



REFLECT
Reconciliation Action Plan
July 2022 - July 2023



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Greater Western Sydney



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

Acknowledgement of Country

Ronald McDonald House Charities Greater Western Sydney (RMHC GWS) would like to acknowledge the Dharug peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies and waterways where we work.

RMHC GWS would also like to acknowledge the various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - amongst the families we care for, our employees, volunteers, and supporters, who form part of the oldest continuous living culture on earth. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.



Message from our Chief Executive Officer

Ronald McDonald House Charities Greater Western Sydney (RMHC GWS) has provided a home-away-from-home to support the needs of seriously ill or injured children and their families, since 1981. For over half of this time our service and programs have run from Western Sydney - home of the Dharug peoples, who are the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work.

RMHC GWS strives to provide a welcoming and safe space for all peoples – embracing families, employees, volunteers, and members of our community, from all backgrounds, to create an environment where every person feels valued, and comfortable. It is through this embrace, that we also celebrate our connections with diversity, experiences, and cultures. Reconciliation has long been in our hearts and minds.

We imagine a future where all Australians value and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and rights – as being the oldest continuing culture in the world. This is a vision many share and one we are compelled to help create.

RMHC GWS has acted on this vision in various ways over the years, yet we felt strongly there was much more we could do to support reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and non-Indigenous cultures.

Our inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) sets RMHC GWS on a new path of more meaningful and impactful action. This RAP outlines our commitment to integrating strategic actions and initiatives within our operations, to help advance reconciliation throughout our sphere of influence.

We invite our employees, volunteers, partners, and supporters to join us in more actively helping to create healing and unity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and non-Indigenous cultures.

Additionally, we hope that by bringing our RAP to life, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families may feel even more welcomed, celebrated and at home while they are in our care.

Belinda Woolford
Chief Executive Officer



About the artwork

Lee Hampton is a contemporary Aboriginal artist based at the foot of the Blue Mountains. Lee grew up on Dharug land in Penrith since the age of 3, but his ancestry can be traced back to the Wodi Wodi, Worimi and Yuin Nations. Here he shares the story behind the artwork called *House of Healing*.

In the centre of the artwork we have a large circle (meeting place) which is connected by journey lines to two smaller meeting places, all three have hands in them. These represent the three houses in which Ronald McDonald House (RMH) has been in over the past 40 years. The main meeting place in the middle is surrounded by "U" (Person/Man/Woman) and "O" (Child) shapes, they represent both families coming into RMH and employees of RMH. There are also more than 200 volunteers that work at RMH. These are represented by the 200+ footprints coming into and surrounding the main meeting place. These footprints also represent the families coming into the House for treatment and support and then leaving the House once their treatment has finished and they head back home, still with the connection of their experience to RMH.

The rainbow behind the hands in the main meeting place represents love, support and inclusivity of all people, with the common bond of nurturing and protection of all the patients of RMH. There are several journey lines interconnecting meeting places throughout

the artwork, these swirling lines and circles represent a couple of things. Firstly, the journey of its patients, their journeys are met with many ups and downs, which is represented by these lines. They also represent water flowing with watering holes. Water represents healing, and their journey as part of RMH is a journey of healing and connecting. Although this is a tough journey for many, along the way, they make life-long friends and a support system that allows them to grow beyond their stay at RMH.

The bottom middle of the artwork has a large orange symbol that can be both a rainbow or a mountain. The rainbow is a representation of hope, and a mountain is a representation of strength.

The hands in each smaller meeting place represent support/helping hands. The main meeting place has the hands of a child and an adult, this represents the support these children have from both staff and family, that they are not alone on this journey, and that they are supported from the beginning of the journey to the end of their treatment and stay at Ronald McDonald House.

We imagine a future where all Australians value and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, culture and rights.

Our business

Ronald McDonald House Greater Western Sydney (RMHC GWS) is an independent not-for-profit organisation.

Our mission is to support the ever-changing needs of seriously ill and injured children and their families. We are committed to "Keeping Families Close."

Over the past 40 years, RMHC GWS has provided a safe haven where families can stay together and continue to share everyday moments, close to their child's medical care. Our hope is that by alleviating parents' stress, they are better able to focus on the most important thing - their children's health and well-being.

Located next to The Children's Hospital Westmead, we support over 2,000 families each year who travel from all over Australia and abroad, to receive critical treatment. Some families may stay for a single night, but many will stay months, or even years.

While our core business is providing accommodation at Ronald McDonald House, we also deliver the following services:

- ▶ Our Ronald McDonald **Family Room** within Nepean Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit is a refuge for families, with a baby in the NICU. Located next door to the ward,

the Family Room provides a kitchen, bathroom, laundry facilities, a comfortable lounge/dining area, along with a mother's room, quiet rooms for rest or reflection and a space for play.

- ▶ The Ronald McDonald **Learning Program** assists school-aged children with serious illnesses and injuries to catch up on missed education following treatment and recovery.

We have a dedicated team of 37 staff and 155 volunteers. While we are not currently aware of any employees who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples, we are eager to address this as part of our RAP deliverables.

Together our team ensures the House operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, while raising funds and resources that enable ongoing programs and support for families. We are also there to offer families a friendly smile, supportive conversation, or listening ear, during the most stressful time of their lives.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

RMHC GWS is developing a RAP to contribute to the advancement of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples. We have been engaged informally in reconciliation activities for many years, by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families in our care. This RAP formalises and strengthens our commitment to reconciliation now and into the future.

The development of the RAP began in March 2020 with discussions between our Head of Family Services, Josh Binns and Kamilaroi woman and Consultant Dr Lana Leslie from Lana Leslie Consulting. Discussions focused on readiness and the steps in developing a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Information sessions for RMHC GWS staff were held from 29 April to 14 May 2021 and facilitated by Josh Binns and Dr Leslie. The first information session was conducted face-to-face and held for staff at the house and included a Welcome to Country by Uncle Bruce Gale, Dharug Elder. The second information session was recorded by Josh Binns and Dr Lana Leslie and forwarded to our team of volunteers. The sessions included information about reconciliation, Reconciliation Action Plans and the reasons RMHC GWS were developing a RAP. The sessions also sought people to join the RAP Working Group.

Expressions of interest were gathered which led to the formation of the RAP Working Group. Planning began for the upcoming RAP Working Group meetings.

In the development stage, the Working Group met to participate in three meetings from 21 September to 8 November 2021. Two meetings were online due to lockdowns and restrictions from the Covid-19 pandemic & the final meeting was held face-to-face. The RAP Working Group meetings focused on discussing information to inform the development of the RAP, as well as strengthening relationships within the group. There was a focus on culture within the meetings, with Dr Leslie facilitating within an Aboriginal practice framework from the beginning of the meetings, during the meetings that included incidental cultural education, and a cultural closing activity.

As well as the meetings, optional cultural self-directed learning activities were forwarded to the RAP Working Group with each agenda. The development stage also included the Head of Family services participating in one-on-one cultural education sessions with Dr Leslie. Each session focused on a different topic including white privilege, naming and terminology, racism, cultural safety, and effective communication with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Once all meetings were held, the RAP was finalised and submitted to Reconciliation Australia for review and later endorsement.

The implementation stage will involve the RAP Working Group meeting regularly to put into practice the plan and to monitor the actions and deliverables. Josh Binns, Head of Family Services at Ronald McDonald House Charities Greater Western Sydney champions and supports the development and monitoring of the RAP through his role.

The RAP Working Group consists of the following members:

- **Josh Binns**
Head of Family Services
Co-Coordinator of RAP Working Group
- **Dr Lana Leslie**
Principal Consultant
Lana Leslie Consulting
Co-Coordinator of RAP Working Group (Development stage only)
- **Belinda Woolford**
Chief Executive Officer
- **Claire Gordon**
Communications Manager
- **Nicola Fynes-Clinton**
Head of Business Services
- **Melissa Smyth**
Programs Manager
- **Jenni Goodwin**
Education Services Manager

Children from the House leave their handprints on the wall of our Aboriginal garden.



Our partnerships and current activities

Community Partnerships

- ▶ Ronald McDonald House GWS has a relationship with the Aboriginal Health Unit at The Children's Hospital Westmead. As part of this relationship, our staff meet with Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALOs) at the hospital several times a week. The ALOs provide guidance as well as relevant personal and cultural information, which supports us in providing our families with the best possible care.
- ▶ Ronald McDonald House GWS has a relationship with Dr Lana Leslie, Kamilaroi woman and Principal Consultant of Lana Leslie Consulting, an Aboriginal Management Consultancy that specialises in assisting organisations with their RAPs, leadership and strategic planning, cultural support and advice, education programs and research. Lana has worked with RMHC GWS on a consultancy basis co-facilitating the development of the Reconciliation Action Plan. Dr Leslie also provided specialised one-on-one cultural education to Josh Binns, Head of Family Services.

Internal Activities/Initiatives

- ▶ RMHC GWS has an Ambassador Program that engages athletes, performers, and other public personalities, to help raise awareness of our mission, as well as visiting the House and interacting with families. These Ambassadors include Aboriginal athletes.
- ▶ In 2018, the official opening of our current Westmead House included a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony by Uncle Greg Simms, Dharug Elder. At significant events, such as our 40th anniversary celebration in 2021, we commenced proceedings with a Welcome to Country from a local Elder.
- ▶ During NAIDOC Week, we organise in-house activities to celebrate and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. These include bush tucker food sharing, as well as craft and educational activities. Children participate in a range of crafts whilst learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and celebrating their friends, families, and relationships.
- ▶ During National Reconciliation Week, children participated in a range of Reconciliation activities in the Learning Centre, including coloring in and the decorating of a tree that brought together children in a shared experience.
- ▶ RMHC GWS uses our social media platforms to promote and celebrate NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week.





Over the next 12 months
July 2022 to July 2023,
 Ronald McDonald House
 Charities Greater Western
 Sydney commits to the
 following actions and
 deliverables:

Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	▶ Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	July 2022	Communications Manager
	▶ Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	July 2022	Education Services Manager
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	▶ Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April 2023	People & Culture Manager
	▶ RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2023	Head of Family Services
	▶ Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 Jun 2023	Head of Family Services



Relationships cont.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	▶ Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	July 2022	People & Culture Manager
	▶ Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	▶ Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2022	Chief Executive Officer
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	▶ Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	August 2022	People & Culture Manager
	▶ Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	August 2022	People & Culture Manager



Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	▶ Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	August 2022	Head of Business Services
	▶ Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	July 2022	Head of Business Services
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	▶ Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	September 2022	Programs Manager
	▶ Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	July 2022	Programs Manager
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	▶ Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	January 2023	People & Culture Manager
	▶ Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2022	People & Culture Manager
	▶ RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2022	Head of Family Services



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	▶ Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	February 2023	Head of Business Services
	▶ Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	February 2023	Head of Business Services
9. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	▶ Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	September 2022	Head of Business Services
	▶ Investigate Supply Nation membership.	March 2023	Education Services Manager



Governance and Tracking Progress

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	▶ Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	July 2022	Head of Family Services
	▶ Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	July 2022	Head of Family Services
	▶ Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	August 2022	Head of Family Services
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	▶ Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July 2022	Head of Family Services
	▶ Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	August 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	▶ Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	August 2022	Head of Family Services
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	▶ Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 June 2023	Head of Family Services
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	▶ Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	May 2023	Head of Family Services





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Thanks to our RAP funding partner

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