



Reconciliation Action Plan: Reflect

January 2025-December 2025





Acknowledgement

We value the diversity and strength of our people and communities. Bass Coast Health acknowledges the Bunurong People and the Traditional Custodians; their Elders past and present and the spirit of their ancestors, of the land on which we live, work and learn. We commit to providing a culturally safe environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including families and children. We also commit to reconciliation and engaging respectfully with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples in our community.



About the Artist



Aunty Patrice Mahoney OAM is a proud mother of five children and one granddaughter. Her connections to family and place reflect her multicultural connections from the Anaiwan Nation (NSW), Malta, France, Ireland and England. She grew up in Armidale (NSW) and then moved to Victoria—first to Lakes Entrance (Gunaikurnai Country), and then to the Bass Coast region (Bunurong Country), where she has lived for over 20 years.

Patrice is a powerful advocate for Aboriginal people and their cultures, and a talented, prolific artist who believes art and education are the basis of identity, self-determination and leadership. She holds a Graduate Diploma (Teaching), Bachelor of Arts (Media Art and Design), Advanced Diploma (Business Management) and is currently undertaking a Master of Fine Art at Monash University. She is profoundly influenced by a sense of space, place, the environment, visual art and culture. She takes great inspiration from the natural environment where she lives.



About the Artwork

With a deep love for the Bunurong coast and its inspirational beaches, the Southern Ocean, the bays and the waterways, and the dense and diversely rich forests and woodland, we call this place today, Bass Coast. The Bunurong coast has powerful seasonal energy that gives her the moody approach to life we love or grow to love deeply as she challenges our emotionally familiar everyday expectations and develops an appreciation for change. These works, these panels of paintings, represent the land, family, and our relationships to our culture and the environment. They show how we live within these spiritual and respectful relationships and help us grow to know the lore that holds us accountable.

This artwork is part of a six-panel piece commissioned for the first stage of the Wonthaggi Hospital Expansion, which opened in 2022.

OUR PLACES, OUR PEOPLE

Our Places, Our People - The dunes and the waves became the vaults of knowledge, history, and heritage. They hold the hunting grounds, gathering places, and stories once lost to the colonising sands of the settlements we call Bass Coast today. The Bunurong held gatherings that brought together cultural days, trade, and festivals, and as the sands moved over the stories, they sat in wait for the people to come home and uncover the stories and events.

Today, we can learn and grow like the dunes of the past; we have the chance to talk the truth and share stories of colonising sands. These sands, dunes and living culture that we can all hear today are being told by the Bunurong. The townships and communities are represented along our coastline with a loud song or a quiet whisper. This work represents those spoken words to remind us we are all part of the living and breathing Bunurong coast. We're all part of the storytelling happening today. Let's all lean into gathering, sharing the history and listening to each other. We have so many gathering places (towns), and yet we can always learn something new from the other; we can know of ones once where, or by inspiration, passion, and innovation, create a new one, one that is founded from grace and hope, one that is supported by the Community Elders and Respected People, broader members of the community that also have the desire to create an inclusive pathway to new knowledge, songs and stories.

We have space to grow, be inspired, and, importantly, know that we have no limits to what we can do. We, as a collective, can all care for Country.



A Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Bass Coast Health to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Bass Coast Health joins a network of more than 3,000 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 Bass Coast Health 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 Bass Coast Health, 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



A Message from our CEO



It is my pleasure to present to you Bass Coast Health's Reconciliation Action Plan, which details our commitment to sincere reconciliation with our First Nations community and to providing culturally safe care.

I would like to acknowledge the Bunurong People as the Traditional Custodians, their Elders past and present and the spirit of their ancestors, of the land on which we live, work and learn.

For many years, Bass Coast Health has been walking alongside our First Nations community on a journey of reconciliation. We've supported in the culturally significant events of Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week, recognised the importance of Close

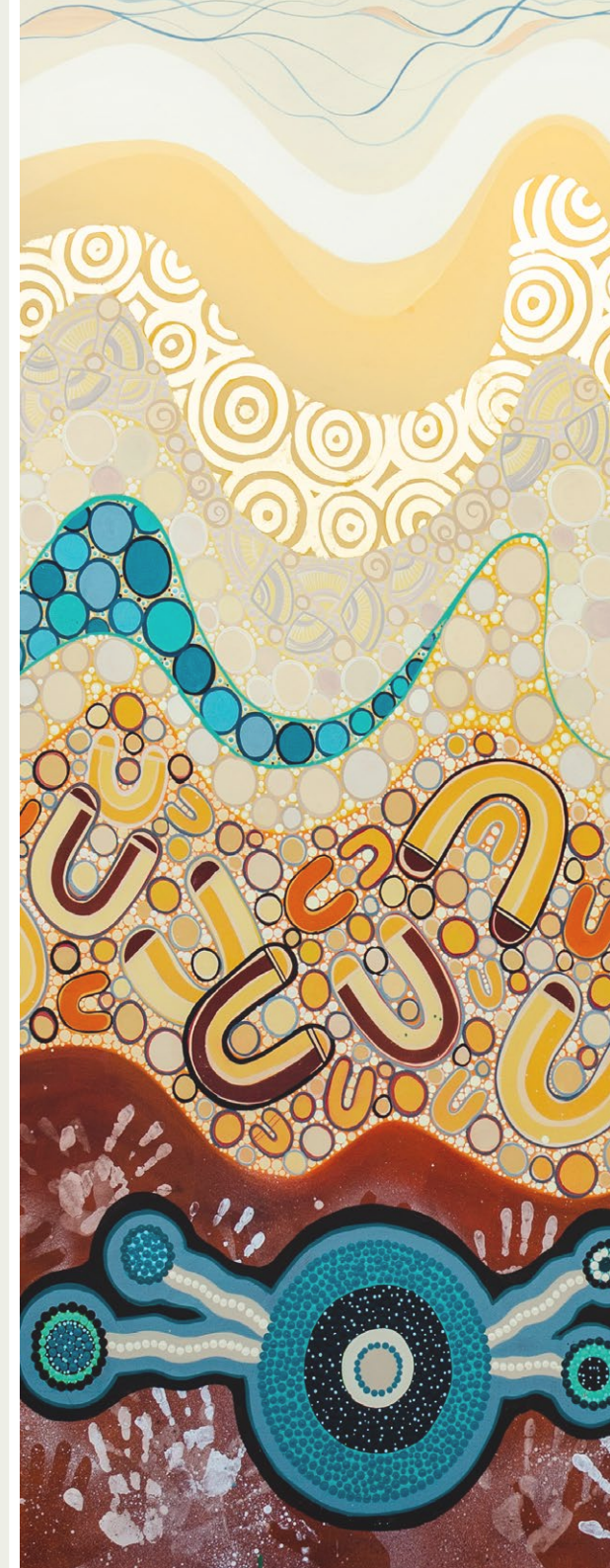
the Gap Day, and acknowledged our First Peoples when designing and operating our healthcare facilities. As examples of creating culturally safe and welcoming places, two wards at Wonthaggi Hospital bear Indigenous names, Indigenous artwork proudly hangs in public places at the hospital, and the new Phillip Island Community Hospital at Cowes to open this year will feature a First Nations artwork at the front entrance.

To enhance the level of care we provide, we have a dedicated Aboriginal Health team of an Aboriginal Clinical Nurse Consultant, Aboriginal Health Nurse and an Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer, who are supported by our Elder-in-Residence.

We provide our services under the guidance of our First Peoples Advisory Committee, which determines community needs and interests, and informs culturally responsive healthcare.

This plan demonstrates our future aspirations to enhancing the health of our First Nations People, knowing that good health is vital to them enjoying their lives to the fullest. We look forward to sharing the journey towards reconciliation together.

Bass Coast Health Interim CEO,
Professor Simone Alexander



Our Business

Bass Coast Health (BCH) is the major public healthcare provider within the Bass Coast Shire. It is an integrated sub-regional health service providing Emergency services as well as Acute Medical and Surgical, Sub-Acute and Residential inpatient beds along with an extensive array of Community and Primary Care services. Services are provided from a number of sites including Wonthaggi, San Remo and Cowes.

Although based in the Bass Coast Shire, the services are accessed by people residing in neighbouring shires (South Gippsland and Cardinia) and by the large numbers of visitors and tourists to the area. The service is a major employer in the region, employing over 1000 staff including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members. There are three known staff who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People. The

main site is located in Wonthaggi, with other sites at Cowes and San Remo, Victoria Australia. The health service also provides outreach services and has a presence in the smaller townships across the Bass Coast Community. The service is committed to working in partnership with our consumers, community, and with other health services and all levels of government to provide high quality and safe care.



WHE Community Open Day. Smoking Ceremony. Josh West, Bunurong Land Council

Our RAP

BCH is committed to progressing our reconciliation journey to recognise, respect and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We want to deliver culturally respectful, responsive and safe services and work environments. We are in the early stages of our reconciliation journey. The CEO is the organisation's RAP champion. Equity is one of BCH's organisational values and also one of Reconciliation Australia's five dimensions of Reconciliation (State of Reconciliation 2021). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be able to participate equally in a range of life opportunities and the unique

rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be recognised and upheld. We are committed as an organisation to strengthening our focus on closing the gap. We have been actively building positive two-way relationships built on trust and respect, promoting and enhancing education about First Peoples' history and culture, acknowledging the past history of our country through education and understanding through provision of comprehensive staff cultural training. These strategies are key dimensions to reconciliation as noted in the State of Reconciliation 2021 report that our RAP will guide us to work towards.



Bridge Walk for Reconciliation.

OUR COMMUNITY

In the 2021 census, 465 people or 1.1 % of the Bass Coast Shire population identified as being Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. As a popular tourist destination, the population increases dramatically during holiday periods. Bass Coast Health provides services to residents of neighbouring Shires and the numerous visitors to the region.

OUR RAP

Bass Coast Health's inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) will shape our initiatives and actions over the next twelve months towards reconciliation and providing culturally accessible, responsive and safe health services. We wish to improve the accessibility of our services, develop employment opportunities and develop the capacity of staff to provide culturally safe services.

RAP WORKING GROUP

Implementation of the RAP will be led by the RAP Working Group (RWG) members comprising:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Elder in Residence (FPAC Chair)
- Aboriginal Clinical Nurse Consultant



- Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer
- Director of Partnerships and Engagement
- Operations Directors
- Manager People and Culture
- Manager Community Relations
- Manager Clinical Nurse Consultants
- Manager Learning and Development
- Nurse Unit Manager Emergency Department
- Manager Dental

FIRST PEOPLES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The FPAC will provide strategic direction to the RAP working group. The FPAC Chair will regularly attend the RWG. Regular progress reports will be provided to the Board, and will be reported to the community in the annual consumer publication, the Bass Coast Health Quality Account.

OUR PROGRESS

The actions outlined in this plan will build on initiatives undertaken over the past three years. This has included: consulting with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members; participating in the Bass Coast Reconciliation Network with other leading employers, the Bunurong



First Peoples Advisory Committee 2025

Land Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members; recognising and participating in Sorry Day, a healing event for community following the referendum vote outcome, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC events; contributing to welcoming environments with flags, Wominjeka welcome signs at main entrances, art works and raising staff awareness via various education opportunities.

A Welcome to Country formed a major part of the opening of the Phillip Island Health Hub, Wonthaggi Hospital Expansion and NAIDOC week.

Bass Coast Health contributed to financing a short film to highlight the Traditional Custodians and their connection to Country. This film is shown to all new employees to highlight the Bunurong People as Traditional Custodians and owners of the lands on which we work.

This RAP is an ongoing commitment to progress reconciliation at Bass Coast Health, to create respectful and safe environments and services for patients / clients, visitors and staff. We are committed to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to progress the actions outlined.

Our Partnerships and Current Activities

The contributions and engagement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members is highly valued, and has included Welcome to Country ceremonies; a cleansing for our new buildings at Phillip Island and Wonthaggi; a blessing for our new maternity wards; consulting with community when undertaking building works, commissioned art work; education, and consultation and feedback to gain a greater understanding of culture, experiences and opportunities.

In 2019 we were proud to join the Bass Coast Reconciliation Network, an initiative to progress reconciliation, with a partnership developed between four major employers – Bass Coast Health, Bass Coast Shire Council, Phillip Island Nature Parks, Westernport Water, and the Bunurong Land Council, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and the Bass Coast South Gippsland Reconciliation Group. This group has planned, promoted and delivered events to recognise Sorry Day and celebrate National

Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week and aims to work together to promote reconciliation.

More recently, an Elder in Residence, an Aboriginal Clinical Nurse Consultant and an Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer have joined the team at BCH. With a range of Gippsland partners, we have established the First Nations Health Yarn and Plan Group to bring together key stakeholders working together to map services, advocate for additional services, share resources, plan and work together on key priorities. We are working closely with a community led First Nations Steering Committee to support a Bass Coast Gathering Place initiative which has recently been awarded an infrastructure grant to commence the process of engagement and business case for a future gathering place in the Bass Coast community. The First Peoples Advisory Committee and community Elders are engaged in consultation for Stage 2 of the Wonthaggi Hospital build and have contributed to the planning of the new Phillip Island Community Hospital.

Our community partnerships are continuing to develop and we look forward to listening and learning to develop deeper understanding and knowledge.



BCH staff at Truth Telling Commemorating Tunnerminnerwait and Maulboyheenner



The Oaks Beach, Bunurong Coast



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Continue to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders within our local area.	January 2025	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	January 2025	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2025	Manager Community Relations
	RWG members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May–3 June 2025	Manager Community Relations



	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May–3 June 2025	Manager Community Relations
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Continue to communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	January 2025	CEO
	Continue to identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	January 2025	Manager Community Relations
	Continue to identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	January 2025	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	May 2025	Director of People and Culture
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	May 2025	Director of People and Culture





Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case to increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	September 2025	Manager Learning and Development
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	September 2025	Manager Learning and Development
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Continue to develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisations operational area.	August 2025	Elder in Residence
	Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	February 2025	Elder in Residence



7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Continue to raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2025	Manager Community Relations
	Continue to introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2025	Manager Community Relations
	RWG to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2025	Director of Partnerships and Engagement




Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. 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 2025	Director of People and Culture
	Continue to build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing levels to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	October 2025	Director of People and Culture
	Continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to attend further education opportunities.	October 2025	Director of People and Culture
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lead organisations.	October 2025	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
	Investigate First Peoples supply resources.	October 2025	Director of Partnerships and Engagement





Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Continue to support the First Peoples Advisory Committee with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation as part of the Governance of the RWG	March 2025	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
	Continue to support and maintain the RWG to govern implementation	March 2025	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
	Continue to ensure the Terms of Reference for the RWG encompasses self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	March 2025	Elder in Residence
	Ensure representation from key BCH Departments are engaged in the RWG	March 2025	Director of Partnerships and Engagement



11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July 2025	CEO
	Continue to engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments	July 2025	CEO
	Continue to appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	July 2025	CEO
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	July 2025	Director of Partnerships and Engagement





12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify primary and secondary contact details are up to date with Reconciliation Australia.	June annually	Manager Community Relations
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August annually	Manager Community Relations
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia	30 September annually	Manager Community Relations
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP	October 2025	Manager Community Relations





RAP Enquiries

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General Enquiries

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