tool to guide their cultural capability planning. Cultural capability extends across everything the organisation does, including workforce strategies and management, the development of partnerships, service design and delivery and the incorporation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into the planning and design of buildings.



The Sunshine Coast Private Hospital hosted a morning tea on 29 May 2015 to celebrate National Reconciliation Week. The event featured a display of Australia's first and only Aboriginal outrigger canoe. Painted by the local Nandjimidji Aboriginal Art Group, the 40 foot long canoe symbolises the connection between the sea life and river creatures and the local Indigenous people and how they work together as one. The hospital was honoured to host two of the artists at the morning tea.

During National Reconciliation Week staff of the St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital were invited to decorate a boomerang. These are now on display outside Little Birdee Café in the hospital. A rare headdress was also displayed at the hospital.

Each of UnitingCare Queensland's four hospitals now has a set of Aboriginal totems at their entrance. This symbolises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are welcome – as patients, visitors and staff.

### **Workforce Strategies**

UnitingCare Queensland's workforce provides strength to the organisation and through effective workforce strategies we aim to attract, support and develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. In early 2015, UnitingCare Health appointed its first Indigenous Liaison Officer to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and establish connections with external stakeholders. The role will also facilitate appropriate cultural events, build relationships with local Indigenous communities and provide guidance on the UnitingCare Health Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

### **Building Strong Relationships**

UnitingCare Queensland service groups have developed strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers and community groups to inform service planning. For example, UnitingCare Community has developed partnerships with the Wiyu Laiyu Garinga Yandina working group of non-profit agencies in Brisbane; and collaboration is occurring with local family support and women's services through practice and resource sharing in Ipswich, Bamaga, Mackay, Gladstone and Emerald.

UnitingCare Community's Family Relationship Centre is proud to be part of the Logan City of Choice Initiative that is building positive relationships between the diverse cultural groups in the Logan area. The area was originally inhabited by the Yugambah and the Jaggera groups and is home to many families including, Aboriginal, Pacifica, Maori, African, Islam, and European. The establishment of the Family Relationship Centre Logan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander Consultative Group aims to bring community leaders and elders together to share information, inspiration and innovation about the services delivered to families, especially those affected by family break-down, separation and divorce. In December 2014 the consultative group held a celebration with stakeholders and friends.

## **Continuing Our Journey into 2015-2016**

UnitingCare Queensland, through the RAP and services provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, is a more culturally aware organisation. The journey towards reconciliation is one that the whole organisation embraces and continues to support. The RAP is the organisation's public commitment to action through developing relationships, showing respect and increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.