

Reconciliation Action Plan

Reflect

August 2023 — August 2024



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as first people. They have never ceded sovereignty, and remain strong in their enduring connection to land, water and culture.

Caring for local people since 1979, Mallee Family Care promotes strong, connected and inclusive communities by embedding diversity and equity practices at the centre of everything we do.



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Reconciliation Australia Message

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Mallee Family Care to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Mallee Family Care joins a network of more than 2,500 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 Mallee Family Care 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 Mallee Family Care, 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



Chair and CEO Message

Mallee Family Care is proud to introduce our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This is a significant milestone in our reconciliation journey, for the Board, our staff and the communities we support.

We are dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of all children, families, youth and adults throughout the Mallee region. Our service catchment area spans across north-west Victoria, far-west New South Wales and into South Australia.

These regions have proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and a diverse multicultural population. We recognise and celebrate the unique differences and the individual characteristics of each of these regions.

Building an organisation that reflects the diversity, intersectionality and lived experience of our very distinct community is one of the key goals in our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. Developing and implementing the Reflect RAP is a meaningful avenue for us to work towards this goal, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all of our catchment areas.

According to the 2021 Census, 7,591 people identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the local government areas that Mallee Family Care services. It is crucial that as an organisation, we listen to these diverse voices, learn and collaborate.

Our workforce of 250+ employees are vital in our reconciliation journey. Our Reflect RAP includes a range of initiatives to enhance understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

We would like to acknowledge everyone who has assisted in the development of the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, including members of the RAP Working Group, Reconciliation Australia, First Nations peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and our many community partners.

Mallee Family Care is committed to representing, supporting and advocating for First Nations peoples. Through our work we strive to create an environment where all people feel welcome, valued and heard.

As we continue on our reconciliation journey, we will actively involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure this commitment translates into meaningful actions through the four core pillars of the RAP Framework: Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance.

Mallee Family Care is looking forward to the possibilities that lie ahead as we implement our Reflect RAP, and as we continue to work together towards reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Thank you to everyone who has supported us on our journey so far, and we look forward to creating positive changes together.

Ross Lake OAM
Chair of the Board
Mallee Family Care



Teresa Jayet
Chief Executive Officer
Mallee Family Care



Our Business

Mallee Family Care is a not-for-profit community organisation and has approximately 239 employees with 12 employees identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons.

Mallee Family Care was established in Mildura in 1979 as a regional community welfare service assisting families and individuals and over the years has expanded its service areas and programs to accommodate the growing need of the communities we service. The regions that Mallee Family Care cover have proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and a multicultural diverse population, Mallee Family Care takes into consideration the individual differences of each region and works with the communities to ensure that the programs and services provided are what the community needs and is the best fit for both Mallee Family Care and the community. Mallee Family Care continues to build on, enhance and expand its current programs and services whilst looking for new and innovative ways to respond to our communities' growing needs.

Mallee Family Care has office locations in Mildura, Swan Hill and Kerang in Victoria and Dareton and Wentworth in New South Wales. In addition to Mallee Family Care's permanent offices, Mallee Family Care also provides outreach services to Birchip in Victoria, the Riverland in South Australia and Balranald and Broken Hill in New South Wales. Offering a broad range of programs and support services including family, youth, children, disability, mental health, homelessness, legal, financial, research and education.

Mallee Family Care continues to evolve and be guided by our communities, working on culturally safe innovated ways to strengthen the capacity of Mallee Family Care to develop programs and projects.

Our RAP

Working Group Member

Margrete Hamence
RAP Project Officer

Ange Johnstone
Events Coordinator

Carol Blundy
Team Leader Child and Family Services Southern Mallee

Eimear Flynn
Manager Governance and Compliance

Irene Vehekite
Proud Barkindji woman
Senior Worker Child and Family Services NSW

Sebastian Roda
Child and Family Services Assistant Southern Mallee

Shaina Collins
Proud Kerrupjmara woman from the Gunditjmara Nation
Manager Child and Family Services NSW

Tania Pearce
Community Engagement Worker

Wayne Walsh
Generalist solicitor southern Mallee (resigned 2023)

Kiarah Birthisel
Placement Support Officer (resigned 2023)

Rebecca Cupitt
Family Preservation and Reunification Practitioner (resigned 2023)

RAP Consultant

Andy Charles
Proud Yorta Yorta, Wemba Wemba Man
Executive General Manager Child and Family Services

Corrina Graham
Manger Community Services

Melissa Amos
General Manager Major Projects and Partnerships



“Did You Know Information Session”, 2023

NAIDOC 2023 Female Elder of the Year Aunty Ada Peterson shared her insights, stories and wisdom with MFC staff at our July 2023 “Did You Know” staff information session.



National Reconciliation Week, 2021

MFC staff came together to celebrate First Nations cultures, and to learn more about reconciliation and what that means to members of our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Our RAP

Developing a RAP provides Mallee Family Care with a platform to review our current practices across all services and programs and to understand how we can improve respectfully upon our current practices, support culturally safe awareness and build on our existing connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users, staff, key stakeholders and external organisations.

The Reflect RAP will allow Mallee Family Care to strategically set our reconciliation commitments in line with our business objectives and the five dimensions of reconciliation; race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, historical acceptance and unity. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAP's and reconciliation initiatives.

Mallee Family Care will continue to work with First Nations people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group to implement the RAP actions through internal communication, training, policies, procedures and activities. Mallee Family Care is currently undertaking a cultural awareness self-assessment and will continue to review any changes made during this process with the intention of advancing to the Innovate RAP on our reconciliation journey.

The Mallee Family Care RAP Working Group was formed through an invitation to all Mallee Family Care Staff and currently consists of the CEO championing the RAP internally and 10 working group members, General Manager Major Projects and Partnerships, Events Coordinator, Placement Support Worker, Manager Community Services, Manager Governance and Compliance, Senior Worker Child and Family Services – NSW, RAP Project Officer, Family Preservation and Reunification Practitioner, Team Leader Child and Family Services – NSW, Generalist Solicitor – Swan Hill.

Mallee Family Care's reconciliation journey has included acknowledging and celebrating where appropriate, significant dates. For example, Mallee Family Care has over the last two years celebrated National Reconciliation Week internally across all of our office sites. Local Aboriginal Services were invited to consult and participate in ceremonial Smoking ceremonies, Welcome to

Country and as guest speakers. Additionally Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members were invited to attend the ceremony and luncheons along with staff, however due to COVID the numbers were limited. Mallee Family Care is a member of the local National Reconciliation Week Committee.

Mallee Family Care celebrates and supports NAIDOC Week internally and externally. Internally staff are provided with information regarding the activities being held in their regions, the history of NAIDOC Week and are encouraged to attend external events being held in their region. Mallee Family Care is a member of the local NAIDOC Committee.

Acknowledgement of Country and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are displayed on Mallee Family Care email signatures and websites. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foyer based flags are displayed in the foyer or entrance at each Mallee Family Care site and all Mallee Family Care offices display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander desk flags, in reception areas, meeting rooms, staff areas, conference rooms and staff offices. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flag pins are displayed on Mallee Family Care staff lanyards.

AIATSIS Maps of Indigenous Australia are hung in all Mallee Family Care entrances, conference and meeting rooms and at the beginning of all meetings or events at each Mallee Family Care site there is an Acknowledgment of Country, or we invite an Elder to provide a Welcome to Country.

Mallee Family Care provides mandatory Cultural Awareness training for all staff and leaders. Training is run by the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), a state-wide Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO).



2021 National Reconciliation Week event at MFC's Mildura office

Our partnerships and current activities

• Our community partnerships currently include

- Financial Counsellors providing on-site appointments at Mildura District Aboriginal Service (MDAS). These appointments are booked through the MDAS reception and are offered every fortnight on a Wednesday. Additionally, the counsellor is on site for any walk-in clients or secondary consultations for MDAS staff.
- The Mallee Family Care Community Legal Centre Swan Hill Solicitor is also a representative on the Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Program of the Swan Hill Victorian Police and currently attends the Local Aboriginal Justice Committee Meeting and the local Koori Court meetings in Mildura and Swan Hill regarding the ongoing needs of the Koori Court.
- Member of the local National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC committees.

- Mallee Family Care with the Mildura Rural City Council have commenced a RAP project officers collaborative working group for local agencies who are currently working on their RAP or about to begin. Currently the group consists of First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, Mildura Rural City Council, Sunraysia Community Health Services, Mallee Accommodation and Support Program, Mildura Base Hospital, Hands Up Mallee and Mallee Family Care.

• Internal activities and initiatives

- Internal and external participation in National Reconciliation Week activities across all Mallee Family Care sites.
- Participation in external NAIDOC events.
- Cultural Awareness training for all Mallee Family Care staff.



Relationships

Mallee Family Care’s commitment to building and strengthening positive relationships.

Mallee Family Care is dedicated to establishing and promoting positive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to continuing to increase our knowledge and implementing best practices to build and strengthen relationships whilst challenging any biases or prejudices that may exist. We strive towards creating an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel welcome, valued and heard.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within Mallee Family Care’s (MFC) local area or sphere of influence.	December 2023	• CEO • RAP Project Officer
	• Continue to build on existing relationships with First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, Mallee District Aboriginal Services, Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation, Barkindji Maraura Elders Environment Team, Mildura Rural City Council, Sunraysia Community Health Services, Mallee Accommodation and Support Program, Hands Up Mallee and Mildura Base Hospital.	July 2024	• CEO • RAP Project Officer
	• Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations and share the information across all MFC sites.	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials across all MFC sites to staff, volunteers and clients.	May 2024	• RAP Project Officer • Communications Manager
	• MFC RAP Working Group members and staff members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2024	• RAP Project Officer • Communications Manager
	• Encourage and support MFC staff and senior leaders to participate in external events to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2024	• CEO • RAP Project Officer
	• Encourage and support MFC service users to participate in events to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2024	• RAP Project Officer • Communications Manager
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all MFC staff and volunteers. Monitor throughout and report on progress.	July 2024	• RAP Project Officer • Communications Manager
	• Identify external stakeholders that MFC can engage with on MFC’s reconciliation journey.	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer
	• Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that MFC could approach to collaborate with on MFC’s reconciliation journey.	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	• Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer • Policy and Procedure Officer
	• Conduct a review of MFC’S Human Resources (HR) policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. -Potential barriers in relation to cultural safety.	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer • HR Manager



Respect

Mallee Family Care's commitment to demonstrating respect.

Respect is central to Mallee Family Care's approach. Through our Reflect RAP commitments, Mallee Family Care collaborates with and listens to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, creating unity, collaboration and mutual respect. We are embedding cultural respect and understanding across all aspects of our organisation. We are committed to the continuation of learning, growing and evolving in our approach and to creating a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

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 for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within MFC.	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer • Manager Governance and Compliance
	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within MFC. Including E learning modules regarding cultural awareness, cultural safety, discrimination, racism, and learning via MFC's intranet and Newsletter.	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer • ETR Research & Projects Officer
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Continue to work with local Traditional Owners / Custodians of the lands and waters across all MFC sites relating to cultural protocols and processes.	July 2024	• RAP Project Officer
	• Increase MFC staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	July 2024	• RAP Project Officer
	• Invite an Elder or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country at significant events.	July 2024	• RAP Project Officer • Communications Manager
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• Raise awareness and share information across all MFC sites in relation to the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June and July 2024	• RAP Project Officer • Communications Manager
	• Introduce MFC staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area and encourage staff to attend.	June 2024	• RAP Project Officer • Communications Manager
	• MFC RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event and encourage staff to attend.	First week in July 2024	• RAP Project Officer • Communications Manager



Opportunities

Mallee Family Care's commitment to progressing reconciliation.

Mallee Family Care is dedicated to advancing reconciliation and ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equal access to opportunities and support within Mallee Family Care. We support recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, by providing training and professional development opportunities to support career growth within Mallee Family Care.

Through our affiliations with local Aboriginal Organisations and communities, Mallee Family Care is working to increase access to culturally safe and appropriate services and supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our sphere of influence. We believe that by working together, we can create a more inclusive and culturally responsive environment for all members of our community.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	• Develop a business case for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment within MFC	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer • Manager Governance and Compliance
	• Build understanding of current MFC Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer • HR Manager
9. Increase Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer • Manager Governance and Compliance
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2023	• RAP Project Officer • Manager Governance and Compliance



Governance

Mallee Family Care’s reconciliation governance and reporting.

Mallee Family Care will continue to develop effective governance processes to inform and guide the implementation of our Reflect RAP. We will regularly review and evaluate our Reflect RAP commitments to ensure ongoing progress, improvement, and support for their delivery. We are committed to engaging with stakeholders for feedback on our Reflect RAP to ensure alignment with community needs. We aim to build stronger partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for culturally appropriate initiatives and to increase awareness of culture among our employees.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Maintain an effective MFC RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Review and maintain MFC RWG to govern MFC Reflect RAP implementation.	December 2023, April & July 2024	• RAP Project Officer
	• Review, update and communicate MFC Terms of Reference for the RWG.	December 2023, April & July 2024	• RAP Project Officer
	• Continue to maintain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation on the MFC RWG.	July 2024	• RAP Project Officer
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of MFC RAP commitments.	• Define ongoing resource needs for MFC RAP implementation.	September 2023	• RAP Project Officer • Manager Governance and Compliance
	• Engage MFC senior leaders in the ongoing delivery of MFC RAP commitments.	July 2024	• CEO • RAP Project Officer
	• Appoint a senior leader to champion the MFC RAP internally.	August 2023	• General Manager Major Projects and Partnerships
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on MFC RAP commitments.	September 2023	• RAP Project Officer • Manager Governance and Compliance
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that MFC’s primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure MFC do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	July annually	• RAP Project Officer
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request MFC’s unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	• RAP Project Officer
	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	• RAP Project Officer
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing MFC’s next RAP.	February 2024	• RAP Project Officer

For enquiries regarding Mallee Family Care's Reconciliation Action Plan,
please contact:

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