



REFLECT

Reconciliation Action Plan for the year 2014-15



Members of the Reconciliation Committee learn about the history and cultural significance of the local area

About the Reflect RAP

Reconciliation Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is about organisations from every sector turning good intentions into real actions and rising to the challenge of reconciling Australia. A RAP is a business plan that uses an holistic approach to create meaningful relationships, enhanced respect and promote sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Reconciliation Australia's RAP program includes four types of RAP, each offering a different level of engagement and support. In developing a Reflect RAP, our organisation commits to completing the following actions over the next 12 months to ensure we are well positioned to implement effective and mutually beneficial initiatives as part of the institute's future Reconciliation Action Plans. Our future RAPs will identify relationships, respect and opportunities actions specific to our business and our sphere of influence.

This Reflect RAP will allow our organisation to focus on building relationships both internally and externally, and raise awareness with our stakeholders to ensure there is shared understanding and ownership of our RAP within our organisation. Development of our future RAPs will involve consultation with staff across our organisation including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or stakeholders to achieve our vision for reconciliation.

Our business

Established in 1915, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research is the oldest medical research institute in Australia.

The institute is affiliated with The University of Melbourne and The Royal Melbourne Hospital, offering postgraduate training as the Department of Medical Biology of The University of Melbourne.

Our research focuses on understanding, preventing and treating cancers, infectious diseases and immune disorders through basic and translational research. Our vision is to be an innovative medical research institute that engages and enriches society and improves health outcomes through discovery, translation and education.

Our scientists work in diverse fields such as chemistry, genetics and mathematics to make fundamental discoveries about the way cells behave and communicate. We use this information to create clinical benefits for patients.

The institute has around 470 scientific staff, 170 students and 330 professional and support staff, spread over three campuses in Melbourne, Victoria, all situated on the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We currently have no identified Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff or students.

Our RAP

Being a part of Australia's premier medical research institute, the board, staff and students of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research are in a unique position to contribute towards reconciliation through activities that work towards 'closing the gap' in life expectancy and disease incidence and mortality as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience a burden of disease two-and-a-half times that of other Australians.

To embark on this journey, we must first build relationships of trust between the board, staff and students of the institute and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as a solid foundation to promote respect for the First Peoples of Australia and their cultures.

We are using the framework of Reconciliation Australia's Reflect RAP for our first plan, which will be a year-long commitment. This Reflect RAP is the first step in a series of RAPs that will continue to develop the institute's goals for reconciliation. The implementation of the RAP will be carried out by staff and students of all divisions and departments across the institute and will be overseen by the institute's Reconciliation Committee and championed by the director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research.

Over the next 12 months our organisation commits to:

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute's staff and students are committed to undertaking initiatives that aim to 'close the gap' in life expectancy, disease incidence and mortality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It is therefore important that we, as an organisation, have relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that are strong and based on trust so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be consulted and involved in decisions on the research programs and initiatives we develop and deliver that are aimed at closing the gap.

It is important that we build a culture of respect towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure that they are appropriately consulted and involved when we undertake planning of the initiatives that are intended to close the gap in the life expectancy, disease incidence and mortality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

At the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute we aim to make discoveries that will benefit all Australians and as such want to make sure our organisation is culturally accessible to all Australians including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. So that the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are appropriately considered when we develop initiatives aimed at reconciliation, we want to employ and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who understand their communities and can help us work best together.

Relationships

Respect

Opportunities

Tracking progress

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverables
Establish a RAP Working Group	Reconciliation Committee Convener	May 2014	1. A RAP Working Group, comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Australians, is formed, operational, and meets monthly to support the development of our RAP.
Develop external relationships	Reconciliation Committee Members, Reconciliation Committee Convener	October 2014	2. A list is developed of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and stakeholders within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to assist us in our understanding of the potential activities in our future RAPs.
Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Reconciliation Committee Members, Conference and Events Manager	27th May – 3rd June 2014	3. Our Working Group organises an internal event to recognise and celebrate NRW (27th May – 3rd June annually).
Raise internal awareness of the RAP	Director, Web Communications Manager, Reconciliation Committee Members	July 2014	4. An internal communications plan is developed and executed to raise awareness across the organisation about the RAP commitment, particularly with key internal stakeholders.
	Reconciliation Committee Members	May 2014	5. A presentation on our RAP commitment is given to all relevant areas of our business to ensure they have an understanding of how their area can contribute to our RAP.
Investigate cultural development	Head of Business Development, Reconciliation Committee Members	August 2014	6. A business case for cultural awareness, capability and development based on our core business is developed, with findings presented to the relevant HR/Learning and Development area for their input.
	Head of Business Development, Reconciliation Committee Members	June 2014	7. We have captured baseline data on our employees' current level of understanding around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, cultures and contributions.
Celebrate NAIDOC Week	Reconciliation Committee Members, Conference and Events Manager	6th – 13th July 2014	8. Our Working Group participates in a community NAIDOC Week event, or holds an internal event (1st Sunday – 2nd Sunday in July each year).
Raise internal understanding of protocols	Reconciliation Committee Members, Web Communications Manager	July 2014	9. The internal communications plan involves raising awareness of key protocols including the institute's Guideline for Acknowledging Traditional Owners and Welcome to Country and the Guideline for Ethical conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.
Consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment	Head of Business Development, Head of People and Culture	December 2014	10. A business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and studentships within our organisation is scoped.
	Senior Human Resources Officer	January 2015	11. Baseline data on current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees is captured to inform future developments.
Consider supplier diversity	Procurement & Logistics Manager, Head of Business Development	January 2015	12. A business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity and how our organisation can develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity program is scoped.
Other opportunities	Reconciliation Committee Convener	February 2015	13. A paper is presented to the RAP Working Group outlining other opportunities, such as those around education, training and employment, that have been identified through our consultation with internal and external stakeholders. This paper will assist in defining actions for subsequent RAPs for our organisation.
Build support for the RAP	Reconciliation Committee Convener	April 2015	14. We have defined available resourcing for our RAP. 15. Our data collection is able to measure our progress and successes. 16. We have submitted our annual report, and the Impact Measurement Questionnaire on our achievements to Reconciliation Australia.

Our partnerships/current activities

Researchers at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research have developed a partnership with the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin, which has an established relationship with Indigenous community groups in the Northern Territory. This has led to a collaborative project studying the immunopathology of acute rheumatic fever in Aboriginal populations of the Northern Territory.

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research is closely affiliated with the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine and the Queensland Tropical Health Alliance through laboratory head Professor Louis Schofield's directorship of the institute and alliance. The Queensland

Tropical Health Alliance is currently engaged in research and public health partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the tropics through its Indigenous health research program.

We have a reciprocal working relationship with the Lowitja Institute: Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research. Staff and students of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, including the director, have been involved in round table discussions held by the Lowitja Institute on matters such as genetic research. In return, staff of the Lowitja Institute have advised staff and students of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research on

best practice for involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in medical research.

A new initiative at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research is the Reconciliation Seminar Series. As a part of this series, invited speakers from around Australia will present a seminar on different aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, with the aim of educating institute staff and students on health issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and how we can get involved.

Items set out in this Reflect RAP will allow us to explore how we build on these relationships and further develop internal initiatives.

Contact details

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TOWARDS OUR CENTENARY IN 2015