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April 2022 to April 2024

**I N N O V A T E**  
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN





### 'Bunurong Goyeep' (Bunurong Feathers)

“Bunurong Goyeep are from the Bunurong clan group areas. The Goyeep are Wadgeel (the Pelican), Barraeemal (the Emu), Yanggae (the Black Cockatoo), Tulum (the Duck), Warreeny Bunjil (the White Bellied Sea Eagle) and Tantan (the Parrot). The Goyeep colour palette represents colours and textures of Bunurong Sea Country.”

- Bunurong artist, Adam Magennis.

**The Baker Institute acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation, past and present, and the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.**

Bunurong Feathers, Adam Magennis, 2022, Kaptify

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## OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our vision for reconciliation is a united Australia with recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Nations peoples and Traditional Owners of this land. To respect and recognise the contribution of all Australians to our history and provide equal opportunity and access to health care for all Australians, without racial overtones or bias.

In the context of our organisation, through discovery and clinical research we endeavour to improve health outcomes and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes to the benefit of our global community. As an Institute with a diversity of cultural backgrounds, we value diversity, inclusivity, and respect for all.

## MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia commends Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere

of influence, Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute is part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.



Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.



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**Karen Mundine**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Reconciliation Australia**

## MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

As Director of the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, it gives me great pleasure to present our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2022-2024). This document formalises our ongoing commitment to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, engage staff in reconciliation, and continue our innovative program of health research that benefits the lives of all Australians.

Our Melbourne (Naarm) headquarters sits on the land of the Boon Wurrung people of the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan. We're proud to have been conducting world-class science in this spot for the past 95 years. Likewise, we acknowledge the connection and knowledge the Traditional Owners of this land have maintained for tens of thousands of years. We commit to honouring this knowledge and continuous culture in our attitudes, behaviours and actions here at the Institute.

In 2007, the Baker Institute established a formal presence in Alice Springs (Mparntwe), becoming the second health and medical research institute to be located in the Northern Territory and the first in Central Australia. Our work there seeks to address the cardiovascular and diabetes burden that arises in part from

the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in Central Australia and throughout the Northern Territory. Our commitment with this work is to provide scientific research that is rigorous, culturally appropriate and ethically sound.

As highlighted in a report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples still experience a burden of disease that is 2.3 times the rate of other Australians. Chronic diseases are responsible for more than two-thirds (70%) of the gap in disease burden between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, with cardiovascular diseases making up 19 per cent of this gap.

While we have a focus on the needs of the population in the Northern Territory, our research enables contributions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health spanning from major cities to the most remote communities in Australia.

We pledge to carry out collaborative research projects in response to community needs that build much needed knowledge and that provide practical contributions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health.



We commit to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are engaged and in control of their own health. Our practices include working with, and empowering, Indigenous community-controlled organisations. In addition, we have a focus on facilitating employment and capacity building of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within our organisation. Sharing our work and our learnings of this important journey with our wider staff base is critical to ensure that we all feel connected and engaged in this important mission.

In my own work, I have been privileged to undertake cardiometabolic research to improve the health of disadvantaged people for the past several years.

This has involved working alongside healthcare workers and community leaders to better understand the significant challenges and opportunities to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Like many of our doctors, nurses, educators and researchers engaged in this work, I have learnt a great deal.

I am very proud to publish our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2022-2024), and I look forward to continuing to lead an inclusive, empowering and innovative medical research institute that is dedicated to helping all Australians live healthier for longer.



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**Professor Tom Marwick**  
**Director and CEO**  
**Baker Institute**

## OUR BUSINESS




Through scientific and technological advances, we aim to precisely diagnose disease and better target prevention and treatment.

Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute (Baker Institute) is an independent medical research Institute, established in 1926, with a focus on diabetes and cardiovascular research. It enjoys an excellent reputation for the quality and breadth of its work, both nationally and internationally.

Our research is dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity. Through scientific and technological advances, we aim to precisely diagnose disease and better target prevention and treatment. As a not-for profit organisation, we rely heavily on philanthropic support and competitively awarded research grant support from government and non-government funding bodies.





We employ over 200 scientists and health professionals who bring expertise to our research programs and specialist clinics. Our clinical services include health education, cardiology and diabetes clinics, which enable us to provide comprehensive assistance to those vulnerable to these chronic conditions. Currently we have two staff members who have identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Our head office is located in Melbourne adjacent to the Alfred Hospital. Our commitment to Aboriginal Health is evident with the establishment of an office in Alice Springs in 2007, which is now located on the Alice Springs Hospital campus.

Our Aboriginal Health Program was established and developed locally to help address the profound health and social disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in Central Australia and throughout the Northern Territory through scientific research that is rigorous, culturally appropriate and ethically sound. Our mission is to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with a particular focus on the residents of Central Australia.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PROGRAMS OF RESEARCH

### Infectious diseases

The highest reported rates of invasive bacterial infection worldwide are reported in Central Australia and infection remains the major cause of death for Aboriginal people admitted to Alice Springs Hospital. This occurs on a background of recurrent pneumonia and skin infections that provide portals of entry by which bacteria enter the blood stream. Our research seeks to understand the interactions between these life-threatening infections and non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes and kidney disease. Diabetes, for example, increases the risk of skin infections and subsequent blood infections with virulent organisms, such as *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Our Aboriginal Health Program in Alice Springs also has a large laboratory dedicated to Human T-Lymphotropic Virus type 1 (HTLV-1). HTLV-1 is a virus which is commonly referred to as a cousin of HIV. HTLV-1 infects a type of white blood cell and establishes a life-long infection of the immune system. It is known to cause serious illnesses such as Adult T cell leukemia-lymphoma, a rare but aggressive blood cancer, and debilitating spinal cord inflammation. Up to 5% of individuals with HTLV-1 develop fatal adult T cell leukemia. The virus also causes inflammatory diseases of the organ systems, including the spinal cord, eye and lungs, resulting in considerable morbidity and mortality. It is suspected by Baker Institute researchers that the virus could play an inflammatory role that reduces the quality of life for people with heart disease or type 2 diabetes. In the last 12 years, hospital-based studies and laboratory testing have given Baker Institute investigators important new insights into the extent and distribution of HTLV-1.

Importantly, central Australia has the highest prevalence of HTLV-1 infection worldwide. The first ever community survey conducted by Baker Institute researchers in five remote communities found an average adult prevalence of 45%. HTLV-1 infection is therefore the most common major health condition in these communities, exceeding rates for diabetes, chronic kidney disease, ischaemic heart disease or rheumatic heart disease. There is currently no strategy in Australia to prevent the virus, transmitted by unprotected sex, blood contact, and breastfeeding.

## Diabetes

Baker Institute is an important partner within the DIABETES across the LIFECOURSE: Northern Australia Partnership, led by Professor Louise Maple-Brown (Menzies School of Health Research). This partnership includes Indigenous researchers, policy makers and health service providers, to improve models of health care and service delivery to women and their children in remote northern Australia. A key project with this partnership is the Pregnancy And Neonatal Diabetes Outcomes in Remote Australia (PANDORA) study. PANDORA, which commenced in 2011, is a prospective birth cohort study of 1139 mothers and 1170 of their children, following them over time. The study assesses outcomes of diabetes in pregnancy in the Northern

Territory, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children who are at high risk of developing diabetes and related conditions. Findings inform the design of further work to reduce risk of future obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease in both the mothers and children. Baker Institute research staff working on the PANDORA study are located in Alice Springs, and are responsible for the engagement and on-going follow-up of PANDORA families living in Central Australia.

While the Baker Institute places emphasis on the Aboriginal Health needs of people in the Northern Territory, our expertise enables contributions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health spanning from major cities to the



**This partnership includes Indigenous researchers, policy makers and health service providers, to improve models of health care and service delivery to women and their children in remote northern Australia.**

most remote communities in Australia, as well as collaborations that address global Indigenous health issues. Our other lead research programs include Atherothrombosis, Bioinformatics Discovery and Translation, Diabetes Complications, and Hypertension and Cardiac Disease which all traverse Aboriginal health. Our bioinformatics strategy incorporates a partnership with Cambridge University and provides access to international registries and informs the pathway to drug discovery and personalised medicine.

Strong partnerships are also established with Australian universities which promote a collaborative and expanded approach to research discoveries. Our researchers are world renowned and supervise passionate science students undertaking post-graduate research to further their career development and drive answers to our biggest health problems. Our translation of science into policy and practice is paramount and supported by commercial opportunities and collaborative agreements.

We are proud of our science and all those who work and commit to our Institute. As a research organisation, we encourage and support collaborative research and innovative science to help reduce the impact of disease.



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As a research organisation, we encourage and support collaborative research and innovative science to help reduce the impact of disease.

Artist at Tangentyere Artists.





## OUR RAP AND RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

We see the development of our RAP as essential in supporting our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Islander health and respect for First Nations peoples. At the heart of reconciliation is the relationship between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



**At the heart of all our current and future research is the knowledge, respect and understanding that reducing health inequity requires an Indigenous voice with community control and shared decision making.**

decision-making, improve access to and collection of data to increase transparency, advocate for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services sector, and ensure that we deliver programs and services that meet the needs of and are defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We are in a position to make a difference to health outcomes and improve opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through research and education under the framework of a RAP.

We have a focus on facilitating employment and capacity building of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within our organisation.

The Baker Institute is a member of the Central Australia Academic Health Science Network (CAAHSN). As a member, the Institute's work in Alice Springs will continue to rely on on strategic and operational partnerships with the other medical research institutes, universities, and primary and tertiary care providers active in Central Australia. Through the CAAHSN network, the Institute will seek to expand on mutually beneficial opportunities for impact in respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health.

To achieve reconciliation, we need to develop strong relationships built on trust and respect, and that are free of racism.

As an Institute, we are dedicated to carrying out collaborative research projects to build and improve the health system and translate research knowledge into practical contributions that enhance the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

At the heart of all our current and future research is the knowledge, respect and understanding that reducing health inequity requires an Indigenous voice with community control and shared decision making. In line with the new 2020 Close the Gap framework, our research will prioritise shared

Our work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is very important to the Institute and, as noted above, we have had a facility in Alice Springs since 2007 dedicated to carrying out collaborative research projects in response to community needs. Through this we build much-needed knowledge which supports the provision of practical contributions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health.

The Baker Institute is committed to playing a leading role in chronic disease education, research and advocacy in Central Australia and nationally.



One of the key educational activities is the annual Educational Symposium held in Alice Springs. This symposium is now in its thirteenth year and aims to upskill healthcare professionals working in rural and remote health, with a particular focus on Aboriginal health. This educational event engages and invites local and interstate stakeholders to share their knowledge and offers networking opportunities for delegates. The Symposium is held annually Each year, in late November or early December in the Alice Springs Convention Centre and typically attracts up to 150 delegates. The program is also streamed and recorded to allow more people the opportunity to participate.

We are currently creating an engagement plan in order to develop and strengthen our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Institute recognises and promotes the values of integrity and respect towards everyone including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and languages across Australia. It is important for the Institute to be respectful and acknowledge the pre- and post-colonial histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia in our core business activities. The importance of learning and understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems that connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people spiritually to the Australian lands, seas, rivers, stars mountains and dreamtime

stories is not broadly understood in our Institution. Sharing learning opportunities can teach respect and influence the reconciliation principles broadly to the Baker Institute's staff, and its supporters.

This is currently supported by a statement in our employment advertisements. The Institute has engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. Engagement is sought during the Enterprise Agreement consultative process, the most recent Enterprise Agreement commenced 2021.

### **OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

The Baker Institute has partnerships with Melbourne-based organisations, including the Aboriginal Health Liaison unit at the Alfred hospital, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, The Boon Wurrung Foundation and the Indigenous Centre for Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Melbourne.

The Baker Institute has also developed meaningful partnerships with a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations through work done while involved in the Diabetes Outreach service to 11 communities over a ten-year period. Although the Baker Institute ceased running this service in early 2020, it maintains relationships with many of these clinics and organisations.

The RAP Working Group works with partners, the Alfred Hospital, Monash University and Burnet Institute – as part of the Alfred Research Alliance – as well as the University of Melbourne. The RAP Working Group also works with its partners in the Northern Territory, such as the Alice Springs Hospital, Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT), Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and Wellbeing, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Centre for Remote Health, Purple House, Tangentyere Council and Menzies School of Health Research. We are also a proud founding member of the Central Australian Academic Health Science Network (CAAHSN).

Our RAP working group is leading our journey to reconciliation through a number of activities.

#### **We have already implemented the following initiatives:**

- Facilitating, promoting and participating in National Reconciliation Week activities and events.
- Cultural awareness training for RAP Working Group and invited staff.
- Annual cultural awareness training for small groups facilitated by Seona James.
- Commissioned artwork for our RAP from Kaptify artist Adam Magennis. Kaptify sits within Boonwurrung Balug country and Auntie Carolyn recommended a local artist.
- Commissioned artwork from a Victorian

Aboriginal artist to signify the research done by the Baker Institute, its commitment to equitable health and the beginning of our reconciliation journey.

- An Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of internal and external meetings, as well as encouraging personalisation of the acknowledgment and understanding of the significance to ensure meaningfulness. Additionally, members of the Boon Wurrung Foundation have offered to review a personalised Acknowledgement of Country.
- Annually recognising National Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks with events which have included DJirri DJirri dancers and delivering seminars and talks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presenters.
- Raised awareness of “Close the Gap” and signing of the petition.
- Appointed a RAP Champion from senior management: Professor Vaughan Macefield (co-chair of our Gender Equity and Diversity Committee).
- Designated intranet section for RAP information, and resources.
- Conducting bi-monthly RAP meetings and maintaining regular contact in between meetings via email.

- Encouraging staff and students to use promotional banners on all social media throughout dates of significance as well as developing an email signature used by all staff and students that includes Acknowledgement of Country on an ongoing basis.
- Inclusion of leave days for extended family in the Institute Enterprise Agreement.
- Introduced survey questions to all staff and students relating to knowledge of our RAP initiatives included in the Baker Institute Gender Equity and Diversity engagement survey, to gauge the level of understanding of RAP initiatives at the time of establishment of our working group and as we progress.
- Allocated annual budget for RAP and initiatives.

**We are working towards the following:**

- Planning to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy as well as educating senior leaders on the effects of racism.
- Consulting with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.
- Exploring opportunities for all staff and students to increase their

awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and cultural learning through online learning modules.

- Increasing staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.
- Inviting a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year wherever possible.
- Encouraging personalisation of the Acknowledgment of Country and understanding of the significance to ensure meaningfulness. Members of the Boon Wurrung Foundation have offered to review a personalised Acknowledgement of Country.
- Encouraging participation in both external and internal NAIDOC Week events and reviewing HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.
- Identifying topics for lunch and learn sessions to increase understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- Annually raising awareness of National Close the Gap Day and highlighting the effectiveness of community-driven initiatives towards health equity.
- Consulting with local Elders and Traditional Owners to display a meaningful Acknowledgement of Country in the foyer of all Baker Institute sites,

both in English and local Traditional Language.

- Consulting with local Elders and Traditional Owners to rename meeting rooms to meaningful names in Traditional Language.
- Consulting with other partners of the Alfred Research Alliance about creating a dedicated culturally safe space for use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students and visitors.
- Developing and implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.
- Increasing the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workplace.
- Actively targeting opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students, to provide tours/assistance/work experience in medical research as well as pursuing funding for a new program called 'The First Scientists'.
- Working towards Developing and implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy; we strive to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated suppliers wherever possible.
- Developing commercial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
- Establishing a stand-alone committee to progress our RAP with its own Terms of Reference. This will bring more visibility

to the committee and assist with ongoing budget allocation and active involvement of members.

- Engaging our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments and reports into Gender Equity and Diversity Committee (quarterly), Management Round Table (every 6 months) and the Baker Institute Board (annually).
- Reporting RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly via all staff meetings, intranet and Management Round Table, and via designated RAP webpage with quarterly updates.
- Developing and maintaining a comprehensive RAP actions implementation plan to track, measure and report on key actions against our RAP commitments. A budget allocation has been made for the RAP implementation in 2022.
- Maintaining an internal RAP champion from senior management.
- Acknowledging the importance of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We will focus on this for our RAP launch and lunch and learn series.
- Providing Institute-wide cultural awareness training on a digital learning platform.

## OUR RAP WORKING GROUP

Our dedicated RAP Working Group currently forms part of our Gender Equity and Diversity Committee. The Baker RAP Working Group was established in 2018 by Amy Searle, a PhD student at the Institute and championed by Ricky Mentha, Heidi Roache and Leonie Cullen. Amy Searle, Amy Lankin and Ricky Mentha identify as Aboriginal people. The academic champion is Prof Vaughan Macefield, who has engaged extensively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and students in Sydney. Although Amy Searle and Ricky Mentha have left the Institute, they are often consulted on matters.

**The RAP Working Group is a cross representation of our research community and professional services [Admin] and includes:**

Prof Vaughan Macefield	RAP Champion, co-chair Gender Equity and Diversity Committee, Laboratory Head
Leonie Cullen (Co-Chair)	Research Integrity and Support Manager
Heidi Roache (Co-Chair)	General Manager, Partnerships
Amy Lankin	Aboriginal Research Assistant HTLV-1 (Central Australia)
Dr Elizabeth Barr	Clinical Researcher
Catherine Butterfield	Media and Communications Manager
A/Prof Neale Cohen	Clinical Researcher and Diabetes Specialist
Dr Ben Costello	Clinical Researcher and Cardiologist
Gabriella Farrugia	Research Assistant
Taylah Gaynor	PhD Student
Adrian Quintarelli	General Manager, Occupational Health and Safety
Nicola Sergienko	PhD Student
Dr Aowen Zhuang	Research Officer

Invitations to join the working group are sent by email to the whole Institute community. We have engaged a newly appointed Aboriginal Research Assistant HTLV-1, Amy Lankin, from our Central Australian office to join our RAP Working Group.



# Relationships

**We are committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are engaged and in control of their own health.**

Our ‘way of doing business’ includes working with and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations. We are passionate about using our skills and expertise to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and to contribute to better health outcomes. The depth of our commitment is what defines Aboriginal Health at the Baker Institute. The Institute respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and contribution to Aboriginal Health Research. It respects that networking and collaboration opportunities, as well as a community transfer of research knowledge and ownership, is critical to harnessing respectful and sustainable relationships to improve how we work with Aboriginal communities.

## FOCUS AREA

Relationships and principled approaches to building meaningful partnerships with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.</li> </ul>	October 2022, October 2023	General Manager, Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	May 2023	General Manager, Partnerships
<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	Media and Communications Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	General Manager, Partnerships
	<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>	May 2022, May 2023	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to organise at least one NRW event each year.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	General Manager, Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia’s NRW website.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	General Manager, Partnerships

# Relationships

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation.</li> </ul>	July 2022, July 2023	RAP Champion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold four lunch and learn sessions to educate staff on the aims of the Uluru Statement, and other relevant cultural topics.</li> </ul>	May/August 2022, May/December 2023	General Manager, Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly, internally and externally via social media platforms</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	Media and Communications Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	General Manager, Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate and engage with other organisations on our precincts to develop ways to advance reconciliation, through shared initiatives.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	General Manager, Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on current Baker Institute diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives in collaboration with key stakeholders to further promote reconciliation among our sphere of influence and continue our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	RAP Champion
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	<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>	January 2023	Senior HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.</li> </ul>	January 2023	General Manager, Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to review and consult our anti-discrimination policy.</li> </ul>	January 2023	General Manager, Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	Senior HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heavily promote and track the completion of the Baker Institute online diversity module in the Institute learning management system by staff and students.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	Senior HR Manager

## Respect

The Baker Institute respects the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to promote community wellbeing through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health focussed research, and commits to participate in the celebration, appreciation and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures during community events both internally and externally. Pride, understanding and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories is particularly important to our organisation in our commitment to working collaboratively with these communities to improve health outcomes. It is crucial that our organisation understands the unique stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and values their cultural knowledge and experience, if we want to be effective collaborators.

The Institute respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and contribution

to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research to promote community wellbeing. It respects that networking and collaboration opportunities, as well as a community transfer of research knowledge and ownership, is critical to harnessing respectful and sustainable relationships to improve how we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We want to provide an environment where all people can be proud to bring their whole selves to work, and to their dealings with us, knowing that their cultural needs are appropriately recognised. This is important in not just attracting and retaining our valued staff, students, and collaborators, but also supporting them to achieve their best.

Our work is about delivering medical advances that help all Australians live

healthier for longer. To ensure our work is contributing to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – a group we know has a higher burden of chronic disease – we must understand cultural and historical factors including the impact of colonisation, and racism that can drive differences in health outcomes. Only with a full appreciation of these unique drivers can our work have a lasting impact.

The Baker Institute commits to participate in the celebration, appreciation and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures during regular community events, both internally and externally. These are important opportunities for our organisation to remain connected to community and support the centring of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and stories.



**The Institute respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research to promote community wellbeing.**

# Respect

## FOCUS AREA

Relationships and principled approaches to building networks of leadership and shared opportunities to Closing the Gap initiatives aligned with Aboriginal Health Focussed Research priorities.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.</li> </ul>	April 2022	Research Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.</li> </ul>	April 2022	Research Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.</li> </ul>	July 2022	Research Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, the HR team and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	Research Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider various ways cultural learning can be provided through online, face-to-face workshops or cultural immersions.</li> </ul>	August 2022	Research Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for all staff and students to increase their awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and cultural learning through online learning modules.</li> </ul>	July 2022	Research Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measure Baker Institute staff’s current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements following implementation and completion of cultural awareness training.</li> </ul>	August 2022	Research Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Reconciliation Australia’s ‘Share our Pride’ online tool to all our staff irrespective of gender, race and backgrounds.</li> </ul>	April 2022, April 2023	General Manager, Partnerships



# Respect

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>6. <b>Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</li> <li>• Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.</li> <li>• Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.</li> <li>• Encourage use of email signature by all staff and students that includes Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners</li> <li>• Include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of internal and external meetings. Encourage personalisation of the Acknowledgment and understanding of the significance to ensure meaningfulness.</li> </ul>	<p>July 2022, July 2023</p> <p>July 2022, July 2023</p> <p>December 2022, December 2023</p> <p>April 2022, April 2023</p> <p>April 2022, April 2023</p>	<p>Media and Communications Manager</p> <p>Media and Communications Manager</p> <p>RAP Champion</p> <p>Research Officer</p> <p>Media and Communications Manager, RAP Champion</p>
<p>7. <b>Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAP Working Group to develop and run an internal NAIDOC week event that will be promoted to other partners where possible. This will be held in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.</li> <li>• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.</li> <li>• Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.</li> <li>• Promote/encourage participation in both internal and external NAIDOC events to staff.</li> </ul>	<p>July 2022, July 2023</p> <p>July 2022, July 2023</p> <p>May 2022, May 2023</p> <p>July 2022, July 2023</p>	<p>Research Officer</p> <p>Research Officer</p> <p>Senior HR Manager</p> <p>Research Officer</p>



# Respect

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>8. <b>Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage staff and students to use promotional banners on all social media throughout dates of significance.</li> <li>Develop a calendar to recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance.</li> <li>Raise awareness of National Close the Gap Day and highlight the effectiveness of community-driven initiatives towards health equity.</li> </ul>	<p>July 2022, July 2023</p> <p>April 2022, January 2023</p> <p>April 2022, April 2023</p>	<p>Media and Communications Manager</p> <p>Media and Communications Manager</p> <p>Media and Communications Manager</p>
<p>9. <b>Acknowledge and demonstrate respect towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working on and visiting the Baker Institute.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with local Elders and Traditional Owners to display a meaningful Acknowledgement of Country in the foyer of all Baker Institute sites, both in English and Traditional Language.</li> <li>Consult with local Elders and Traditional Owners to rename meeting rooms to meaningful names in Traditional Language.</li> <li>Consult with other partners of the Alfred Research Alliance about creating a dedicated culturally safe space for use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students and visitors.</li> <li>Promote artwork commissioned to signify the research done by the Baker Institute, its commitment to equitable health and the beginning of our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	<p>July 2022, July 2023</p> <p>July 2022, July 2023</p> <p>July 2022, July 2023</p> <p>April 2022</p>	<p>Research Officer</p> <p>Research Officer</p> <p>Research Officer</p> <p>Research Officer</p>

## Opportunities

As a medical research institute we are passionate about training and education. We are keen to explore an initiative with secondary school students through a science program, including virtual tours and education resources. If students are exposed early to career opportunities, they have a broader knowledge of areas which interest them. The Institute staff and current students are interested in developing this program which is likely to develop two-way relationships which may lead to expansion of initiatives. This could provide a pathway for careers in medical research and provide placements for future undergraduate and doctoral students.

Our Institute also has partnerships with key Universities, University of Melbourne, La Trobe, Deakin and Monash University. We will actively explore opportunities regarding engaging with our partners on joint initiatives.

This may include a designated scholarship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

As a workplace, we are focused on providing a culturally safe environment for all. We view that as looking after our staff students and providing the best environment to nurture positivity and productivity. We look to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by providing professional development and acknowledge and understand cultural significance.

It is essential to the Baker Institute, Gender Equity and Diversity Committee and RAP Working Group to provide a culturally safe and culturally inclusive working environment. Cultural safety is key to the success of our RAP and being a progressive and inclusive organisation.

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**As a workplace, we are focused on providing a culturally safe environment for all. We view that as looking after our staff students and providing the best environment to nurture positivity and productivity.**

# Opportunities

## FOCUS AREA

Research and Training, professional development.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. <b>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>	July 2022, July 2023	Research Integrity and Support Manager Senior HR Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.</li> </ul>	July 2022, July 2023	Research Integrity and Support Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.</li> </ul>	July 2023	Research Integrity and Support Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a culturally-inclusive workplace for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. This will be done via self-reflection and education of staff on cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural competence and cultural safety.</li> </ul>	May 2022, May 2023	Research Integrity and Support Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff are provided with future employment and development opportunities. This will be actioned through internal messaging, emails and direct follow up with managers of individuals.</li> </ul>	January 2023	Senior HR Manager and Research Integrity and Support Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and training pathways across all divisions of the Baker Institute.</li> </ul>	January 2023	Senior HR Manager and Research Integrity and Support Manager

# Opportunities

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in all job advertisements, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply'.</li> <li>• Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.</li> <li>• Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on selection panels when recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and/or for roles that will be working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members or services.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce.</li> </ul>	<p>July 2022, July 2023</p> <p>July 2022, July/2023</p> <p>January 2023</p> <p>July 2022, July 2023</p>	<p>Senior HR Manager and Research Integrity and Support Manager</p> <p>Research Integrity and Support Manager</p> <p>Senior HR Manager and Research Integrity and Support Manager</p> <p>July 2022, July/2023</p>
<p><b>11. Provide opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore Career Trackers and investigate opportunities to host students at the Institute interested in medical science.</li> <li>• Develop a new mentoring program called 'The First Scientists' that encourages young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to study Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) subjects.</li> </ul>	<p>July 2022, July/2023</p> <p>July 2022</p>	<p>Research Integrity and Support Manager</p> <p>Research Integrity and Support Manager</p>

## Opportunities

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>12. <b>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.</li> </ul>	July 2022	Research Integrity and Support Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate Supply Nation membership.</li> </ul>	July 2022	Purchasing Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.</li> </ul>	July 2022	Research Integrity and Support Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.</li> </ul>	July 2022	Research Integrity and Support Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.</li> </ul>	July 2022	Research Integrity and Support Manager

# Governance

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>13. <b>Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be represented on the RAP Working Group for the life of the RAP</li> <li>• Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.</li> <li>• Continue to meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.</li> <li>• Transition the RAP Working Group as a stand-alone committee independent of the Gender Equity and Diversity Committee with budget control and increased visibility in the Institute.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2022, January 2023</p> <p>April 2022</p> <p>April June August October December 2022, 2023</p> <p>January 2023</p>	<p>General Manager, Partnerships</p> <p>Research Integrity and Support Manager</p> <p>Research Integrity and Support Manager</p> <p>Research Integrity and Support Manager</p>
<p>14. <b>Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define resource needs for RAP implementation and include a budget allocation.</li> <li>• Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.</li> </ul>	<p>September 2022</p> <p>April 2022, 2023</p> <p>September 2022, 2023</p> <p>December 2022, 2023</p>	<p>Research Integrity and Support Manager</p> <p>RAP champion</p>

# Governance

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and maintain a comprehensive RAP actions implementation plan to track, measure and report on key actions against our RAP commitments.</li> <li>Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.</li> </ul>	December 2022 December 2023  January 2023	Research Integrity and Support Manager  Research Integrity and Support Manager
<b>15. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.</li> <li>Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly. Updates will be available on our RAP section of the intranet, in the Institute bulletin and at the annual staff meeting.</li> <li>Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.</li> <li>Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia’s biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.</li> </ul>	September 2022, September 2023  April 2022,2023 September 2022,2023 December 2022,2023  July 2022 July 2023  May 2022	Research Integrity and Support Manager  Research Integrity and Support Manager  Research Integrity and Support Manager  Research Integrity and Support Manager
<b>16. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP.</li> </ul>	October 2023	Research Integrity and Support Manager

## CONTACT DETAILS

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