

# Aboriginal Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-19 Summary





Cover art: Jarra Karalinar Steel,  
Boon Wurrung

Alfred Health uses the term 'Aboriginal'  
to mean both Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander throughout this document

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples  
are warned that this document may contain images  
and names of deceased people.



### More about our plan

This plan is a summary of our key projects. See our comprehensive action plan for more details [alfredhealth.org.au/RAP](http://alfredhealth.org.au/RAP).

We are interested in hearing from our community about our RAP.

Please provide your feedback:

Patient Experience and Consumer Participation Program (03) 90762409 [communityparticipation@alfred.org.au](mailto:communityparticipation@alfred.org.au)

## Message from our Chief Executive

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I am delighted to present Alfred Health's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP): a living and practical plan built around strong relationships, respect and pride in our local Aboriginal community and the potential for employment and business opportunities.

This plan is something of a watershed in our relationship with our Aboriginal community. It recognises that we need to do better in providing care for our Aboriginal patients and commits us to a journey to achieve greater equality in healthcare for our first peoples.

Already it has been a two-year journey in developing this plan and along the way we have learnt much about what reconciliation means to us and the importance of meaningful and respectful relationships.

Thanks must go to the many people involved in creating this plan, particularly to local elder Caroline Briggs, The Boon Wurrung Foundation, and Reconciliation Australia who have supported and guided us through this process.

The vision for reconciliation is for all Australians to be equal, to have equal opportunities and for there to be trust as we move forward in a shared vision for our country. I sincerely hope that this plan and the energy and commitment of our Alfred Health staff will contribute to achieving this vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Way', written in a cursive style.

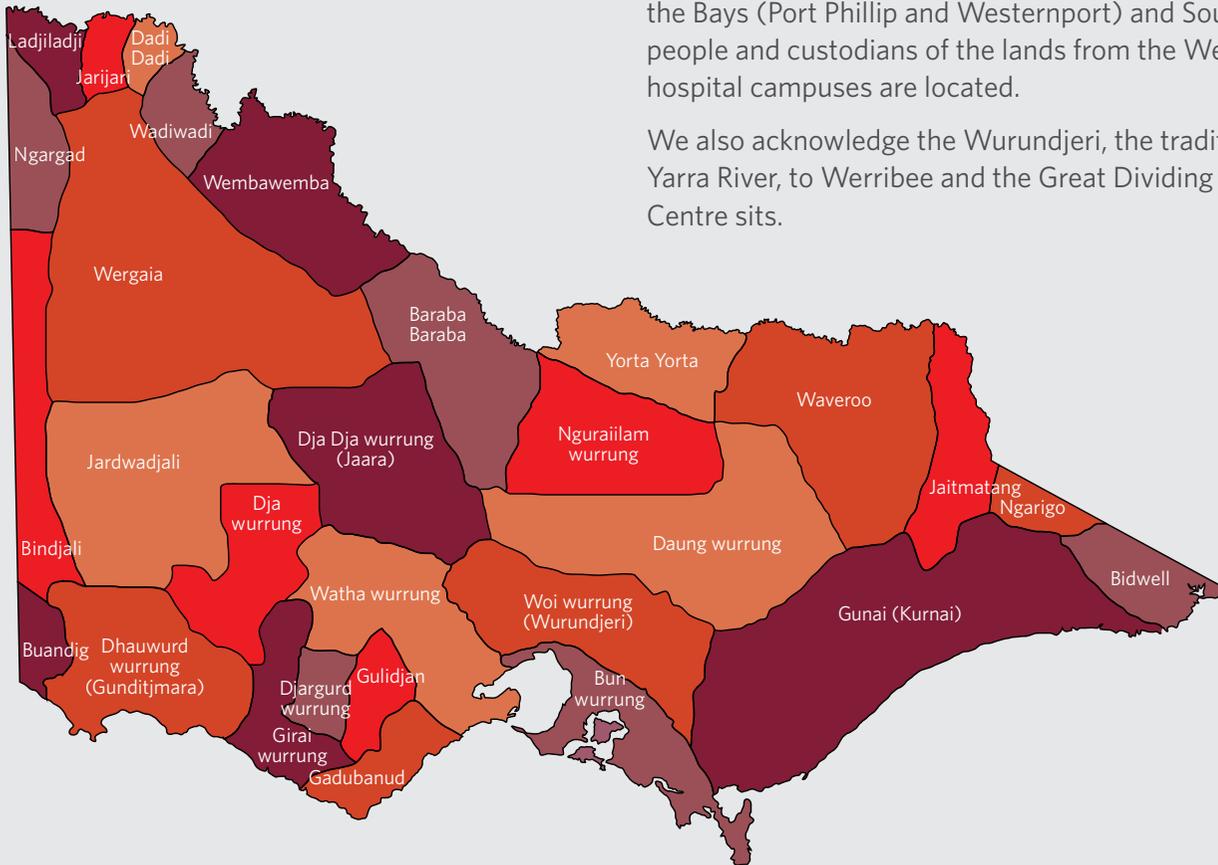
Prof Andrew Way  
Chief Executive  
Alfred Health

## Acknowledgement of Country

As a national health provider, Alfred Health acknowledges all of the clans throughout Australia who are the custodians of the land and waters, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Alfred Health acknowledges all proud members of the Kulin People, including the First People of the Bays (Port Phillip and Westernport) and South East Victoria, the Boon Wurrung, the traditional people and custodians of the lands from the Werribee River to Wilson's Promontory, where our three hospital campuses are located.

We also acknowledge the Wurundjeri, the traditional people and custodians of the land from the Yarra River, to Werribee and the Great Dividing Range, the land on which Melbourne Sexual Health Centre sits.



**Victorian Aboriginal tribes**



## Message from Reconciliation Australia

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Reconciliation Australia congratulates Alfred Health on developing its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

By adopting an Innovate RAP, Alfred Health demonstrates its readiness to develop and test innovative approaches to reconciliation and champion reconciliation at every level of the organisation. Alfred Health's commitments in this RAP see it well placed to continue this progress across the key pillars of reconciliation—relationships, respect and opportunities.

Alfred Health understands the importance of building and maintaining meaningful, respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations in order to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. It displays this commitment through its actionable goal to promote and celebrate community events such as National Reconciliation Week (NRW), by holding at least one internal event per year.

Respect and understanding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures is key to Alfred Health's core values. It champions these values by committing to embed cultural training in its existing internal training programs, and align with other relevant external benchmarks such as National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) standards.

Alfred Health is committed to driving reconciliation through developing employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It demonstrates this through its goal to ensure there are no barriers to future Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants participating in its workplace, by reviewing its HR policies and recruitment procedures.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Alfred Health on this Innovate RAP, and look forward to following its continued reconciliation journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Mundine'.

Karen Mundine  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



## Response from Boon Wurrung Foundation

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Reconciliation is about moving forward as a community – acknowledging the past and looking forward to a future where we can share our stories, our history and our culture. It is important that reconciliation builds upon our strengths and acknowledges the past.

My first experience with The Alfred was over 50 years ago; when, as a young first-time mother, I was admitted to the Margaret Cole Hospital – the maternity section of The Alfred. In those days, maternity hospitals were very strict, medicalised and regulated – rarely allowing any family to accompany the mother once admitted. When I was admitted to the Margaret Cole, they made an exception, allowing my mother to accompany me through labour. I am forever grateful that this hospital was willing to recognise the cultural and individual needs – some 50 years ago.

Since that time, I have visited immediate family in The Alfred – and staff have been willing and supportive of the needs of my family at all times.

The opportunity to work with Alfred Health in developing their Reconciliation Action Plan has been a rewarding experience. I have been keen to show how such a plan can move away from the general rhetoric – and produce a meaningful process of engagement – building upon their strengths – and planning for the future.

The Alfred is located on the traditional estate of the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan of the Boon Wurrung. I believe it is critical that, in order to work towards reconciliation and develop a shared sense of our history, we have to first understand the soul of our country on which we live.

The development of this plan has drawn upon the relationship between Alfred Health and the traditional owners of this country, I am confident that this will result in the building of a stronger relationship between the community and Alfred Health.

Womin Djeka  
N'arweet Carolyn Briggs  
The Boon Wurrung Foundation Ltd

## About us

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Alfred Health is one of Victoria's major metropolitan health services, caring for people living in southern and bayside Melbourne through our three hospital campuses, numerous clinics and community based services. We offer the most extensive range of statewide services, with 14 programs delivering expert care to people throughout Victoria.

### Our story

Across our diverse organisation, we value and respect life from beginning to end. We provide treatment, care and compassion to the people of Melbourne and Victoria. Our research and education programs advance the science of medicine and health and contribute to innovations in treatment and care. Through partnerships we build our knowledge and share it with the world.

### Our purpose

**To improve the lives of our patients and their families, our communities and humanity**

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## Our beliefs

Patients are the reason we are here – they are the focus of what we do.

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How we do things is as important as what we do. Respect, support and compassion go hand in hand with knowledge, skills and wisdom.

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Safety and care of patients and staff are fundamental.

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Excellence is the measure we work to everyday. Through research and education we set new standards for tomorrow.

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We work together. We all play vital roles in a team that achieves extraordinary results.

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We share ideas and demonstrate behaviors that inspire others to follow.

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## Our objectives

Respect for staff, patients and community is fundamental to our health service. This plan will help us deliver the best possible health care, sensitively and respectfully for our Aboriginal patients.



## Patients Come First

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The *Patients Come First Strategy* is described as Alfred Health's 'roadmap' for putting patients and their families at the centre of care through supporting their own individual healthcare needs and rights.

Its eight pillars represent the key elements of a positive patient experience. We have a range of projects within these pillars that aim to improve the overall experience of care for our patients and families. We measure our patient experience through our many surveys and other feedback such as complaints and compliments. Under Pillar 2 – Respect, Alfred Health have developed this RAP.



**1. Access**



**2. Respect**



**3. Team**



**4. Communication**



**5. Comfort and environment**



**6. Compassion**



**7. Family and friends**



**8. Leaving our care**

## Vision for reconciliation

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**Where all Australians are equal and have equal opportunities, where we trust each other and are moving forward towards a shared vision for Australia**

## About our Reconciliation Action Plan

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### What is a Reconciliation Action Plan?

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) provide a framework for organisations to realise their vision for reconciliation. RAPs are practical plans of action built on relationships, respect and opportunities.

RAPs create social change and economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

### Our RAP

Our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan journey started two years ago. It was developed by our RAP Working Group with the guidance of our local Aboriginal community. Special thanks go to Carolyn Briggs Aboriginal Traditional Elder and other representatives of the Boon Wurrung foundation and local community for their participation.

Alfred Health would also like to acknowledge invaluable contribution and consultation from the following organisations:

- Boon Wurrung Foundation
- Department of Health and Human Services (Aboriginal Employment Branch)
- Koorie Heritage Trust
- Reconciliation Australia

## Our Reconciliation journey

**2015**

First workshops and RAP working group formed

**2016**

Full Day workshop with Reconciliation Australia and first draft RAP

**Early 2017**

The RAP was approved by Alfred Health Executive and Boon Wurrung Traditional Elder Carolyn Briggs

**June 2017**

Conditional endorsement was received from Reconciliation Australia

**August 2017**

Formal launch of the RAP at The Alfred Hospital

**September 2017**

Launch the Alfred Health Aboriginal Health web page and staff guidelines

## Foundations of our RAP

The framework for our RAP is built on the following four areas.



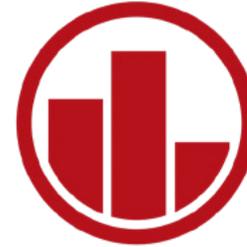
**Relationships**



**Respect**



**Opportunities**



**Reporting**

See our comprehensive action plan for more available at [www.alfredhealth.org.au/RAP](http://www.alfredhealth.org.au/RAP)

## Our RAP Working Group:

- Shelley Anderson, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Psychiatry
- Lead for Patient Experience and Consumer Participation
- Sean Curtain, Director Human Resources Services and Staff Welfare
- Alicia Fay Morris and Sharon Bolger, Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers
- Cyndie Fox, Aboriginal Access & Support Worker
- Susan Leake, SCP Carer Support
- Geraldine Loeliger, Department of Health and Human Services
- Ursula McGinnes, Director, Public Affairs
- Volle McHarg, Social Work - Adult Outreach/Caulfield Access
- Clare O'Brien, Practice Leader, Caulfield Community Health Service
- Simon Stafrace, Director, Alfred Psychiatry
- Bridget Wall, Manager, Patient and Family Services
- Janet Weir-Phyland, Executive Director Nursing Services, Chief Nursing Officer
- Lauren Witzand, Aboriginal Healthcare Pathways

### Early 2018

Build RAP awareness and education into staff orientation

### Mid 2018

National Reconciliation Week 27 May-3 June and NAIDOC week 8-15 July 2018

### 2018

Develop an Aboriginal garden at The Alfred

### Late 2018

Develop and implement cultural awareness training

### 2019

Review current RAP and plan for our next RAP

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***This plan will help us deliver the best possible health care for our Aboriginal patients through growing our cultural understanding and sensitivity.***

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Janet Weir-Phyland  
Executive Director Nursing Services



## Relationships

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### **Building strong relationships with our Aboriginal patients and community is important to us.**

#### What will we do?

- Maintain a RAP Working Group (RWG) with key Aboriginal Elders and members of our community.
- Work with them and our staff to ensure the RAP leads to action.

#### How will we do it?

- Work with Carolyn Briggs, traditional elder Boon Wurrung Foundation.
- Build partnerships with other Aboriginal organisations.
- Ask our aboriginal patients and families about their care and how it can be improved.
- Develop and promote practical information for Aboriginal patients and families on Alfred Health's website.
- Celebrate key Aboriginal events each year and invite the local community.

## Respect

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**We respect and are proud of our local Aboriginal community and will create a greater understanding and appreciation of cultures, lands, waters and histories.**

### What will we do?

- Help our staff understand the importance of Aboriginal traditions, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country.
- Support new staff to understand local Aboriginal communities and customs.
- Focus on new education programs around Aboriginal health and wellbeing.
- Create an inclusive and warm health care experience.
- Celebrate and recognise Aboriginal dates of significance, such as Reconciliation and NAIDOC week.

### How will we do it?

- Develop and implement Aboriginal cultural awareness training.
- Work with universities, schools and other organisations to help develop and deliver awareness education.
- Create an Aboriginal garden at The Alfred as a space for reflection and healing.
- Develop a local artwork program for our Caulfield and Sandringham campuses.
- Create a shared calendar for key Aboriginal dates of significance throughout the year and communicate internal and local external events with staff.

“

***Already we have learnt much about what reconciliation means and the importance of meaningful and respectful relationships.***

”

Prof Andrew Way





***The RAP Employment Strategy will generate new opportunities for our local community and bring a greater understanding of our local culture into our health service.***



Sean Curtain  
Director HR Services and Staff Welfare

## Opportunities

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### **Increase and support Aboriginal long-term employment, businesses, and education.**

#### What will we do?

- Help achieve positive health outcomes for Aboriginal patients through campaigns and engagement.
- Help support Aboriginal owned and operated businesses.
- Improve services for Aboriginal patients and families.
- Develop an Aboriginal employment plan for Alfred Health.

#### How will we do it?

- Develop a list of Aboriginal businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.
- Work with Aboriginal patients and families to find out how they want to give feedback about their care.
- Establish relationships with key universities, schools and the Aboriginal community to understand their employment goals and work with them to create opportunities.
- Work with the Aboriginal community and other organisations to implement this work.

## Reporting

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# Regular reporting and increasing transparency will drive improvement and progress.

## What will we do?

- Continue the RAP Working Group to report on progress to Alfred Health, Community Advisory Committee and Board.
- Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia.

## How will we do it?

- Six monthly written report on progress to relevant committees.
- Complete the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire in conjunction with Aboriginal community and submit to Reconciliation Australia annually.
- Participate in the RAP Barometer (a national research study that looks at the relationship between Indigenous and other Australians).
- Each year publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to our Aboriginal community and broader health service community.

Check out developments at [alfredhealth.org.au/RAP](http://alfredhealth.org.au/RAP).



### **Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers**

Our Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers (AHLOs) support Aboriginal patients, families, community members and our staff.

If you need any assistance around your health while you are at Alfred Health, please contact them at:

Patient & Family Services (03) 9076 3026  
AHLOs Mobile 0419 592 207

## Our RAP journey art



THE SOUL OF COUNTRY (Bundjil Midst Creation, Healing from Creation)

“  
***In order to work towards reconciliation, and develop a shared sense of our history, we have to first understand the soul of our country on which we live.***  
”

N'arweet Carolyn Briggs

The art by Jarra Karalinar Steel is a modern interpretation of the spirit of her, her mother's and ancestors' land during Bundjil's creation of the landscape of the Yaluk-ut Weelam (the local clan of the Boon Wurrung).

According to Boon Wurrung, the country was created by a spiritual being – known as Bundjil, who travelled as an eagle. Bundjil was a very powerful man. He was the head man of the Kulin people. Bundjil was responsible for making all the mountains, the rivers and streams, and also the sea and the ocean. Bundjil carried a large blade that he used to make the land, and he travelled around cutting the rivers and the mountains and all the different shapes of the land.

The 'Soul of Country (Bundjil Midst Creation, Healing from Creation)' artwork depicts Bundjil's creation story from his point of view – flying over the land, using his blade to create the landscape and healing it from the time of chaos.

The traditional art of the Yaluk-ut Weelam was often done as a temporary installation, which included sand and body paintings.

The women used the inside of their possum cloaks to draw 'maps' of their journey cycle.

The 'Soul of Country' reflects an interpretation of the traditional patterns created by the women in recording 'maps' of their annual journey cycles through the country created by Bundjil.

The colours chosen by Jarra are the colours of Melbourne's native landscape, which became more vivid and important to her after being away from country for a year. The gold represents the wattle tree, which is a symbol death and rebirth. It is also the gold in which modern Melbourne was built with. The Gold Rush also allowed some of her ancestors' opportunities to help them survive.

The land is an important part of the Yaluk-ut Weelam people's journey.

The coastal area provided the basis for the economy of the Yaluk-ut Weelam. The six seasons of the Yaluk-ut Weelam brought an abundant harvest. Each year, the iilk (eel) would be harvested when they returned to the rivers and streams; the myrnong (yam daisy) would be cultivated; and during deep winter, known as Beerreen, the fruit of the sacred Cherry Ballart were collected for ceremony.

The art work's connection to the story of Alfred Health's reconciliation journey is about achieving reconciliation with understanding 'the souls of our country' and healing through creation and having our stories heard and shared. Bundjil created and healed the Yaluk-ut Weelam from chaos. Alfred Health, working with the Boon Wurrung in creating their RAP, are working towards healing and creating a better future.