

*It's about you. Always!*  
**Communities@Work**



**Reconciliation**  
ACTION PLAN  
INNOVATE RAP

**Innovate**

Reconciliation  
Action Plan  
2015 -2017





*It's about the people*  
**Communities@Work**

Communities@Work Richardson Child Care & Education  
Centre Educator Amy Minchin

## Our Vision for Reconciliation

Communities@Work recognises the special place that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold within Australia and acknowledges their role as Australia's First People of the land we share today. Communities@Work believes in working towards building stronger partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in moving to a place of equity, recognition and mutual respect for all Australians.

Communities@Work is committed to improving the quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to continue along the journey towards reconciliation within Australia. Communities@Work promotes the recognition of a shared responsibility of family, community, business and government. Communities@Work is committed to working collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through honest and meaningful dialogue. Communities@Work wishes to acknowledge the unique situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to respect their culture's diversity.

Communities@Work's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) sets out how we will continue our reconciliation journey by:

- ⦿ listening to, learning from and consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- ⦿ building and maintaining mutually respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, families and communities
- ⦿ promoting reconciliation and raising awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture with Communities@Work's staff, service users, volunteers, partner organisations and wider stakeholders
- ⦿ delivering high quality services that recognise and build on the strengths and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- ⦿ ensuring Communities@Work's programs and services are accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- ⦿ increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Communities@Work
- ⦿ recognising and acknowledging the histories, cultural heritages and identities of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- ⦿ cultivating relationships in a respectful, meaningful and authentic way
- ⦿ working collaboratively with our stakeholders and clients to promote inclusion, capacity and resilience
- ⦿ proactively supporting and promoting greater health and well-being for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- ⦿ seeking to influence positive change and decision making through consultation
- ⦿ demonstrating a strong commitment to reconciliation throughout Communities@Work

In summary, Communities@Work will achieve its RAP objectives by embedding reconciliation throughout the organisation.

Communities@Work believes in working towards building **stronger partnerships** with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in moving to a place of **equity, recognition and mutual respect** for all Australians.

## Vision, Mission and Values

### Our Vision

A resilient and socially inclusive community that cares for the well-being of all.

### Our Mission

To deliver quality community services of social value and practical benefit.

### Our Values

- ⊙ **Trust, Integrity and Transparency:**  
We earn the confidence of the community by embedding these qualities throughout Communities@Work.
- ⊙ **Respect for All:**  
We respect everyone we deal with, care about everyone in the community and value difference and diversity.
- ⊙ **Flexibility and Responsiveness:**  
We are adaptive and agile in pursuing the vision of Communities@Work, with a proactive approach to change and progress.
- ⊙ **Quality and Innovation:**  
We are committed to excellent service delivery, underpinned by continuous improvement and innovation.
- ⊙ **Affordability and Sustainability:**  
We ensure our services are relevant and appropriate as we build our capacity for a sustainable future.

## Who We Are

Communities@Work provides a broad suite of quality community programs of social value and practical benefit.

Established and developed in Canberra, we are a local organisation that understands local needs. Our innovative and progressive culture seeks to respond to changing community needs in a thoughtful and constructive manner.

Communities@Work adopts a client-centred approach to the development and delivery of services to meet identified client needs in four key program areas: Children's Services, Special Program Areas, Social Programs and Lifestyle Services. With nearly 40 years of experience, we provide services across the entire Australian Capital Territory and also serve clients within the Greater Capital Region.

We deliver services to more than 20,000 people annually with a paid workforce nearing 700, 150 self-employed family day care educators and the passionate commitment of close to 300 volunteers. At the time of publishing this RAP, Communities@Work had nine Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employees, one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Volunteer and we supported four Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to obtain qualifications.

While some of our services are provided on a fee-for-service basis or funded through contracts with government, we also deliver a range of charitable programs which rely on strong community support through philanthropic grants, donations and sponsorships. We are a public benevolent institution, endorsed to receive tax deductible donations. We invite others to support our efforts in making a difference to the social fabric of our community.

We value productive partnerships with other organisations and individuals to undertake community projects, strengthen connections between people and ensure a sustainable future.



  
YACHTING  
AUSTRALIA

AQUA  
SPORT

STEARNS

Communities@Work's Buoyed Up Program



you. Always!  
**Work**

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- Trust, Integrity
- Respect for All
- Flexibility and
- Quality and In
- Affordability an

## Our RAP

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) will support Communities@Work's commitment to be an organisation where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children and elderly experience respectful relationships. Communities@Work strives to be an organisation that authentically considers the histories and cultures of Traditional Custodians, and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees experience respect and equity in employment and mutually beneficial opportunities. Through our RAP we promote the development of appropriate and relevant resources that improve cross-cultural awareness and understanding to strengthen engagement and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children and elderly within Communities@Work.



### Communities@Work's RAP Advisory Group

*From left to right*

**Judith McDonnell** Executive Director  
Lifestyle Services

**Rebecca Lester** Manager  
Communities@Work Narrabundah  
Early Childhood Centre

**William Beale** RAP Champion

**Lynne Harwood** Chief Executive Officer

**Lorcan Murphy** Executive Director  
Internal Operations

**Michelle Robertson** General Manager  
Integrated Communications and Marketing

**Sarah Wilcox** Director  
Early Education and Care

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**Communities@Work**



Communities@Work's Isabella Plains Early Childhood Service  
Celebrating NAIDOC Week



## Relationships

Communities@Work's vision is for a resilient and socially inclusive community that cares for the well-being of all. We are committed to building strong and mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to progress our commitment to reconciliation and improve our knowledge and skills so that our services and programs are appropriate and support the needs of both Indigenous and other Australian people.

**Focus area:** Build strong and meaningful relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that provide opportunities to share knowledge and skills.

### Action

1. Innovate by forging a structured and collaborative association with compatible Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander owned organisations to share knowledge and expertise, and to create a platform from which to learn and adopt culturally sensitive best practices.

### Target

- ⊙ Investigate suitable organisations to meet with, develop relationships with and to explore opportunities with.
- ⊙ Draw up a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the terms of the association.
- ⊙ Establish a framework for information, skills and knowledge sharing.

**Responsibility:** CEO, Deputy CEO & relevant Program Directors

**Timeline:** From August 2015

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### Action

2. Strengthen our existing ACT relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations to enhance the accessibility and cultural responsiveness of our programs and services.

### Target

- ⊙ Maintain three existing relationships and contacts with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: leaders and Elders organisations and individuals within the ACT; and develop another two collaborative initiatives.
- ⊙ Consult with current contacts to establish a directory of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and elders, organisations and individuals in the ACT.
- ⊙ Ensure key stakeholders are invited to all relevant Communities@Work events.
- ⊙ Develop and distribute information and materials on Communities@Work programs and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to raise awareness and accessing of Communities@Work programs and services.

**Responsibility:** CEO, Deputy CEO & relevant Program Directors

**Timeline:** From August 2015

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### Action

3. Communities@Work RAP Advisory Group (RAG) will continue to actively monitor RAP development, including implementation of actions, tracking of progress and reporting.

### Target

- ⊙ RAG oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.
- ⊙ Meet at least four times per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.
- ⊙ Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.

**Responsibility:** Communications Manager and RAP Champion

**Timeline:** Quarterly January, April, July & November

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### Action

4. Celebrate National Reconciliation Week by providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and other employees to build relationships.

### Target

- ⊙ Communities@Work to organise at least one internal event each year.
- ⊙ Staff will be supported to attend National Reconciliation Week events.

**Responsibility:** HR Manager

**Timeline:** Annually 27 May to 3 June

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### Action

5. Raise internal and external awareness of the RAP

### Target

- ⊙ RAP to be available on Communities@Work's intranet and Reconciliation Australia's website.
- ⊙ All existing employees and Board members provided with copies of RAP 2015-2017.
- ⊙ RAP to be included in Communities@Work information pack.
- ⊙ RAP to be included in organisation overview/induction for new employees and volunteers.

**Responsibility:** Communication Manager

**Timeline:** August 2015



Paul House giving a Welcome to Country at Celebrate Gungahlin 2015



## Respect

Communities@Work delivers quality community services of social value and practical benefit. We believe that respect and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures will extend the understanding and skills of our staff. This understanding will deepen their connection and enable the provision of culturally respectful and appropriate support. We hope to foster a culture of learning from and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and view reconciliation and cross-cultural learning as a dynamic and continuous process.

**Focus area:** Acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and provide cultural awareness training to all staff.

### Action

1. Communities@Work will engage employees in understanding the protocols around Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies.

### Target

- ⊙ Maintain the protocols around Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies that Communities@Work has developed.
- ⊙ At all significant internal and external events undertake an Acknowledgement of Country.
- ⊙ Identify two events each year where a Welcome to Country is performed by a Traditional Owner.

**Responsibility:** CEO, Executive Directors and relevant Program Directors

**Timeline:** December 2015

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### Action

2. Communities@Work will engage employees in cultural learning to increase understanding and appreciation of different cultural backgrounds in order to lay the foundation for other RAP actions to be achieved.

### Target

- ⊙ Communities@Work will continue to deliver cross-cultural awareness workshops for new employees and employees that have not attended the previous workshops.
- ⊙ Communities@Work to develop full day cross cultural awareness workshops where staff are able to workshop topics that relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culture, history, families and lifestyle.
- ⊙ Communities@Work will provide cultural competencies training to all our child care centres by 2017.

**Responsibility:** RAP Champion and HR Manager

**Timeline:** From August 2015

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### Action

3. Embed and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture across Communities@Work.

### Target

- ⊙ A strong visual presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is evident in all of our facilities including flags, artworks and maps.
- ⊙ Communities@Work to develop and maintain resources across the organisation to support the development of cultural competence and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- ⊙ Communities@Work conducts activities and events that provide an opportunity for the community to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

**Responsibility:** HR Manager

**Timeline:** August 2015

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### Action

4. Provide opportunities for employees to engage with their cultures and communities through commemorative events such as NAIDOC Week

### Target

- ⊙ Communities@Work to organise at least one internal event each year.
- ⊙ Communities@Work will celebrate significant cultural events including National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's day and NAIDOC Week.
- ⊙ Communities@Work's staff will be supported to attend NAIDOC week events.
- ⊙ Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.
- ⊙ Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in local NAIDOC Week events.

**Responsibility:** Relevant Program Directors

**Timeline:** Annually July



Tracks to Reconciliation Gungahlin joint event held by Gungahlin Child and Family Centre, Libraries ACT and Communities@Work



# Opportunities

Communities@Work's capacity to deliver quality services and programs is underpinned by our knowledge of and relationship with the communities we serve. Providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities to contribute to our services is a vital aspect of our business success.

**Focus area:** The expertise, knowledge and perspectives of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people inform our service delivery and development.

### Action

1. Investigate opportunities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and volunteering opportunities.

**Responsibility:** Executive Directors

### Target

- ⊙ Develop strategies to raise awareness of programs and services offered by Communities@Work.
- ⊙ Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and volunteering strategy.
- ⊙ Ensure RAG has the opportunity to provide input to development of policies and procedures.
- ⊙ Investigate and where possible participate in the ASBA (Australian School Based Apprenticeship) traineeships program.
- ⊙ Advertise vacancies in Indigenous media.
- ⊙ Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.
- ⊙ Increase traineeship programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment across all sectors.
  - » **2016** Communities@Work will commence four traineeships across Communities@Work.
  - » **2017** Communities@Work to increase our trainee intake to six across Communities@Work.

**Timeline:** Ongoing

### Action

2. Communities@Work will continue to investigate opportunities to increase supplier diversity within our organisation.

**Responsibility:** Executive Directors

### Target

- ⊙ Review procurement policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
- ⊙ Investigate becoming a member of Supply Nation or partnering with our local Indigenous Chamber of Commerce.
- ⊙ Educate staff about using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
- ⊙ Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business.
- ⊙ Continue to foster our current partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

**Timeline:** August 2015

## Tracking Progress and Reporting

### Action

1. Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the Annual Impact Measurement Report.

**Responsibility:** Communication Manager

### Target

- ⊙ Communities@Work to complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.

**Timeline:** September Annually

### Action

2. RAG to meet quarterly to track progress of RAP and make recommendation or provide guidance on achieving RAP targets.

**Responsibility:** RAG

### Target

- ⊙ RAG to meet at least four times a year to monitor progress.
- ⊙ RAP report to be provided every quarter to Communities@Work's CEO and Board for consideration.

**Timeline:** Quarterly January, May, September, December

## Contact Details

RAP Advisory Group

Phone: (02) 6293 6500

Email: [admin@commsatwork.org](mailto:admin@commsatwork.org)

[www.commsatwork.org](http://www.commsatwork.org)

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2015 Sorry Day Bridge Walk

The acrylic painting used on the cover of Communities@Work's RAP was commissioned from Indigenous artist, Warren Brim and is on display at the Communities@Work's Tuggeranong Community Centre. It reflects a respect for independence and diversity, caring and sharing and the importance of these values for our community's well-being.

Warren's mother, grandparents, aunts and uncles wanted Warren to learn the Aboriginal culture. They taught Warren how to live off the land, what food he could use for medicine and what he could eat by taking him on fishing and hunting trips.

Warren's mother and aunts taught Warren how to paint and painting has become one of his life pleasures. Warren and his art teacher, Anna Eglitis, have produced illustrations for a children's book which depicts European and Aboriginal designs of each letter of the alphabet and explains the details in English and the Djabugay language. This book is called *Creatures of the Rainforest*.

