



**ncoss**  
NSW Council of Social Service



**RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN**

**REFLECT**

# REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

June 2022 to November 2023

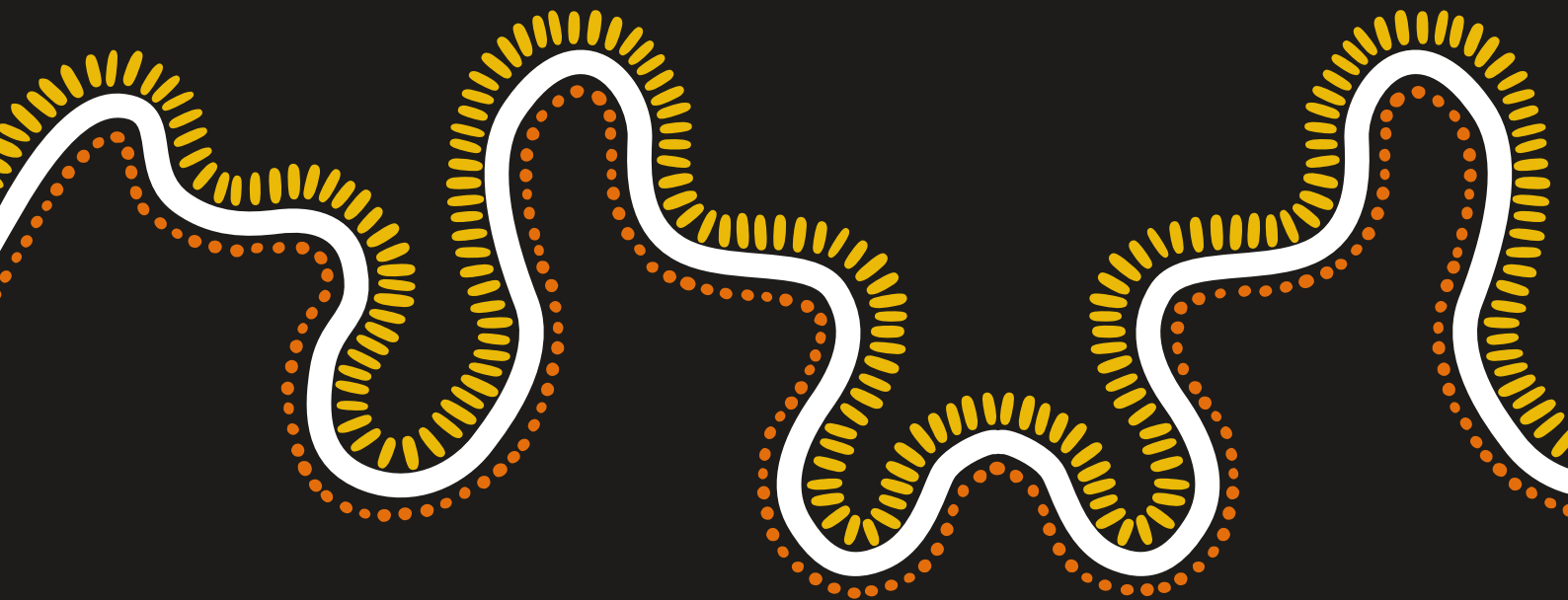




## Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the sovereign Custodians of Gadigal Country and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the rich cultures, customs and continued survival of First Nations peoples on Gadigal Country, and on the many diverse First Nations lands and waters across NSW.

We acknowledge the spirit of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and accept the invitation to walk with First Nations peoples in a movement of the Australian people for a better future. This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) supplements the work that needs to be done to ensure the commitment of the NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) to Voice, Treaty, Truth.



## About the Artwork: One step of many more

The seamlessness between Country and Country's people is evident throughout this artwork, illustrating the interconnectedness and symbiotic relationship between Country, people, spirituality, health and wellbeing. Considering Country as a living and breathing being, and subsequently considering its relationship with us, its people, and ours with it, is realising that supportive, empowering and healing relationships are unassuming, holistic, and without expectation except for mutual caring. They are grounded in knowledge, in love, in respect and in justice. This artwork illustrates the blueprint and our responsibilities for how we engage in relationship with one another, with our immediate and broader community and especially with Country.

This artwork, then, elucidates NSW Council of Social Services' commitment and responsibility to support, to advocate, to learn and grow, and to bring about meaningful change for First Nations peoples and communities, as well as the broader community. The journey must first start with one step, and then again another step the next day and another the next. In this instance, the journey is one of building and nurturing connections to support the ongoing fight for meaningful change, only allowable through following the blueprint for relationship as delineated by Country since a time immemorial. Thus, the journey begins with the first step of many more.

**Karlie Stewart, 2022**



## About the Artist

Karlie Stewart is a Wandj Wandian woman from Yuin Country on the South Coast of New South Wales. She lived in Nowra throughout her childhood and spent time around the Nowra, Wreck Bay and Jerrinja Aboriginal communities with her family. Since the age of 10, Karlie lived on Bidjigal land and has strong connections to the La Perouse Aboriginal community. She now lives, works and creates in Wollongong, on Dharawal country.

In 2019, Karlie graduated with an Honours in Social Work from the University of New South Wales and has since practiced as a social worker. Karlie currently manages Weave Youth and Community Services' Aboriginal Healing Program alongside her lecturing role at the University of Wollongong. She is passionate about healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and as such is or has been involved with numerous executive committees and advisory groups for organisations such as Just Reinvest NSW and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation.

Karlie has been painting and creating Aboriginal artworks since she was young as a way to express her connection to her saltwater home on the South Coast.



## Our vision for reconciliation

NCOSS has a leadership role in advocacy and public policy to achieve a fair, inclusive and sustainable NSW. Critical to achieving this vision is the need to act to advance reconciliation and justice for First Nations peoples.

NCOSS has developed mutually respectful relationships with First Nations peoples, organisations, and individuals over many years, through entering into joint initiatives, supporting the advocacy and policy positions of First Nations bodies, and showing a deep respect within NCOSS for the unique and valuable contribution of First Nations peoples to Australia.

Consistent with the principle of self-determination, NCOSS is committed to listening to, learning from, and walking alongside First Nations peoples, working collaboratively with their leaders, key bodies and communities to help put a spotlight on the issues they have identified as impeding the advancement of better life outcomes for First Nations peoples in NSW.

Formalising our Statement of Commitment to reconciliation through this RAP is a critical next step in our journey.

In developing our RAP, NCOSS aims to keep the rights, aspirations, cultures, and heritage of First Nations peoples at the forefront of our work. NCOSS can also advocate for and promote reconciliation within our membership, the social services sector, and the wider community by formally demonstrating reconciliation in our attitudes, structures, policies, and peak body activities.

We know that reconciliation is just part of the journey towards addressing the ongoing inequalities and injustices that First Nations peoples face today and as echoes from a brutal past. We call on the Australian Government to enshrine a First Nations Voice to parliament through constitutional change, and the establishment of the Makarrata Commission to supervise treaty and truth-telling, and acknowledge the gift that First Nations peoples have given all Australians in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.



## From the CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes NSW Council of Social Service to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

NSW Council of Social Service joins a network of more than 1,100 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 NSW Council of Social Service 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 to NSW Council of Social Service, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Office  
Reconciliation Australia





## Message from the NCOSS President

The NCOSS Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan is an exciting first step in our journey of formalising our genuine commitment to reconciliation.

NCOSS acknowledges First Nations peoples as the sovereign Custodians of Country and pays its respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise First Nations peoples' right to practise their own unique culture and customs.

As the President of NCOSS, I take pride in leading the organisation on this collaborative journey and affirming our commitment to being a stronger ally to First Nations peoples. As outlined in our Statement of Commitment, the principles that will guide our efforts are Partnership, Respect, Cultural Humility, Representation, and Empowerment.

The journey to reconciliation involves a process of truth-telling and meaningful action in response. Though significant national milestones have been achieved such as the 1967 Referendum, the historic Mabo decision in 1993 and the national apology in 2008, there is still a significant disparity between the socio-economic and health status of First Nations peoples compared to the wider population. For the necessary shift to occur, we must all strive, as a community, to not only listen better but to ensure that our actions reflect the advice given to us by First Nations peoples.

I am excited to work with a team that truly believes in the three reconciliation pillars adopted by Reconciliation Australia: Respect, Relationships and Opportunities. We undertake this journey, not because it is easy but because it is necessary and long overdue, and to play our part in ensuring that the voices of First Nations peoples are elevated, and the opportunities for self-determination, empowerment and improved quality of life are increased.

**John Robertson**  
President, NCOSS



## Message from the NCOSS CEO

As the CEO of the peak body for social services in NSW, I am proud to launch NCOSS's first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. So far, the NCOSS journey towards building our reconciliation commitments has been humbling. I sincerely thank the First Nations people who have taken time out of their busy schedules to work with us to develop the NCOSS RAP. We have already learnt so much from you all.

NCOSS's core vision has hardly changed since it was founded during the Great Depression, a NSW free from poverty and inequality. This vision is in absolute alignment with advancing rights and justice for First Nations peoples.

NCOSS is proud of its history and its achievement in bringing together its members, civil society, government, and business to create a more equal and inclusive NSW. However, as a sector we must own our history; the good with the bad. Historically the social services sector has not always got it right when working with First Nations peoples. Abhorrent paternalistic and racist policies stain our past, most painfully remembered by the role our sector played in bringing about the Stolen Generations.

Reconciliation is about truth-telling; acknowledging past abuse but also illuminating current policies that continue to perpetuate racism and inequality. Institutional racism persists in our sector, evident in paternalistic partnership models and the language we use to talk about disadvantage and First Nations peoples.

I am excited to be leading the NCOSS team on its journey towards 'cultural humility', to challenge our ways of thinking and communicating with First Nations peoples and each other. Becoming a culturally competent organisation is a vital first step to being a strong ally for First Nations peoples.

**Joanna Quilty**  
CEO, NCOSS



# Our organisation

The NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) works with and for people experiencing poverty and disadvantage in NSW to positively change our communities.

The core vision of NCOSS is unchanged since our foundation in 1934, a NSW free from poverty and inequality. To achieve this vision, we work to:

- **Amplify the experience of people affected by poverty and disadvantage**

NCOSS works to bring the experience of those affected by poverty and disadvantage out of the shadows and into the spotlight to raise public awareness, contribute to informed policy positions and influence decision making. We do this through analysis, research and projects that build the evidence base, are informed by lived experience and paint a picture that would otherwise go unseen.

- **Support a diverse, collaborative and innovative community sector**

NCOSS as an industry leader – supporting, advocating for, and collaborating with the social services sector to strengthen recognition, effectiveness, and sustainability. We work collaboratively across Government and the sector to explore, develop, and implement new ways of working and solutions to growing social and economic inequality in our state. Our unique vantage point representing the broader sector across multiple domains means we are well placed to see the intersectionality of issues, the challenges for individuals in trying to access the right support at the right time due to systemic barriers, and the need for ‘joined-up’ service delivery.

- **Form constructive partnerships to influence change**

NCOSS works with sector, Government, corporate and academic partners to deliver benefits to the social services industry and the people we support.

- **Build a strong, effective and sustainable NCOSS**

We continue to build a strong, effective and sustainable NCOSS by: ensuring good governance including a Board that brings diverse expertise, deep community connections, and the capability to strategically position NCOSS for the future; establishing clear priorities in consultation with the Board, our members and other stakeholders to avoid duplication and strengthen our value-add; continually refining our operating model to maximise impact and efficiency; and demonstrating our worth to members, potential members, Government and other bodies to consolidate and build on existing revenue streams, and grow new ones.

NCOSS has a current staff of 11.6 FTE. Our offices are based in Sydney and our members come from across NSW. NCOSS does not currently employ any First Nations people. NCOSS hosts interns and volunteers to support its operations from time to time.

## NCOSS Board

The NCOSS Board sets the organisation’s strategic direction as well as guiding and monitoring the business and affairs of NCOSS on behalf of the members. The Board is elected from the membership at the Annual General Meeting and is accountable to members.

Candidates for the Board are drawn from a broad cross-section of expertise within the social and community services sector in NSW.

Under the NCOSS Constitution the NCOSS Board comprises up to 10 members – see: [www.ncooss.org.au/about/governance](http://www.ncooss.org.au/about/governance)



IMAGE: NCOSS Post-Budget Breakfast 2019



# Our Reconciliation Action Plan

The NCOSS journey of reconciliation in partnership with Reconciliation Australia, begins with the development and implementation of this RAP.

The NCOSS RAP will guide our engagement and relationships with member organisations and other partners. It is intended that this RAP will also provide us with an opportunity to deepen and strengthen our relationships with the First Nations communities, families, young people, and children with whom we work.

The RAP is supported by an overarching Statement of Commitment with guiding principles. These documents together provide the framework which underpins NCOSS's work with First Nations peoples, and greater transparency in relation to our intent, ways of working and the results achieved against our stated RAP commitments. The RAP also confirms our support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart including a First Nations Voice to parliament protected by the Constitution; and the establishment of a Makarrata Commission to enable treaty and truth-telling.

The development of this RAP was led by Rowena Lawrie, Director, Yamurrah and Julianna Demetrius, Demetrius Consultancy. Yamurrah is a collective of First Nations clinicians, consultants, and educators. Rowena lives and was raised on Darkinyung country, Central Coast NSW and her cultural connections are from Longreach to the Leichhardt River (Gulf Country), Wakka Wakka and Wiradjuri nations.

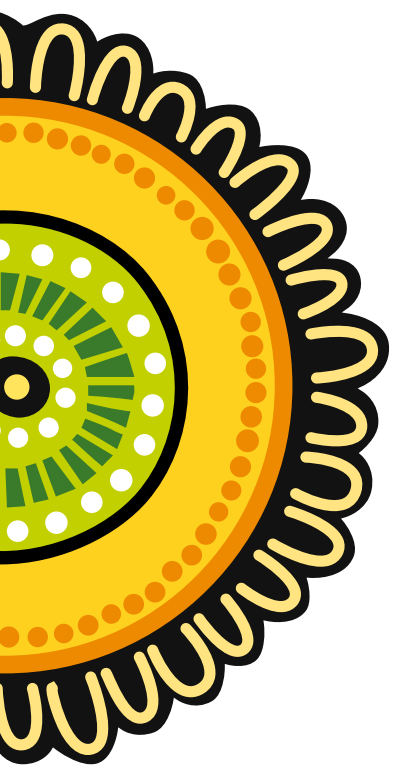
In developing the RAP, NCOSS together with Rowena, also sought guidance and feedback from several expert advisors from First Nations NCOSS members, including:

- NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation
- Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- Poche Centre for Indigenous Health
- Yerin Aboriginal Health Services Ltd
- Burrun Dalai Aboriginal Corporation Incorporated

At the heart of this RAP, is a focus on tangible action and measurable outcomes. This RAP will be championed by Joanna Quilty, CEO, NCOSS, in partnership with a working group of NCOSS staff who will be supported by Rowena Laurie, and a First Nations Partners and Advisory Group. The working group will meet quarterly to provide oversight, monitoring and reporting on key actions and commitments. The working group will ensure that all members of NCOSS share the responsibility of RAP commitments, which will be led from senior executive and management. NCOSS Board members will receive regular reports on the RAP Implementation and commitments, as well as participate in all Board activities outlined in the RAP. The First Nations Partners and Advisory Group will provide advice and support for the implementation of the RAP particularly in relation to the development of key protocols and strategies as outlined in this action plan.



**IMAGE:** Child, Youth, Family, Disability and Homelessness teams at Yerin – Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services with NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty



## Statement of Commitment

NCOSS acknowledges First Nations peoples as sovereign Custodians of the country and appreciates the distinct culture and customs in the many diverse nations across NSW. NCOSS recognises the impacts of invasion, colonialism and racism on First Nations peoples across generations, and that our sector had a part in this that we need to redress.

NCOSS strives to be a stronger ally to First Nations peoples and communities. We will take an active stand against racism, including policy and practice that is racially biased. We will speak out against racism, but we will not speak on behalf of First Nations peoples. We will walk in solidarity.

Our role is to advocate for a fairer, more inclusive NSW and to provide leadership for our sector, collaborating with First Nations communities and partners, and seeking to listen and learn with First Nations peoples to increase self-determination, empowerment and quality of life.

We will do this by:

1. Developing, launching and effectively implementing our RAP.
2. Integrating the RAP with our Strategic Plan and embedding RAP actions in work plans.
3. Establishing and implementing a First Nations Engagement Strategy.
4. Creating Collaboration Agreements with key First Nations partners and stakeholders.
5. Participating in the campaign for Voice, Treaty, Truth.



**IMAGE:** First Nations artist Jessie Waratah (Gamilaraay and Warlpiri) addresses the audience at the NCOSS AGM in 2021

### Fundamental Principles

These principles, as a holistic framework, will guide our work with First Nations stakeholders:



#### Self-determination

First Nations peoples leading conversations, actions and decisions on matters that concern them.



#### Empowerment

Including and privileging voices of First Nations peoples.



#### Partnership

Working with First Nation partners and communities.



#### Collaboration

Working in collaboration and co-designing with First Nation partners.



#### Respect and Reciprocity

Working in reciprocal, respectful, open and honest ways.



#### Cultural humility

Striving for cultural competency, with integrity and accountability.



#### Representation

Ensure First Nations representation on NCOSS advisory groups and other policy platforms.



## Our partnerships and current activities

NCOSS's commitment to reconciliation with First Nations peoples precedes this RAP.

Consistent with the principle of self-determination, NCOSS is committed to listening to, learning from, and walking alongside First Nations peoples, and working collaboratively with their leaders, key bodies, and communities to help put a spotlight on the issues they have identified as impeding the advancement of better life outcomes for First Nations peoples in NSW.

### Case Study 1

#### Economic analysis and a focus on issues for First Nations peoples

Over 2020 and 2021 NCOSS has applied an economic lens to the impacts of rising disadvantage in NSW, and the essential support provided by the social services sector in this context.

Our economic analysis has incorporated a strong focus on issues for First Nations peoples which has been achieved in a number of ways: Inviting First Nations peak bodies to partner with us to commission the analysis and sit on the steering committee; seeking expert input from a cultural adviser; using available datasets to highlight impacts for First Nations households, workforces and communities; collecting and reporting on information and feedback from social service organisations including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs); and spotlighting successful approaches employed by ACCOs and challenges faced through available evidence, interviews and case studies.

In presenting the results of our analysis to the sector and in advocating to government, we have involved First Nations leaders from the social services sector on panel discussions and in representations to decision makers. We will continually strive to include, and strengthen, a focus on issues for First Nations peoples in our research and policy work, in a way that is inclusive, consistent, meaningful, and respectful; and which recognises that they hold the knowledge and expertise.

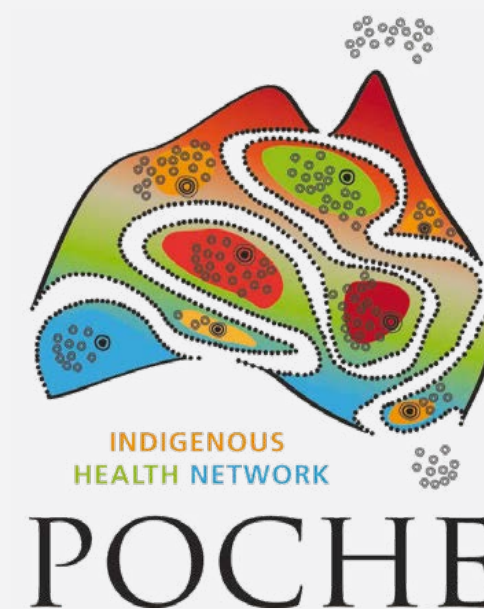
### Case Study 2

#### Partnership with the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health

NCOSS has worked closely and collaboratively over the past few years with Director and proud Bundjalung man Boe Rambaldini and his team at the Poche Centre. The Poche Centre has led numerous projects that NCOSS has been involved in, including a project on water security issues for small, remote First Nations communities and co-design approaches to improving oral health for young First Nations peoples.

The Poche Centre is an active member of one of NCOSS's key advisory groups, the Health Equity Alliance, and has led valuable conversations in the Alliance about improving health outcomes for First Nations peoples and the importance of co-design. In 2019, Boe also spoke as a panel member at the NCOSS Post-Budget Breakfast to discuss how the 2019-20 state budget would impact First Nations communities.

It continues to be a pleasure and privilege for NCOSS to work and partner with the Poche Centre. It is hoped that NCOSS's reconciliation journey will help NCOSS be a stronger ally and partner for the Poche Centre.





As a voice for people affected by poverty and inequality, NCOSS recognises the substantial impact of past government policies and practices on the wellbeing and prosperity of First Nations peoples.

While it is not the role of NCOSS to speak for or on behalf of First Nations peoples, as a leading peak body in the social services sector in NSW, it is incumbent on NCOSS to put a spotlight on the views expressed by First Nations leaders and bodies, in subject areas relating to its mandate. In order to play this role effectively, it is crucial that NCOSS forms and maintains meaningful partnerships with First Nations bodies and participates in an ongoing dialogue with them about how it can best lend support to their advocacy.

For this reason we use the language of solidarity and partnership in seeking to *stand with* and *walk alongside* First Nations partners and the communities they serve. It means we will turn up whenever we can, make policy recommendations that reflect and support First Nations calls for change, and highlight the voices of First Nations partners in our advocacy work, as well as deliver sector development work that is informed by First Nations members and partners.

NCOSS will continue to build upon and source new memberships from, and further enhance relationships with, First Nations peoples, organisations, and other stakeholders.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and map key First Nations state bodies, local community entities and leaders who can inform NCOSS activities and maintain a register of key contacts.</li> </ul>	January 2023	Director Policy and Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on and expand working partnerships with First Nations leaders, academics, and staff representing organisations operating in areas related to NCOSS' policy and advocacy priorities.</li> </ul>	June 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>	January 2023	Director Policy and Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on this research to develop an Engagement Strategy that outlines NCOSS's collaborative processes with First Nations peoples and organisations and articulates how we are going to walk alongside First Nations peoples in conducting our work.</li> </ul>	November 2023	Director Policy and Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Collaboration Agreements with key partners to identify how NCOSS can most effectively advocate for critical issues of concern and walk in solidarity with First Nations people and their communities.</li> </ul>	November 2023	CEO

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>2. Walk alongside our First Nations partners to affect positive change for First Nations peoples, organisations, and communities, with self-determination as the driving principle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively support, promote, and participate in the campaign to amend the Australian Constitution to include a First Nations Voice to Parliament and the establishment of the Makarrata commission to enable treaty and truth-telling.</li> </ul>	November 2022	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stand with First Nations partners, organisations and regional alliances in calling on Government and the community services sector to ensure that First Nations peoples fully participate in decision-making processes about key issues facing their communities.</li> </ul>	June 2022	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stand with First Nations partners to support their submissions and leadership; and to challenge racist practices and policies in the community sector.</li> </ul>	June 2022	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include the voices of First Nations peoples, where appropriate, when public commentary is made about issues being promoted by NCOSS and ensure consistency with our Statement of Commitment, Engagement Strategy, and Collaboration Agreements.</li> </ul>	October 2022	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise public speaking opportunities for First Nations leaders/experts, on relevant issues in internal and external forums facilitated by NCOSS.</li> </ul>	October 2022	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure social policy and advocacy work reflects advice from working partnerships, highlights research carried out by First Nations peoples, and is consistent with and held accountable to -through our reporting - our values and self-determination principles as set out in the Statement of Commitment, Engagement Strategy, and Collaboration Agreements.</li> </ul>	June 2022	Director Policy and Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include a focus on the perspectives of First Nations peoples in our Budget submissions, about key matters in First Nations communities, consistent with their right to determine and control their own economic advancement.</li> </ul>	October 2022	Director Policy and Research





# Relationships cont.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>3. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)</b>	• Circulate NRW resources and materials to all staff and members via email communications, website and newsletters.	June 2022, 2023	Partnerships and Communications Manager
	• RAP Working Group members to participate in at least one external NRW event.	June 2022, 2023	CEO
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	June 2022, 2023	CEO
<b>4. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence</b>	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation by circulating the NCOSS RAP, Statement of Commitment, and Engagement Strategy to all staff - and include in inductions.	June 2022	Operations Manager
	• Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey, and include stake-holders in the launch and distribution of the RAP.	November 2022	Partnerships and Communications Manager
	• Identify other like-minded organisations in the RAP Network that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2022	CEO
	• Promote the NCOSS Statement of Commitment which recognises the value of self-determination and walking in solidarity with First Nations peoples in conducting our work.	June 2022	Partnerships and Communications Manager

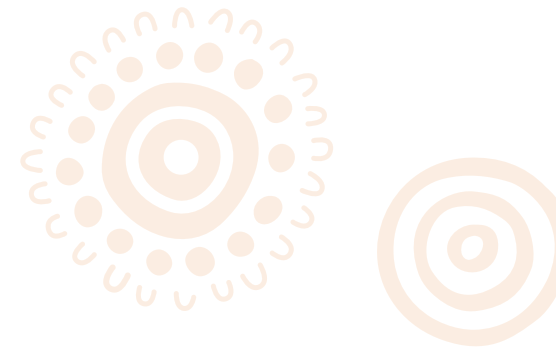
ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>5. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies</b>	• Ensure the Statement of Commitment takes an active stand against racism.	June 2022	CEO
	• Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination and implement throughout our workplace.	December 2023	Operations Manager
	• Review HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs, including a focus on First Nations peoples Employment Strategies.	December 2023	Operations Manager
	• Utilise relationships with Government at all levels to influence policy decisions which progress the well-being of First Nations peoples in NSW and address discrimination.	March 2023	CEO



Respect is one of the principles underpinning the NCOSS Statement of Commitment.

NCOSS has a critical role to play in mobilising against government policies which have the potential to maintain or continue to create disparities in opportunities and outcomes for First Nations peoples in comparison to the broader community, particularly in relation to the areas of child protection, education, housing, and justice. Harm occurs when unjust policies and practices inform and support disrespectful relationships.

NCOSS will promote amongst its Board, staff, and membership the critical importance of seeking to understand the views of First Nations peoples and the importance of being a culturally responsive organisation.



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge and make a public statement about the impact of colonialism, harmful policies and practices on First Nations peoples and declare future commitments on days of significance including Sorry day, Invasion day, National Reconciliation Week, Mabo Day.</li> </ul>	Jan 2023 May 2023 June 2022, 2023	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review cultural learning needs within our organisation.</li> </ul>	November 2022	Operations Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.</li> </ul>	March 2023	Operations Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide comprehensive cultural training that is trauma informed, for all staff and Board Members.</li> </ul>	June 2023	Operations Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide ongoing opportunities to deepen cultural learning, and engage with First Nations peoples and organisations. Ensure a component of this cultural learning is specific to the Gadigal people, of the Eora Nation.</li> </ul>	March 2023	Operations Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage Board members in opportunities to increase their understanding and appreciation of the ongoing impact of harmful policies and practices on First Nations peoples.</li> </ul>	March 2023	Board President
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite First Nations partners and other experts to address the Board on contemporary issues facing First Nations peoples.</li> </ul>	March 2023	Board President

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols</b>	<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>	July 2022	Director Policy and Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols tailored to suit NCOSS activities. Provide and promote the resource to staff and ensure it is updated regularly.</li> </ul>	November 2022	Director Policy and Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage staff in understanding the protocols around ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies.</li> </ul>	November 2022	Director Policy and Research
<b>8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC week and other days of significance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness and share information to all staff and Board Members about the meaning of NAIDOC week.</li> </ul>	July 2022, 2023	Partnerships and Communications Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote external NAIDOC Week events to staff and Board Members.</li> </ul>	July 2022, 2023	Partnerships and Communications Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrate the achievements of First Nations peoples and cultures by promoting and participating in NAIDOC week.</li> </ul>	July 2022, 2023	Partnerships and Communications Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for the RAP Working Group to participate in and support NAIDOC events hosted by First Nations organisations and communities.</li> </ul>	July 2022, 2023	CEO



Creating opportunities for building the economic capability of First Nations peoples by ensuring that NCOSS prioritises the employment of First Nations peoples to help strengthen our commitment to equal opportunity and workplace diversity.

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development</b>	<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>	March 2023	Operations Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.</li> </ul>	November 2023	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support First Nations partners, organisations and regional alliances in seeking to increase the employment of First Nations peoples in the NSW public service and community services sector.</li> </ul>	November 2023	CEO
<b>10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify First Nations suppliers for crucial business needs (e.g., consultancy, publications, catering, stationary supplies).</li> </ul>	November 2022	Operations Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate opportunities within NCOSS to increase engagement of First Nations owned and led enterprises.</li> </ul>	March 2023	Operations Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the work of Supply Nation and First Nations businesses to the NCOSS network and identify opportunities to leverage the network's purchasing power; as well as investigate joining.</li> </ul>	March 2023	Operations Manager

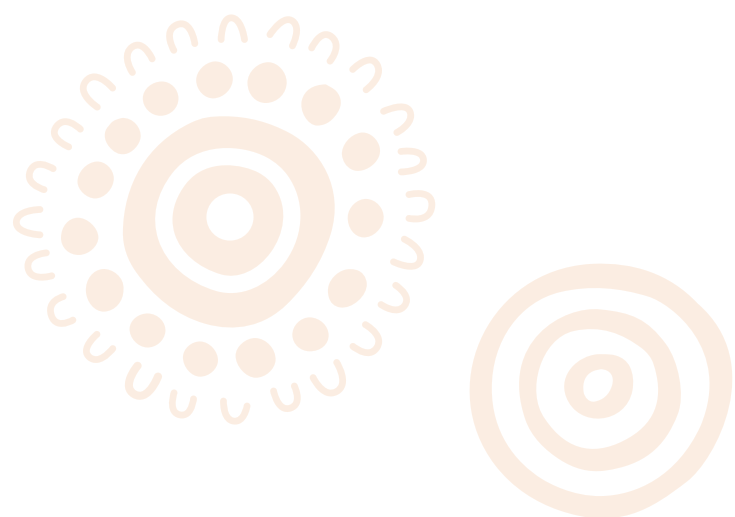
ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>11. Improve the accessibility of the work that we do for First Nations organisations and communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stand with First Nations partners and organisations to promote initiatives aimed at:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing employment and economic opportunities for First Nations peoples.</li> <li>Improving the safety and wellbeing of First Nations children and families.</li> <li>Increasing safe and affordable housing and home ownership for First Nations people.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	November 2022	Director Policy and Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review memberships to improve accessibility for First Nations organisations.</li> </ul>	November 2022	Partnerships and Communications Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a fee waiver policy to allow First Nations organisations to maintain multiple peak body memberships.</li> </ul>	November 2022	Partnerships and Communications Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of First Nations organisational members to strengthen NCOSS partnerships with them, and the communities they serve.</li> </ul>	November 2023	Partnerships and Communications Manager



Having effective governance will ensure the commitments of this RAP are completed. It is critical to have accountability, cultural oversight, progress tracking and reporting of the deliverable outcomes. NCOSS is committed to ensuring that the RAP has effective and transparent governance.

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP</b>	• Establish a RAP Working Group comprising NCOSS staff with specific responsibilities under the RAP.	June 2022	CEO
	• Develop Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June 2022	Director Policy and Research
	• Establish a First Nations Advisory Group to provide support and advice to the RAP Working Group. Confirm a First Nations representative on the RAP working group.	June 2022	Director Policy and Research
<b>13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments</b>	• Develop a RAP implementation plan outlining resources needed to implement the RAP.	June 2022	Director Policy and Research
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments and appoint a RAP Champion.	June 2022	CEO
	• Ensure that NCOSS maintains at least one Board position for a First Nations leader, and actively seeks out advice from First Nations subject matter experts.	November 2022	Board President

ACTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally</b>	• Establish mechanisms to report achievements, challenges and learnings against our commitments.	June 2022	Director Policy and Research
	• Ensure the RAP and RAP progress reports are made available publicly.	June 2022	Director Policy and Research
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contacts are up-to-date to ensure we are receiving important correspondence.	June 2022, 2023	Director Policy and Research
	• Submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	November 2022, 2023	Director Policy and Research
<b>15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP</b>	• Follow up with Reconciliation Australia if we have not yet received our unique reporting link to participate in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2022, 2023	Director Policy and Research
	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	November 2023	Director Policy and Research





# Acknowledgements

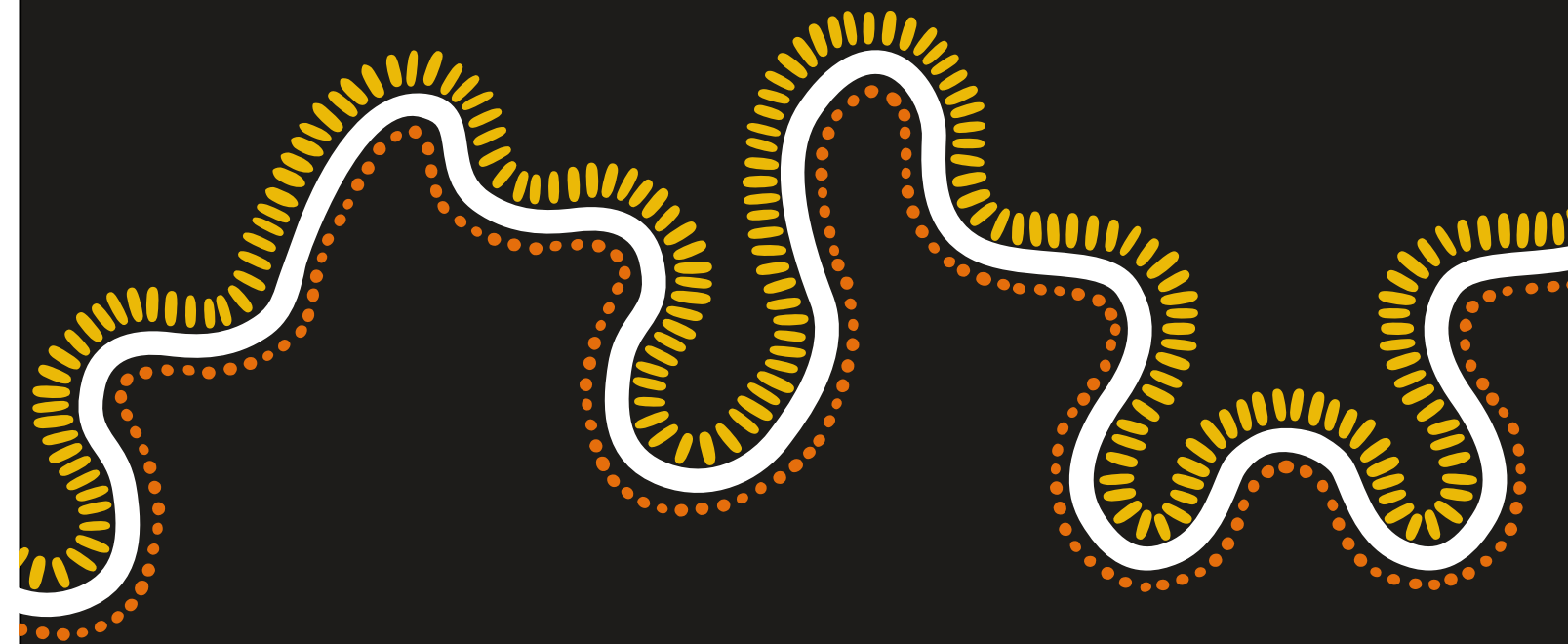
NCOSS would like to thank all of the people who contributed to the development of the Reconciliation Action Plan including the artist Karlie Stewart; consultants Rowena Lawrie, Director, Yamurrah and Julianna Demetrius, Demetrius Consultancy; NCOSS staff and Board; and First Nations stakeholders and partners including NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation, Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council, NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, Yerin Aboriginal Health Services Ltd, and Burrun Dalai Aboriginal Corporation Incorporated.



## RAP Consultant Rowena Lawrie

Rowena is the Director (and founder), Yamurrah, a collective of First Nations clinicians, educators, academics, consultants, who specialise in professional development, supervision, therapy, training, project consultancy and research. Yamurrah has a focus on First Nations worldviews and healing frameworks, human rights, trauma and recovery and social justice. Rowena has over 25 years experience as a clinical social worker, and has worked across law, health and human rights sectors. Rowena has a strong research background and has a number of published articles and research papers.

Rowena was raised and lives on Darkinyung country, and is a Wakka Wakka descendant with her matriarchal lines extending from Longreach to the Leichhardt River, Gulf of Carpentaria.





### For more information

For more information about NCOSS and our RAP, on behalf of our RAP Champion Joanna Quilty, CEO, NCOSS please contact:

**Policy and Advocacy Team | NCOSS**  
e [advocacy@ncoss.org.au](mailto:advocacy@ncoss.org.au)

Visit our website: [www.ncoss.org.au](http://www.ncoss.org.au)  
Follow us on Twitter: [@\\_NCOSS\\_](https://twitter.com/_NCOSS_)



**ncoss**  
NSW Council of Social Service