

# REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

August 2023 – January 2025



## **Acknowledgement of Country**

SHAC acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities as the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and culture, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise that their sovereignty was never ceded.

## Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Shelter Housing Action Cairns to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Shelter Housing Action Cairns joins a network of more than 2,200 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 Shelter Housing Action Cairns 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 Shelter Housing Action Cairns, 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



## Our Business

Shelter Housing Action Cairns (or SHAC) is a not-for-profit charity. For over thirty years, SHAC has grown and developed to respond to the needs of families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Cairns and the Far North Queensland region. Our vision is to eliminate homelessness. Our purpose is to support people on their path to a secure future. Our values are respect, advocacy, human rights, diversity, transparency and environmental sustainability.

Our current services include:

- Temporary supported accommodation and case managed support to approximately 300 Cairns families per year who are homeless. Support is offered in the form of advocacy, information, education and referral pathways - all of which aim to reduce barriers to housing and increase housing access.
- Mobile case managed support to families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Cairns (whom SHAC is unable to offer temporary accommodation). This program offers support to address barriers to accommodation/housing (eg no/poor independent rental history, financial debt, health issues), as well as to find or hang on to private rental housing. Last year SHAC worked with 311 families in this capacity.



- The My Money Program: is a free financial support service which assists over 200 families and individuals every year to maintain and sustain their tenancy. This includes financial counselling, budgeting, increasing income, reducing debt, assessing housing affordability and building financial safety nets.
- The No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS): provides over 850 affordable no interest loans a year to individuals and families on a low income. Loans up to \$1500 are

available for essential goods and services. Repayments are set at an affordable amount over 12 to 18 months.

Currently SHAC employs 21 people, these include full time and part time workers as well as paid trainees. Of these staff members, six identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. All staff work from our business premises at 3 Brisbane St, Paramatta Park, Cairns.



## Our RAP

SHAC is developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) because we want to formalise our commitment to reconciliation. Our RAP Champion is the SHAC CEO who will be responsible for driving and championing internal engagement and awareness of this RAP.

We hope our RAP will assist us to build on our current relationships with First Nations people, build trust in our community, lessen prejudice and increase pride of Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures. Ultimately, we want to contribute to efforts to achieve economic equity and support self-determination among First Nations people.

To date, SHAC has focussed on the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and on culturally responsive service delivery. We want our efforts in this space to be more considered and formalised.

## Our partnerships/current activities

We do not currently have any formal partnerships or formal reconciliation activities in place. We are always represented at NAIDOC celebrations in Cairns, we do make employment of First Nations peoples a priority and we have recently applied for and received funding for Indigenous paid traineeships at SHAC.



## Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.</li> </ul>	August 2023	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	August 2023	SHAC Team Leader
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</li> </ul>	April 2024	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.</li> </ul>	27 May-3 June, 2024	Lead: Financial Support Worker (RAP Working Group Convenor) Support: RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> </ul>	27 May-3 June, 2024	CEO
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.</li> </ul>	From August 2023, ongoing.	Lead: CEO Support: Leadership Team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	September 2023	SHAC Team Leader
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	September 2023	CEO
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.</li> </ul>	October 2023	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.</li> </ul>	April 2024	Lead: CEO Support: HR Dynamics



## 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.</li> </ul>	April 2024	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.</li> </ul>	November 2023	SHAC Team Leader
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Lead: Financial Counsellor Support: MMP Team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Lead: Family Support Worker (Mary) Support: FST Team
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.</li> </ul>	June 2024	Lead: NILS Officer Support: NILS Team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.</li> </ul>	June - July 2024	Finance Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.</li> </ul>	First week in July 2024	Lead: Financial Support Worker (RAP Working Group Convenor) Support: RAP Working Group



## Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.</li></ul>	January 2024	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</li></ul>	November 2023	CEO
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.</li></ul>	November 2023	Finance Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Investigate Supply Nation membership.</li></ul>	September 2023	Finance Manager





## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.</li> </ul>	August 2023	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.</li> </ul>	August 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RWG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.</li> </ul>	August 2023	CEO
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define resource needs for RAP implementation.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RWG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.</li> </ul>	October 2023	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.</li> </ul>	October 2023	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.</li> </ul>	December 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RWG
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.</li> </ul>	June annually	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.</li> </ul>	July annually	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.</li> </ul>	September annually	CEO
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.</li> </ul>	October 2024	CEO



## Contact Us

To talk to SHAC about our Reconciliation Action Plan, please contact us on:

*Name:* Sally Watson

*Position:* CEO

*Phone:* 07 4080 7400

*Email:* [sally@shac.org.au](mailto:sally@shac.org.au)

*website:* [www.shac.org.au](http://www.shac.org.au)



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SHELTER HOUSING ACTION CAIRNS

3 Brisbane Street, Parramatta Park | PO Box 847, Cairns Q 4870

P: 07 4080 7400 | E: [admin@shac.org.au](mailto:admin@shac.org.au)