



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP)

Child & Family Services

February, 2023 – February, 2025



Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Child & Family Services (Cafs) 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 Cafs 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, Cafs 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 lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and 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. Cafs is part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Cafs' 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 Cafs on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



RAP Feature Artist and Artwork "Healing Scars"

About the Artist - Shirahan (Shu) Brown

I am a proud Adnyamathanha Man of the Flinders Ranges, South Australia. I have a passion for Aboriginal Art and sharing this through different mediums, services and products. For the past 5 years I have been working more in the Digital Art Space, gaining increased experience and interest as I produce more work for a variety of projects.

A proud father of 4 children and married to a teacher, together we aim to help organisations in all sectors - but particularly through our business Nunga Creations we target early childhood education, embed Indigenous perspectives through play and visual art designs.

Cafs works with Children and Families and I envisaged an artwork for their Innovate RAP that would reflect this, using bright colours to promote happiness and connection. Images that relate to family and culture that all people and cultures can connect to. Symbols that represent, family, culture, connection whilst having a spiritual element as well. A pathway and journey to healing and belonging that connects to Cafs staff, business and community.

About the Artwork

"Healing Scars"

"Connection to Family and Culture are the fundamental foundations towards ones journey of healing. Guided by our spiritual beliefs and beings of creation such as Bunjil, we all develop a sense of belonging and connection when not in the presence of our loved ones.

Communities, families and individuals may bear the scars of our past but we can be the difference between ongoing transgenerational trauma, and living a loved-filled life with the people who can give us the love and opportunity every child and family deserves.

Our path is not predetermined. We are all on our own journey. Let us walk it together, begin healing the scars and find your place on your own journey of healing and discovery."

Shu Brown



OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

We will continue to collaborate and walk with community to ensure that Cafs becomes a clear example for others to follow in ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are able to *self-determine their lives and feel culturally safe and supported through family and community services. We will have the courage to try new things that will transform our services and relationships ethically and responsibly.

*Self-determination is an 'ongoing process of choice' to ensure that Indigenous communities are able to meet their social, cultural and economic needs.





Message from the CEO

This Reconciliation Action Plan is one of the ways that Cafs demonstrates its public commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This second plan is another opportunity for Cafs to authentically demonstrate a range of ways that it is using its position as a recognised leader in inclusion and diversity to make measurable and positive changes in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It builds on the momentum of our Reflect RAP and represents an expansion in our relationships with Traditional Owners.

At Cafs we acknowledge our historical responsibilities in Australia's shameful era of assimilation that led to the Stolen Generations. We have been working hard over the past year to address our history, including the experiences of Aboriginal former residents of the Ballarat Orphanage and Ballarat Children's Home.

We acknowledge that the histories and records of this organisation belong to the children and young people who lived them, the adults they have become, and the families they have left behind.

We take our responsibility as the holders of these records very seriously – both historically and for those we work with today and in the future – and we are working tirelessly to make sure that this is understood across our organisation, and by the public.

This responsibility extends to sharing these stories across the region to ensure that this aspect of Ballarat's history is understood as part of broader Truth-telling through the Yoorrook Justice Commission and the implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

We commit to working with communities and demonstrating every day that we are conscious

of our circumstances and how we build a different and better future together. This future will be given life through this plan by celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, in ensuring that culture is at the heart of all service experiences, and that we will make structural changes to our organisation, services and projects that are necessary to create this change.

We understand that there must be self-determination for families through our services and partner organisations. We also acknowledge that people we care for are not the sum of their vulnerabilities. Rather they bring their own hopes and dreams and, for some people, their lived experience is intersectional. This means that we also consider people we care for as whole people who may also be part of the LGBTIQ+ community including Sister Girls or Brother Boys, have a disability, or have cultural requirements based on their gender and we are able to respond accordingly.

While the steps set out in this plan are comparatively small in comparison to our shared history, I believe that they are intentional, meaningful and will enable us to hold ourselves accountable.

We will know we are successful in implementing this plan when we have established and are cultivating strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, when our staff are taking responsibility for delivering culturally safe services and supporting self-determination for clients and when Cafs has a reputation amongst community for being culturally safe, responsive and a provider of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

WENDY STURGES she/her
Chief Executive Officer

Message from our RAP Action Group Co-chairs

As Co-Chairs we are committed to our leadership role in supporting the RAP Action Group members in ensuring that there is widespread understanding of our organisational commitments to reconciliation, as we work to meet the requirements of this RAP in coming years.

This includes championing change across all Cafs sites and within teams and ensuring that our systems and processes enable us to track and measure our progress.

We'd like to ensure that this RAP positions Cafs to seize opportunities to partner with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations by creating genuine relationships over the long term.

There is a clear focus in this RAP on building individual staff capacity – this includes embedding cultural safety in our interactions with children, families, and people who use our services.

We're also focusing on self-reflection, learning and understanding cultures, and supervision processes that enable us to sit with what comes up for us personally as we each take responsibility for the changes that are required to deliver our parts in this plan.

KYLIE AND LEAH



Our business

Cafs is an independent, not-for-profit community service organisation that provides a range of programs and services across the Central Highlands of Victoria.

We have a total of 5 office locations in Ballarat, Daylesford, Bacchus Marsh and Ararat. Additionally, we run 5 youth residential houses and an Early Childhood Parenting Centre in Ballarat.



Traditional Owner Groups



This geographical area spans the land, waterways and air space of the Wadawurrung People, Eastern Maar Peoples (Djap Wurrung), Dja Dja Wurrung People and Barengi Gadjin Land Council (representing Traditional Owners from the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Peoples).

* we recognise that Traditional Owner Group boundaries don't align with state borders or local government areas. Dealing with multiple jurisdictions and municipalities lengthens processes and strains resources, creating complications for Traditional Owners and councils. To support sustainable engagement and uphold self-determination principles, this Plan encourages a Country-based approach. This means Aboriginal Victorians determine the engagement, informed by Country boundaries rather than local council boundaries.

We provide a range of programs and services that cover out-of-home care for children and young people, family violence, housing, men's support, financial counselling, problem gambling and community development.

The majority of Cafs' funding comes from the Victorian Government with some Federal Government funding. Donations and philanthropic grants are often sought to support piloting new programs. Cafs is overseen by a Board of Governance made up of members of our community, and a number of volunteers help us achieve our goals.

At the time of writing this plan Cafs employs approximately 260 people, 3 per cent of whom identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Cafs is also supported by volunteers at Thread Together (a partnership providing people in need with brand new clothing and accessories), as Youth Mentors and as Foster Carers and Kinship Carers. We support more than 6,800 individuals and families each year.

Cafs appointed Ms Karen Heap, the Chief Executive Officer of Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC) to its Board of Governance, strengthening the ties to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and service delivery organisations.

Stakeholders involved in our operations, and therefore within our sphere of influence can be summarised by this graphic:



INTERNAL

- Employees
- Executive
- Board Members
- Volunteers & Carers
- Orange Door

EXTERNAL

- **Service Users; children, families & individuals at risk**
- **Traditional Owner Groups & Registered Aboriginal Parties**
- **Department of Fairness, Families and Housing**
- **Department of Education & Training**
- **All levels of Government**
- **Contractors**
- **Accreditation bodies (ie Rainbow Tick, White Ribbon, Diversity Council Australia etc)**
- **Ballarat & District Aboriginal Cooperative**
- **Previous residents of Cafs care**
- **Community organisations; Social Services and cultural groups**
- **Fundraisers and donors**
- **Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)**
- **Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare**



Our RAP

Cafs has developed this RAP in recognition of the fact that we have a strong role to play in contributing to the reconciliation story across our services and geographic footprint.

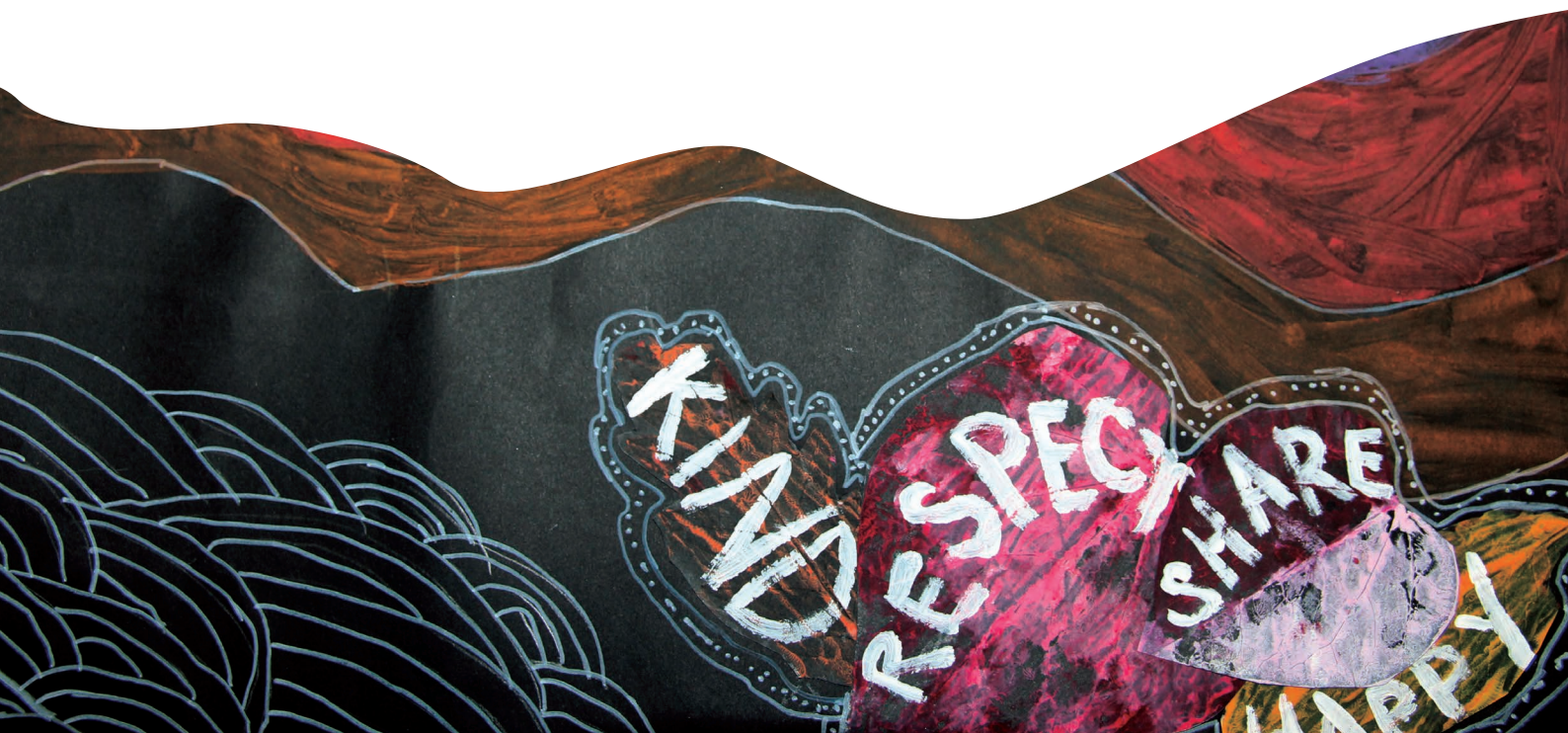
We do this in conjunction with our service partners and the broader community. The actions contained in this Innovate RAP will provide us with a blueprint to understand and consider culture in our practice. This includes a strong commitment to embedding cultural safety in all that we do.

Cafs has developed this plan through its RAP Action Group and the Cafs Executive. Cafs staff have also had an opportunity to reflect on their previous RAP achievements and how this Innovate RAP will connect to their daily work. Cafs RAP Action Group have stewardship over the implementation and monitoring of this Plan. The Cafs Board will also receive regular updates across the executive portfolios in relation to

the progress of the Plan, demonstrating high organisational accountability for this work.

Important feedback for this RAP was received from Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Bonnie Chew, Director of Mirriyu Cultural Consulting; and the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative, providing insights from the perspective of local community and linkages to other organisations who have created Reconciliation Action Plans in the region. Cafs is beginning its journey to establish relationships with the Dja Dja Wurrung, Eastern Maar Peoples and Barengi Gadjin Land Council and has created actions in this plan to reflect this.

The RAP Action Group members include; Kylie Kennedy-Climpton (proud Wotjobaluk woman), Family Violence; Peter Lamb, Finance; Leah Crough, People and Engagement; Joy Nichols, Early Childhood; Taite McNamara, Family Services; Liz Hardiman, Inclusion and Diversity; Bernadette Keogh 'Keeping Families Together', and Kat Avery, Heritage and Records. We are also grateful for the contributions of Darlene Rumler (Dept of Education & Training) who walked along side us as a member of the Action Group in its early stages.



Our RAP champion is CEO Wendy Sturgess – also a RAP Action Group member.

The hard work of the members of the inaugural RAP Action Group is also recognised, noting this work provided the foundation for future engagement and work with community.

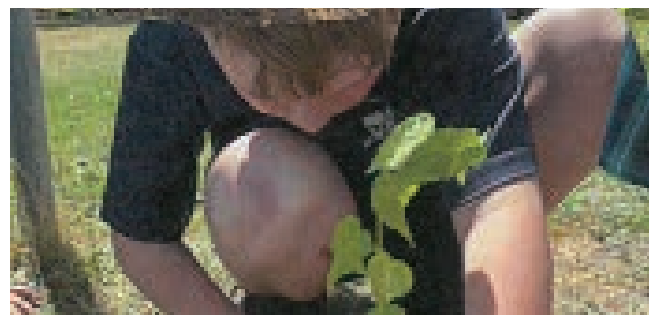
Cafs successfully completed its first Reflect RAP across 2019-2020, adapting its plan to ensure that it met its reconciliation plan commitments including moving many activities online during the global pandemic. This included sharing documentaries, participating in digital National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week activities, and hosting online Q&As for staff.

In brief, Cafs Reflect plan highlights include:

- **Recruitment of a dedicated role** to support Reconciliation Planning as a major focus for the organisation and dedicated budget to support activities.
- **Purchasing resources** that reflect the diversity of Cafs families and children, including Aboriginal art, activities, games and Aboriginal toys for children's spaces.
- **Celebrating NAIDOC Week** with a special online Q&A with Nova Peris OAM OLY
- **Strengthening the Cafs relationship with Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative and other Aboriginal services** including Koorie Education Officers and working closely with the City of Ballarat Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer.
- **Commissioning art from local community members** across Cafs sites and developing a list of artists from which to invest into the future.
- **Raising funds for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.**

The organisation has evolved through its Reflect activities into one that is now prepared to be fully engaged with the magnitude of the impact of Cafs past operations as the Ballarat Orphanage and an openness to redress and healing. We have learnt that we need to invite people and organisations to join our journey and set new benchmarks for cultural practices, celebrating cultures and developing cultural understanding as a minimum requirement for staff. Building trust has been a challenge for Cafs, and we have a renewed commitment to strengthening relationships with Traditional Owner groups, the Ballarat & District Aboriginal Cooperative and local communities - ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are involved in improving Cafs services and in shaping its reconciliation activities.

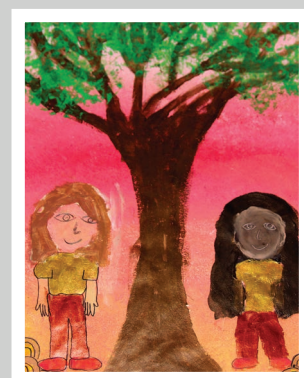
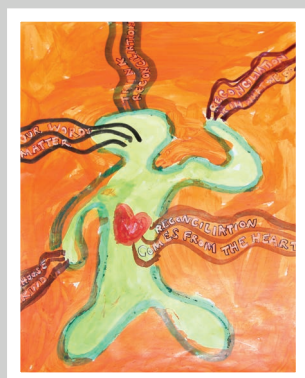
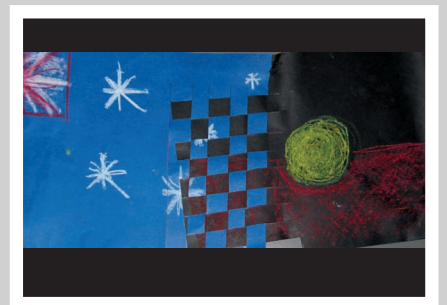
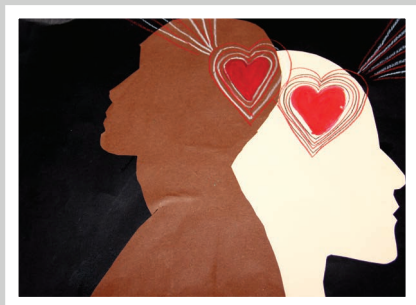
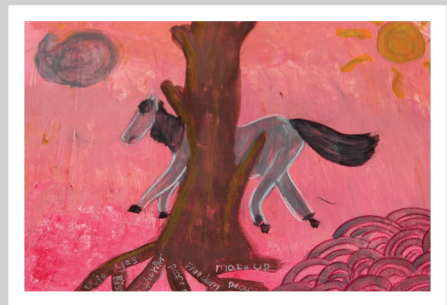
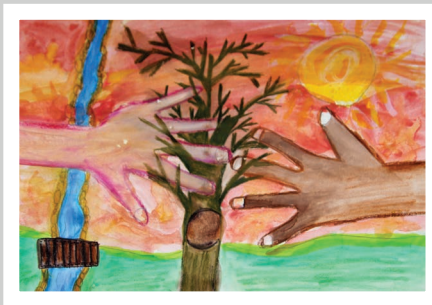
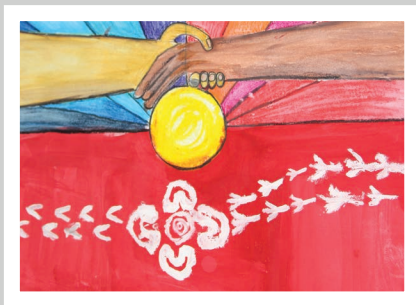
In the time between the Reflect Plan and the creation of this Innovate Plan, Cafs has continued to make change and to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance. This includes participating in a lunch time NAIDOC chat with football legend and author Adam Goodes, taking initial steps in sharing Cafs archival records and care records with Stolen Generations Survivors and working with Traditional Owners to name meeting rooms in language across all sites. We also celebrated NAIDOC week with tree planting at Maggie Primary School.



So thank you cofs for donating us a magpie
Primary school and doing it for the aboriginal
NAIDOC week. so thank you

Scotsburn Primary School student 'Mt. Buninyong' art project outcomes (featured throughout this RAP)

"Students were inspired by the picture story book "Say Yes" by Jennifer Castles, which explores friendships during the 1967 referendum. We talked about improvements gained by the landmark decision, work still to be done and the importance of continuing the journey of reconciliation. When asked what reconciliation meant to them, most students identified themes of coming together, supporting each other, and celebrating differences. We aimed to show these messages in these artworks." **Lead teacher, Elizabeth Morgan**



*Acknowledgment of student artists; page 33

RELATIONSHIPS



Cafs will continue to build relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that are built on mutual respect, trust and inclusiveness. These relationships help to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous staff, students, children, families and community members.

Building relationships are essential for the success of our RAP, as well as developing a deeper understanding of Australia's First Peoples.



ACTION 1

Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	March 2023	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
<p>Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. Including but not limited to a plan for engagement with the relevant Aboriginal Organisations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wadawurrung Aboriginal Traditional Owners Corporation • Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation • Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation • Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation • Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative • Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative; and • Other Traditional Owner Groups in relation to Stolen Generations access to Cafs historical records 	May 2023	Exec Manager Client Outcomes
Investigate further relationship building opportunities, activities and events, including partnering with BADAC and Goolum Goolum at the practitioner level and the convening of a panel with local Elders to inform ongoing engagement approaches and opportunities to be in relationship together.	February 2024	<p>Lead: CEO</p> <p>Support: Executive Management Team</p>



ACTION 2

Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023, 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Executive Management Team
RAP Action Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June, 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW, recognising that Cafs operate across several geographical locations.	27 May - 3 June 2023, 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Executive Management Team
Organise at least one NRW event each year (involving Cafs geographic reach), extending an invitation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share their reconciliation experiences and/or stories.	27 May- 3 June, 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead

Action 3

Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	May 2023	Manager Brand Development
Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with Cafs stakeholders (internal and external) via monthly. All Staff e-communications, social media posts, media and Cafs website	February 2023 and ongoing	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	November 2023	Lead: CEO Support: Executive Management Team
Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	April 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Continue to promote Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride online tool to all staff.	May 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead



ACTION 4

Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	September 2023	Exec Manager People & Engagement
Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	September 2023	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	June 2023	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	September 2023	Learning & Development Lead



RESPECT

Respect for culture is at the heart of this Reconciliation Action Plan. Working in partnership is very much our approach, and respect is where partnership begins. Through respectful alliances and deeper understanding we can work with staff, families and communities to help improve employment and social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and families.



ACTION 5

Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	February 2023	Learning & Development Lead
Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy. This includes consultation around intersectional identities through training including First Nations people who live with disability, or who are members of the LGBTIQ+ community.	April 2023	Learning & Development Lead
<p>Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff which defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business. Consider various ways cultural learning can be provided such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online• Face to face• Workshops• Cultural immersion experiences	April 2023	Learning & Development Lead
Provide opportunities for RAP Action Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	May 2023	Learning & Development Lead
Engage the professional skills and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and creatives to enhance the aesthetics of our office spaces, and levitate cultural appreciation.	Ongoing Review September 2023, 2024	Chief Executive Officer

ACTION 6

Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country.	June 2023	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	June 2023	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	May, June and/or, July 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	Ongoing Review September 2023, 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Executive Management Team
Enshrine Cultural Leave in Cafs new Enterprise Agreement.	April 2023	Executive Manager People & Culture
Ensure Cafs display an Acknowledgement of Country plaque in our offices.	July 2023	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Honour First Nations peoples by reflecting their language in our place and meeting names in consultation with Traditional Owners.	April 2023	Inclusion & Diversity Lead

ACTION 7

Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC week.



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
RAP Action Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	April 2023	Lead: CEO Support: Executive Management Team
Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July 2023, 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Executive Management Team
Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week.	First week in July 2023, 2024	Executive Manager People & Culture
Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the delivery of internal or external NAIDOC Week event(s).	June 2023, 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Executive Management Team and Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Liaise with our local NAIDOC Week committee(s) to learn about and promote events in our community.	June 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead

ACTION 8

Strengthen Cafs History and Records Strategy with a focus on First Nations past and present histories and Truth-telling.



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop programs and services to support Aboriginal communities and Stolen Generation members to access Cafs records.	June 2023	Lead: CEO Support: Executive Management Team
Collaboratively work with Aboriginal communities to develop a new service delivery model for Stolen Generations to access records about themselves and their families.	June 2023	Heritage and History Records Lead
Continue to develop content for Cafs website which tells the history of Cafs role in the Stolen Generations, to support access to records and increase public awareness of Aboriginal histories.	June 2023	Heritage and History Records Lead
Work with the Wadawurrung Aboriginal Traditional Owners Corporation, Aboriginal communities and other partners to develop cultural protocols for the management and access to records of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.	June 2023	Heritage and History Records Lead
Work collaboratively with BADAC and the Wadawurrung Aboriginal Traditional Owners Corporation and Aboriginal communities and former residents to identify priority collection management and interpretation projects to increase access to records for Stolen Generations members.	Review June 2023, 2024	Heritage and History Records Lead
Liaise and collaborate with the Wadawurrung Aboriginal Traditional Owners Corporation, BADAC and other Aboriginal organisations to design cultural supports for Stolen Generations survivors.	Review June 2023, 2024	Heritage and History Records Lead
Develop cultural protocols for managing and providing access to historical records. In particular images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	September 2023	Heritage and History Records Lead

ACTION 9

Celebrate and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance to Cafs and communities.

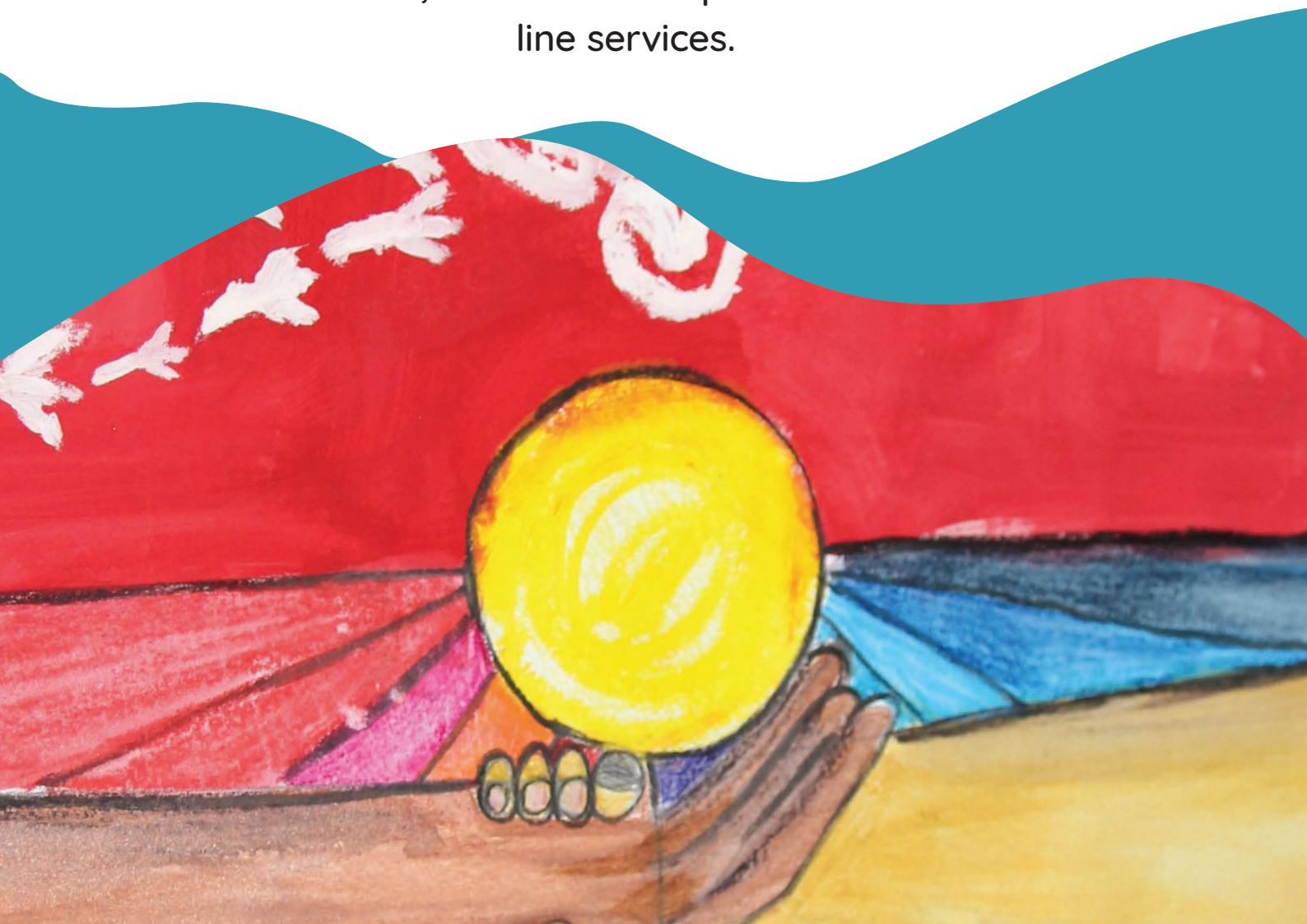


Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop and communicate a calendar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance.	January 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Circulate information and educational resources about each date of significance to all staff.	February 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Extend Cafs successful celebration of cultural and arts programming (ie music, visual arts, cultural knowledge workshops) – specifically focused on collaborating and celebrating with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation, BADAC and other Traditional Owners.	Review May 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead



OPPORTUNITIES

Cafs are intentional towards reconciliation and say yes to new opportunities where we can celebrate and affirm Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This is important to ensure that First Nations peoples are able to safely access Cafs services, for targeted recruitment and retention strategies as well as creating new opportunities for self-determining careers in management, human resources, team leadership as well as front line services.



ACTION 10

Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Collect data, and build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	March 2023, 2024	Executive Manager People & Engagement
Review the effectiveness of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy and update as necessary.	September 2023, 2024	Organisational Development Lead
Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	April 2023	Manager People & Engagement Partnerships & Safety
Engage with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or consultants to advise on recruitment, employment and retention strategies, including professional development.	April 2023	Manager People & Engagement Partnerships & Safety
Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	February 2023 and ongoing	Manager Brand Development
Include in all job advertisements that 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply'	February 2023 and ongoing	Manager Brand Development
Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	September 2023, 2024	Manager People and Engagement Partnerships and Safety
Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways (i.e. traineeships or internships).	September 2023	Organisational Development Lead
Include Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation as a paid selection panel member whenever possible.	Review March 2023, 2024	Manager People and Engagement Partnerships and Safety

ACTION 11

Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	June 2023	Chief Financial Officer
Investigate Supply Nation membership to better ensure Cafs is investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses across a range of procurement opportunities.	April 2023	Chief Financial Officer
Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	April 2023	Chief Financial Officer
Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	April 2023	Chief Financial Officer
Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	April 2023	Chief Financial Officer
Investigate opportunities that are mutually beneficial with Kinaway and the Victorian Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce.	April 2023	Chief Financial Officer

ACTION 12

Develop and strengthen culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients



Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders on the development of a Cafs Cultural Safety Framework.</p> <p>This includes exploring what is possible through Aboriginal organisations for cultural planning for young people and children in out of home care. This framework would reflect the intersectional experiences of people and children who may live with disability or be a member of the LGBTIQ+ community.</p>	November 2023	Executive Manager People & Culture; Executive Manager Client Outcomes

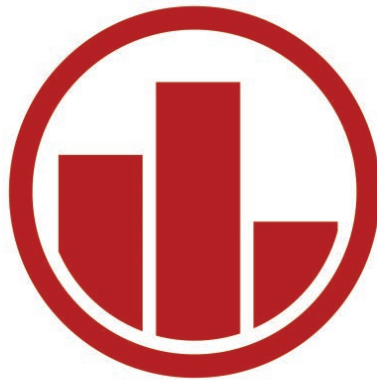
ACTION 13 Increase professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional mentoring network in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	March 2024	Organisational Development Lead
Develop a Cafs scholarship program that offers opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	October 2023	Organisational Development Lead

ACTION 14 Create cultural spaces and places that support reconciliation and community connectedness

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Explore the possibility of collaborating with BADAC on a cultural precinct project (including consideration for client/staff parking, space for events, housing of maintenance equipment and youth spaces).	August 2023	Chief Financial Officer
Investigate available grants and strategies for approaching cultural spaces and places alongside BADAC.	September 2023	Manager Brand Development

GOVERNANCE



GOVERNANCE



ACTION 15 Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RAPAG) to drive governance of the RAP

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAPAG.	Annual EOI process in January 2023 and 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Review, endorse and apply a Terms of Reference for the RAPAG.	February 2023 and 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Meet a minimum of four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	February, May, June and Oct 2023 and 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Develop and distribute an expression of interest to join the RAPAG to key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our sphere of influence.	January 2023 and January 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead

ACTION 16 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	February 2023 and 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Reporting March, May, July, Sept & Nov 2023, 2024; RAP updates published monthly on Cafs intranet.	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	May 2023 and 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	February 2023 and 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead



ACTION 17

Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June 2023, 2024	Executive Manager People & Culture
Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, 2023, 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Publish minutes for Cafs RAPAG on Cafs intranet to enable all staff to keep abreast of reconciliation activities and progress of this plan	February 2023 and ongoing	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Make available to all staff via electronic mean; Cafs annual RAP Impact Measurement questionnaire to facilitate further understanding of the impact of the plan.	November 2023 and 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	November 2023 and 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead
Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	January 2025	Inclusion & Diversity Lead

ACTION 18

Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	August 2024	Inclusion & Diversity Lead



Glossary of acronyms used:

BADAC	– Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative
Cafs	– Child & Family Services
CEO	– Chief Executive Officer
NAIDOC	– National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NRW	– National Reconciliation Week
OMA	– Medal of the Order of Australia
OLY	– Post-nominal letters to registered athletes who have participated in the Olympic Games
RAP	– Reconciliation Action Plan
RAPAG	– Reconciliation Action Plan Action Group (Cafs)
SNAICC	– Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care



WE SAY SORRY...

Conditions and experiences of children in out of home institutions around Australia were documented and reported on in the ‘Forgotten Australians’ Report by the Australian Senate in 2004. Many Aboriginal children came to our care as part of the Stolen Generations. As the successor organisation to the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, the Ballarat Orphanage and the Ballarat Children’s Home, Cafs acknowledges the harm done and apologises to those children.

CAFS APOLOGY

The Agency now called “Child and Family Services Ballarat Incorporated” (Cafs) has cared for children since 1866.

It managed the “Ballarat District Orphan Asylum (1866-1909), the Ballarat Orphanage” (1909 – 1968) and the “Ballarat Children’s Home” (1968 – 1983) providing institutional accommodation for children.

We are sorry.

For the abuse and cruelty that many children endured, and the needless pain and suffering that was inflicted. For failing in our duty of care. For failing to keep them safe. For failing to implement policies and processes to protect them from abuse and harm. For enabling and protecting the perpetrators of abuse. When children told us what happened, we didn’t listen to them. When the adults they became told us what happened, we ignored them for years. For many, justice was neither pursued nor achieved.

We took labour from children and robbed them of opportunities to prosper later in life. Many children never received the education they deserved, nor got to make choices about their own lives. Many did not receive the medical care they needed, causing longer term damage later in life.

We are sorry to families and for keeping them apart. To the mothers and fathers who could not visit their children, and the brothers and sisters who were separated from each other.

We were active participants in policies and practices that led to the Stolen Generations, and the devastation of Aboriginal families and communities.

We acknowledge that people who were from the LGBTIQ+ community would not have been

able to be their true selves in the institutional context as were the norms of the day. We did not always care adequately for those with diverse abilities.

We were part of the systems and structures that caused physical, psychological and social harm to children from all over Victoria, Australia and the world.

We acknowledge that trust has been betrayed and irreparable harm caused.

We do not seek forgiveness, we now seek truth and justice.

We commit to shine a light on our past, and to help former residents and their families keep finding and telling their own stories. We face our past so we can do better for families and children now and in the future.



Orphanage kindergarten class, 1914



Acknowledgements:

Cafs gives thanks to all of those who've contributed to our Reconciliation Action Planning.

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF CAFS RECONCILIATION ACTION GROUP SINCE 2021:

Kylie Kennedy-Climpton;
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Judith O'Grady;
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Liz Hardiman;
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Taite McNamara;
Renay Howard;
Susan Nelson;
Tegan Tregea;
Fleur Marshall;
Darlene Rumler;
Ange Elson;
Bonnie Chew

SCOTSBURN STUDENTS

Students were inspired by the picture story book "Say Yes" by Jennifer Castles, which explores friendships during the 1967 referendum. We talked about improvements gained by the landmark decision, work still to be done and the importance of continuing the journey of reconciliation. When asked what reconciliation meant to them, most students identified themes of coming together, supporting each other, and celebrating differences. We aimed to show these messages in these artworks.

Grade 2: **Noah M**

Grade 4: **Mia K, Kahlan G, Maggie E, Ella D,**

Grade 5: **Aiden G, Tully M**

Grade 6: **Lucas M, Jacob H, Mercury W, Lexie K, Lara F**

Lead teacher: Elizabeth Morgan



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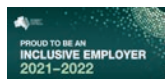
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