



**Barnardos Australia
Stretch Reconciliation Plan
January 2023 - December 2025**



In this document the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' and 'First Nations' will be used interchangeably to ensure they are inclusive of all Australia's First Peoples. Also 'Aboriginal' will be used when appropriate as this term is commonly accepted in reference to the First Nations inhabitants of NSW and the ACT.

Preamble

Our vision for reconciliation

As a leading non government child and family organisation in NSW and the ACT, Barnardos Australia's vision for reconciliation is an Australia where our First Nations children and young people enjoy the same opportunities in life as their non-Indigenous peers.

Barnardos will be an inclusive and diverse workplace that is not just culturally safe, but culturally rich and proud.

Barnardos vision for reconciliation aligns with the organisation's vision 'to empower every child in Australia to reach their full potential'.

Our path to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is founded on an acceptance of our shared history. We acknowledge the impact of government policies of assimilation and dispossession on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people today.

In the context of our organisation's core business, our vision echoes the objective of Family Matters 'that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people will grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture'¹. Barnardos will collaborate with governments and our partners to meet Target 12 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020)² which states that by 2031, the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care will be reduced by 45 per cent.

an initiative of Barnardos Australia



¹ Family Matters: Strong Communities. Strong Culture. Stronger Children is Australia's national campaign to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture www.familymatters.org.au/

² www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement

Reconciliation Australia CEO introduction

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate Barnardos Australia on its second Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), its third RAP overall.

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, the RAP framework assists organisations to contribute to the reconciliation movement. Through the creation of this Stretch RAP, Barnardos continues to contribute to the ever-growing community of RAP organisations that have transformed goodwill into meaningful action.

Barnardos vision is to empower every child in Australia to reach their full potential. As a leading non-government organisation that provides a range of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, and their families in NSW and the ACT, Barnardos has the potential to drive considerable reconciliation outcomes across its sphere of influence.

This Stretch RAP is built upon Barnardos learnings and achievements since commencing its formal reconciliation journey in 2015. This has included the introduction of cultural learning programs; building partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organisations; and establishing Gurung Wellama, Barnardos Aboriginal Cultural Unit, which is led and staffed by First Nations people. It has also worked to build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into its leadership, installing two additional Aboriginal Board members on the Board of Directors in 2022. These initiatives show Barnardos creating strong and sustainable foundations upon which to build its further reconciliation activities into the future.

This Stretch RAP reflects Barnardos continuing commitment to prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in its work. It contains a range of initiatives that respond to the voices of the First Nations families and communities Barnardos services, as well as the voices of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, carers, and partners. This includes a commitment to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development opportunities, and to develop and implement an organisation-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business procurement strategy. It is also ensuring its policies are aligned with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle; and building relationships with Aboriginal Community Control Organisations to support the transition of Out of Home Care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. These initiatives, among others, show Barnardos leveraging its work and expertise to create significant benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Barnardos on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.



Karen Mundine
CEO Reconciliation Australia

A message from the Chief Executive Officer of Barnardos Australia

As CEO of Barnardos Australia, and on behalf of Barnardos Board, executive leadership, leadership teams, employees, and carers, I am exceedingly proud to introduce Barnardos Australia's third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) - our Stretch RAP 2023-2025. For Barnardos, reconciliation starts with a genuine acknowledgment of the trauma and loss experienced by the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed from their families under Australian Federal and State Government policies from the 1800's through to the 1970's. The intergenerational trauma arising from such dispossession will continue to significantly impact the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people for generations to come. Barnardos acknowledges this tragic episode in our shared history, and we are deeply sorry.

However Barnardos also acknowledges the strength and resilience of Australia's First Nations peoples who are the world's most enduring culture, having survived successive government approved attempts to eradicate their culture since colonisation of Australia began in 1788.

Barnardos has a strong commitment to keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people safe and connected to their families, communities, and culture. Our previous two RAPs (2015-2017 and 2018-2021) have assisted Barnardos to progressively structure and strengthen our organisational structures, policies and practices, driving improvements in the way we support and nurture Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

Over the past three years we have moved forward in several important areas including our compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, cultural learning programs, cultural consultation guidance, recruitment and retention of First Nations employees, partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organisations, application of cultural protocols, and our observance and celebration of First Nations dates of significance. We have made significant progress, however there is much work yet to be done - our reconciliation journey continues.

One of Barnardos most significant achievements within the 2018-2021 RAP has been the establishment of Gurung Wellama, in 2020, the Aboriginal Cultural Unit at Barnardos. Led and staffed by Aboriginal people this unit is leading the way on our organisation's road towards reconciliation.

Barnardos Stretch RAP 2023-2025 is more ambitious than our previous RAPs, and more resolutely than ever holds Barnardos Executive Leadership Team to account for its implementation. Genuinely listening and responding to the voices of the Aboriginal families and communities we serve, and to the voices of our First Nations employees, carers and partners, is a priority for Barnardos and has associated key actions in our new RAP.

Thank you all who have contributed to the development of the Barnardos Stretch RAP 2023-2025, via an extensive consultation process and robust discussion. Our commitment to reconciliation remains strong and focused and we look forward to strengthening our cultural safety and to continuing to make a real difference to the lives of Aboriginal children via the culturally competent practices that we continue to strive, with community, to provide.



Deirdre Cheers
CEO Barnardos Australia



Artist: Joanne Cassady
Title: Gurung Wellama
Year: 2022
Medium: Acrylic on canvas



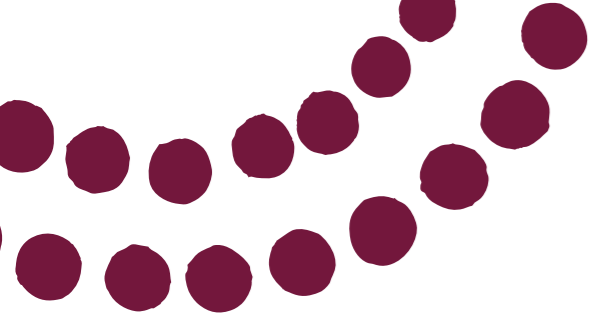
"Gurung Wellama" artwork

Barnardos Australia commissioned First Nations artist Joanne Cassady of 'Balgarra Designs' to design the artwork and brand for Gurung Wellama, Barnardos' Aboriginal Cultural Unit. Gurung Wellama, means 'Child comes back' in Gadigal language. It is uniquely symbolic of Barnardos work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and is an artwork that is relatable across different country and mob. This beautiful artwork also features in our Stretch RAP 2023-2025. The blue curves around the semi-circle represent people gathering together. The curves with one line next to it, represents a woman and the curve with two lines represent a man. The smaller curves represent children. The semi-circles represent a gathering place usually a campfire, waterhole or campsite in this case it is home. It represents 'at home' and 'outside of home'. The blue, aqua and white dots throughout the middle represent peace and harmony flowing through, giving peace to children coming back.

Joanne Cassady is a self-taught artist and mother of six, with five sons and one daughter as well as being a doting grandmother. Joanne is a descendant of the Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta Nations located in NSW and Victoria. Joanne's Wiradjuri totem is the goanna and her Yorta Yorta totem is the turtle, which gives her inspiration to recreate throughout her artwork.

As a professional artist, Joanne utilises her skills as a means of education for cultural awareness with both adults and children. This allows opportunities to share her personal experiences and her culture in art workshops and art therapy. Joanne was born and raised in Sydney NSW and grew up in the suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo. She faced many challenges from a very young age, choosing not to become a victim. Choosing art, its meaning to her as an artist is deeper than paint on canvas. It tells of her stories, her culture and language. Joanne's art is as contemporary as she is.

Balgarra Designs is 100% Aboriginal owned and operated by Joanne Cassady. The word 'Balgarra' comes from the Wiradjuri language which means "to emit sparks" - to emit sparks, the beginning of something new, to ignite a fire. Through this symbolic meaning Joanne hopes to ignite a fire of understanding, education, cultural awareness and unification through her art to the world.







Our business

Barnardos Australia is here because every child needs a champion. A children's charity for over 100 years, we listen, we act, and we advocate for the safety of children at risk of abuse and neglect, providing family support programs and services that empower children to reach their full potential. When it comes to protecting vulnerable children from abuse, we never give up. We are dedicated to the prevention of trauma in children, and support families to be the best parents they can be. During 2021-2022, Barnardos supported 14,083 children, young people and their families to improve their lives. Barnardos has 739 employees and 1,399 carers. 59 Barnardos employees identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. This equates to 8% of the total Barnardos paid work force.

Who we are

<p>Vision</p> <p>To empower every child in Australia to reach their full potential.</p>	<p>Purpose</p> <p>We support vulnerable children to recover and thrive. Together, we ensure they reach their brightest future.</p>	<p>Values</p> <p>We never give up. We speak up. We aim higher. We stand with you. We do what's right.</p>	<p>Commitment</p> <p>We commit to supporting vulnerable children to thrive, through our effective evidence-informed and research-based programs.</p>
--	---	--	---

Who we care about

 <p>Children, young people and families</p>	 <p>Staff and volunteers</p>	 <p>Foster carers</p>	 <p>Partners and supporters</p>
---	--	---	---

What we will do

<p>Engage</p> <p>We listen to act with intent.</p> <p>We actively involve, partner and consult with others to carry our voice.</p>	<p>Empower</p> <p>We equip to create opportunity.</p> <p>We share wisdom, strengthen skills, and collaborate to create positive change.</p>	<p>Excel</p> <p>We push ourselves to be outstanding.</p> <p>We operate in ethical, sustainable and transparent ways to achieve effective outcomes and social impact.</p>	<p>Evolve</p> <p>We are brave and adapt to change.</p> <p>We promote a learning and innovation culture to inspire greater agility and resilience.</p>
--	---	--	---

Barnardos Australia provides a diverse mix of early intervention, prevention and intensive family preservation programs for vulnerable families to help them keep their children and young people safe, nurtured and well in their families and communities. For children who cannot live safely with their families Barnardos provides a range of out-of-home care programs such as short-term and long-term foster care, kinship care and open adoption.

Barnardos programs are delivered across regional, rural and metropolitan NSW and the ACT. The Barnardos head office is situated in the inner Sydney suburb of Ultimo.

Barnardos Children's Family Centres

Barnardos has seven Children's Family Centres within NSW and the ACT. These centres provide wraparound prevention programs to help families stay together. They provide services to Southern NSW, the ACT, Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions of NSW, the wider Sydney metropolitan region and Western NSW. Our Children's Family Centres provide a wide range of integrated programs based on local need including the following:

- **Parenting Support** - We give parents the tools and confidence to care for their children, encouraging them to be their child's first teacher, strengthening parent-child relationships and their connection to community.
- **Early Learning and Education** - We focus on early learning, school readiness and engagement. We also provide breakfast clubs and homework support through our Aboriginal Learning Centres.
- **Family Support** - We assist families with complex issues such as domestic violence, poverty, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse and mental illness through wraparound services and specialist Aboriginal programs.
- **Youth Support** - We provide youth homelessness services, counseling and mediation, mentoring and advocacy, youth drop-in and street outreach programs, drug and alcohol services, and juvenile justice support.
- **Disability Support** - In our Penrith Centre we provide a range of leisure and recreational activities to children and young people with mild to profound disabilities.
- **Homelessness services** - We provide supported crisis accommodation and transitional accommodation and homelessness prevention including information about other services, supported referrals, case management and brokerage.
- **Community Development** - We work in and together with communities to build community capacity and cohesion.
- **Restoration to Family** - We provide short-term foster care while we work with birth parents to have their children restored home.

In 2021, 25% of the children and their families supported by Barnardos Children's Family Centres were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Our RAP

As a large mainstream child and family non-government organisation, Barnardos provides a range of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families in NSW and the ACT. Our organisation is critically aware of the tragic impact that colonisation and the history of child removal have had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This impact is experienced acutely in the escalating numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children entering the out-of-home care (OOHC) system. The stark reality of this situation is provided in the 2021 Family Matters Report as follows:

'A staggering 21,523 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were in OOHC at 30 June 2020, which represents one in every 15.6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living in Australia. 79% (17,068) of those children live permanently away from their birth parents. Children are predominantly placed with non-Indigenous carers, with the proportion of children placed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers dropping from 53% to 42% between 2013 and 2020'³.

The Barnardos Stretch RAP provides a strategic framework for our organisation's efforts to make a substantive contribution to the work of our sector, together with Commonwealth, state and territory governments, to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031, a target of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (July 2020). Barnardos supports the objective of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians.

The prevention of family breakdown and subsequent removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and communities is a priority focus of Barnardos. The Stretch RAP provides an action and accountability framework for Barnardos leadership and their teams to improve organisational cultural safety and respect with the main objective of keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people safe with family, community and culture.

Developing this Stretch RAP

The development of Barnardos third RAP has been led by Gurung Wellama (Barnardos Aboriginal Cultural Unit) which was established in August 2020. Following a review of the achievements of our Stretch RAP 2018-2021, and the work still to be done to become a culturally safe and respectful organisation, a thorough consultative process was followed by Gurung Wellama with Barnardos First Nations employees (BIG - Barnardos Indigenous Group), the Footprints Together Working Group (Barnardos bi-cultural RAP Working Group), and our leaders and their teams. This Stretch RAP 2023-2025 will align with the strategic initiatives of Barnardos Towards 2025 Strategic Directions (2020-2025).

Championing our RAP

All of the Executive Leaders in Barnardos will champion the RAP in their areas of responsibility. The Executive Leader of the Practice Quality portfolio will provide Executive leadership for the implementation of our Stretch RAP. In addition to the Executive champions, designated members of the broader leadership team across all portfolios and the Footprints Together Working Group will champion the RAP in their spheres of influence, both internally and externally.

Barnardos RAP Working Group (Footprints Together Working Group – FTWG)

The FTWG is a bi-cultural group comprised equally of Barnardos Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous employment representatives (50% First Nations identified). The FTWG meets 4 times per year. Gurung Wellama coordinates the FTWG and it is co-chaired by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous representative. The Executive Leader Practice Quality has executive responsibility for the FTWG.

The members of the FTWG in 2022 are as follows:

Viv Freeman	Program Manager Yurungai Learning Centre, Sydney Metro Children's Family Centre, Senior Advisor Aboriginal Services
Leanne Major	Educator, Early Learning Centre, Auburn Children's Family Centre
Maryanne Bechara	Program Manager, Early Learning Centre, Auburn Children's Family Centre
Bronwyn Radford	Project Worker, Queanbeyan Homework Club, Southern NSW Children's Family Centre
Sharon Maza	Program Manager, Aboriginal Early Years, Sydney Metro Children's Family Centre
Lisa O'Grady	Program Manager, Communities for Children and Bundaleer, South Coast Children's Family Centre
Warrika Watson	Family Support Caseworker, South Coast Children's Family Centre
Zanette Clements	Team Leader Reconnect, Cobar, Western NSW Children's Family Centre
Fleur Stubbs	Reconnect Caseworker, Warren, Western NSW Children's Family Centre
Lauren Newman	Case Manager ACT Together (out-of-home care), ACT
Alicia Pearson	Program Manager, Permanent Out-of-Home Care, Illawarra NSW
Catherine Turner	Content Producer, Engagement and Giving
Bruce Shillingsworth	Senior Education Support Worker, Yurungai Learning Centre, Sydney Metro Children's Family Centre
Vanessa Barnes	Team Leader Western Sydney Family Connect and Support
Tina West	Manager, Gurung Wellama

³ www.familymatters.org.au/the-family-matters-report-2021



Our RAP journey

The Barnardos Indigenous Group (BIG), an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Barnardos employee network, was formed to provide peer support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and to provide advice to senior management on culturally competent service delivery

2006

The Barnardos Australia Reconciliation Statement was launched

2012

NAIDOC Day was established as a leave day for all Barnardos employees taken during NAIDOC week

2012

An Aboriginal identified Senior Advisor appointed

2016

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous working group established to progress reconciliation in Barnardos

2012 - 2015

A flexible bereavement leave policy was incorporated in Barnardos Enterprise Agreement. This policy recognises the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

2012

Barnardos first Reconciliation Action Plan, an Innovate RAP, was implemented

2015 - 2017

The Louise Voigt Award was established. This award is provided annually to one or more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees who is undertaking further study.

2015

Footprints Together Framework established

2017

Footprints Together Working Group formed – Barnardos bi-cultural RAP working group

2017

Independent ACCO OOHC organisations were established on NSW Central Coast and In Western Sydney following partnerships with Barnardos Australia

2018 - 2021

Barnardos 2nd RAP, a Stretch RAP, was implemented

2018 - 2021

First Aboriginal Board member appointed

2017

The Barnardos Aboriginal Cultural Unit was established

2020

Two new Aboriginal Board members were appointed

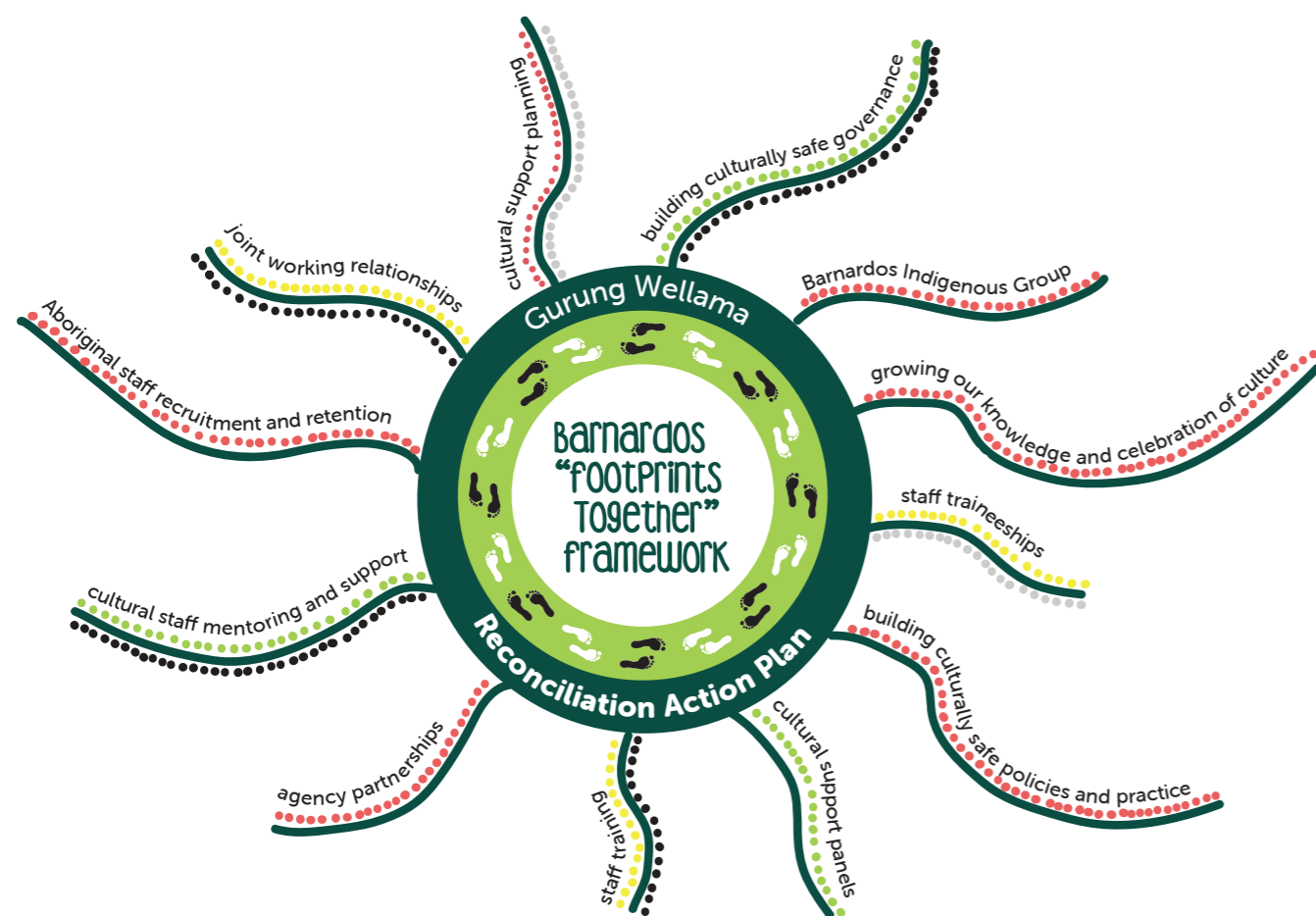
2022

The Aboriginal Cultural Unit was renamed Gurung Wellama which is Gadigal language meaning 'child comes back'. Keeping or returning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children connected to their family, community, and culture is core to Gurung Wellama's purpose.

2022

Reconciliation achievements 2018 – 2021

The Footprints Together Framework, Barnardos organisational, policy and practice framework for building a culturally safe organisation, has become more firmly established as an important mechanism for building key organisational structures and practices to grow Barnardos cultural respect and safety. The Footprints Together Framework provides the scaffolding for governance, human resources, communication, organisational and practice structures and processes in our agency. A strengthened framework has led to the following significant achievements since 2018 in Barnardos reconciliation journey.



Building culturally safe governance

Barnardos Aboriginal Cultural Unit (ACU), now renamed Gurung Wellama, was established in August 2020. Gurung Wellama is managed and staffed by identified First Nations employees. This unit has significantly elevated the importance of the RAP and driven considerable improvements in Barnardos culturally safe policy and practice development. The purpose of Gurung Wellama is to ensure that Barnardos Australia is culturally safe for Aboriginal peoples. Its vision is that Aboriginal children and young people, together with Barnardos Aboriginal workforce will feel connected and engaged with Barnardos services. Gurung Wellama is a unit of the Practice Quality portfolio and provides culturally safe practice and policy guidance to all portfolios, the Executive Leadership Team and CEO.

Appointment of two additional Aboriginal Board members on the Board of Directors.

The Footprints Together Working Group (FTWG), Barnardos bi-cultural RAP working group, continues to meet on a quarterly schedule and has led to improved engagement of Barnardos employees with RAP priorities and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Examples of what this looks like in Barnardos are:

- The RAP has increasingly become a standing agenda item for team meetings across all portfolios
- There is improved observance and participation in internal and community events for such significant dates as NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week
- There is improved communication via the Barnardos internal internet of practice highlights and dates of significance

Strengthened and clearer governance structures for RAP implementation. For example, the RAP Leadership Group has been established to work alongside the FTWG. This group is comprised of a cross section of 12 employee and leadership representatives from across all portfolios, with 20% First Nations representation,

The Barnardos Indigenous Group (BIG) continues to meet annually as a large Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee group and more regularly as smaller regional and metropolitan groups.

Aboriginal staff recruitment and retention

Implementation of new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee recruitment and retention policy and procedures, which have strengthened culturally safe approaches to recruiting and retaining First Nations employees. Our ongoing ambition is to progressively increase the proportion of our employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, their children and young people receive culturally safe care and support in their communities. This currently stands at 8% across the whole organisation.

The Louise Voigt award has been awarded annually to successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who are undertaking tertiary study.

Building culturally safe policies and practice

Some of the most significant improvements to Barnardos policy and practice driven by Gurung Wellama are:

- Culturally safe OOH placement decision making procedures to improve Barnardos compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP)
- Establishment of OOH cultural care panels in NSW and the ACT
- Best practice cultural guidance for prevention and early intervention services
- Culturally safe and respectful children’s activities and learning resources have been developed and used across our early children’s services and after school homework programs. The Narragunnawali resources have been utilised in curriculum planning in our early children’s services
- Improved templates and practice guidelines for Cultural Support Planning
- Culturally informed consultation and co-design guidelines are currently being developed
- Provision of individual employee and team cultural advice and mentoring

Growing our knowledge and celebration of culture

The 'Your Mob Learning' First Nations online cultural awareness training package has been mandated for all new Barnardos employees. During the period of our last RAP a range of cultural learning activities were held in Barnardos. These included such cultural awareness or immersion activities as yarning circles held by teams and facilitated by Aboriginal colleagues and/or invited Aboriginal community leaders, other team activities, e.g. 'can I ask that?' which encourage exploration of culture, team participation in walks on Country led by local Elders, and cultural identity face to face learning groups held in various locations throughout the organisation wide reaching and consistent participation in these cultural learning activities does however remain a challenge for our organisation and will be a priority deliverable in our new RAP.

The observance of National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week and other First Nations dates of significance has become stronger and more consistent across the organisation. Participation by all employees in both internal and external events to mark these important dates is actively facilitated by our Executive Leadership Team. Some examples of how these events of significance were celebrated are:

- Barnardos Children's Family Centre in Warrawong in the NSW Illawarra region leads a community NAIDOC family event in a community park. Several other community based organisations partner with Barnardos in running this event. This event has become more popular each year
- NAIDOC week, Sorry Day and other National Reconciliation Week morning teas, children's activities and collaborative community events have become more widespread across our Children's Family Centres and out of home care teams in metropolitan Sydney, our NSW regional and rural centres and the ACT over the past 3 years

Agency partnerships and joint working relationships

The development of mutually beneficial partnerships between Barnardos and Aboriginal organisations remains a priority for Barnardos. Our services across NSW and the ACT built more than 45 working relationships and partnerships since 2018. These have included:

- OOHHC partnerships with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in Western Sydney and the NSW Central Coast contributed to the establishment of independent Aboriginal OOHHC services in 2018 and 2019
- In the Sydney metropolitan area, a successful partnership has been ongoing between Barnardos and Deadly Connections Community and Justice Services, an Aboriginal owned and operated organisation
- In Cobar in Western NSW Barnardos runs playgroups in collaboration with the Cobar Lands Council, the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly
- Barnardos South Coast Centre, based in Wollongong, has enjoyed a long community relationship with Coomaditche United Aboriginal Corporation situated in Warrawong, a suburb of Wollongong. This relationship has supported the development of a successful NAIDOC event held in Warrawong each year, the delivery of children's art classes and the development of a Cultural Trauma Tool. Barnardos partnership with Coomaditche has built our confidence and connections with the local Aboriginal community over the years





What we learnt and can improve upon

Consulting and reviewing our RAP with external First Nations partners and community representatives

Although we worked hard to consult with both our First Nations and non-Indigenous Barnardos colleagues and leadership teams when reviewing our previous RAP's progress and developing our new RAP, we did not consult with any external partners or First Nations communities or individuals. This significant oversight will be addressed when seeking external First Nations organisational guidance and advice, reviewing Barnardos performance in meeting the new RAP's deliverables and when developing our next RAP.

Communication and engagement

Our Barnardos colleagues on the Footprints Together Working Group, the Barnardos Indigenous Group and in other employee consultations told us that previous RAPs have not been communicated effectively throughout the organisation. This has undermined employee and carer engagement with the RAP. Improving RAP communication strategies and RAP employee representative structures in the delivery of our new RAP will be important Stretch RAP 2023-2025 deliverables.

Cultural learning

Even though considerable progress was achieved during the three year term of our last RAP in developing First Nations cultural awareness and learning programs for all Barnardos employees and carers, more work is needed to embed these programs in our training and development systems and to build engagement of all participants in the cultural learning activities. This is a key action in our new RAP.

Staff recruitment and mentoring

Application of the 2021 Barnardos Employee Recruitment and Retention policy to First Nations people has been inconsistent across our organisation's portfolios. Improving our agency's recruitment and retention of First Nations employees will remain a priority RAP deliverable.

Compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

Although compliance with the ATSICPP in Barnardos OOHCC services is growing with frameworks and procedural guidance being progressively strengthened and reinforced, a strong focus on continual improvement must be sustained. Best practice guidelines and employee training for supporting and nurturing Aboriginal kids and their families in our Safety and Prevention programs will be an important deliverable in our new RAP.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy

Whilst an increase in business relationships between Barnardos and First Nations businesses and services occurred during the life of our last RAP, this was inconsistent and ad hoc across the organisation. A formal procurement strategy supported by targets and employee guidance and training has not been developed. This will be an action in our new RAP.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination

Barnardos supports recent government policy reforms to enhance the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector and provide more opportunities for First Nations people to receive culturally safe services and supports from their local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO). Barnardos will work in partnership with our ACCOs and peaks to promote self-determination.



Relationships

Barnardos recognises that building respectful, strong and enduring relationships between our organisation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, their families, communities and organisations is fundamental to our organisation’s purpose and focus. By building mutually beneficial relationships based on partnership and collaboration with our First Nations partners Barnardos will develop more culturally safe service delivery leading to improved safety and cultural connection of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people we support and nurture.

How Barnardos ‘Towards 2025’ Strategic Directions focuses on ‘Relationships’

We will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to build their identity and connection by:

- Maintaining an emphasis on the benefits of strong family and extended social networks
- Upholding self-determination principles with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families to strengthen cultural connection and community

We will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families to seek and learn about their culture and build community connections, so that they create lifelong pride in their cultural identity and guide how their communities are supported.

We will strengthen our relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and peak bodies to reinforce our commitment to connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families with culturally safe services and expertise.



Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	Working jointly with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and our partners, design and implement guidelines to assist Barnardos programs to plan engagement and joint working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations	June 2023	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Communicate our engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to all employees	September 2023	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and Engagement and Giving	Manager Gurung Wellama and Head of Communications
	Meet with a minimum of one local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholder/ organisation in each geographic area per year where Barnardos services are located to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Children and Families and Practice Quality	General Managers Children and Families Manager Gurung Wellama
	Establish and maintain a minimum of 3 formal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations where MOUs or service agreements are negotiated across the Safety and Prevention, NSW OOHc and ACT Together portfolios	June 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Children and Families and Practice Quality	General Managers Children and Families Manager Gurung Wellama
	Gurung Wellama will provide direct advice to individual Program Managers and leadership teams across all portfolios on practical ways to reach out to local Aboriginal communities and organisations to build relationships with Barnardos services and units	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Establish a feedback mechanism between Gurung Wellama and cross portfolio teams which reviews informal and formal partnerships between Barnardos and First Nations organisations with a view to continuous improvement	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all employees	Deliver: May, 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Encourage and support all employees and their Leaders to participate in at least 1 external event to recognise and celebrate NRW during work hours	Deliver: May, June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	All Portfolio Senior Leaders Manager Gurung Wellama
	Organise and deliver a minimum of 8 internal NRW events across all Barnardos sites each year including an organisation wide online event hosted on the Barnardos Hub	Deliver: May, June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	All Portfolio Senior Leaders Manager Gurung Wellama
	Footprints Together Working Group and RAP Leadership Group members to participate in two external NRW events	Deliver: May, June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	All Barnardos service delivery programs will invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people we assist, their families and carers to NRW activities	Deliver: May 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Children and Families	General Managers Children and Families
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website	Deliver: May 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Reflect and review upon NRW activities and plan for next year's events	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	Implement strategies to engage all employees to drive reconciliation outcomes. Strategies will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a communication strategy which increases awareness and engagement by all employees with Barnardos reconciliation activities Posting colourful and engaging RAP signage prominently in all Barnardos service sites Facilitation by the leadership team and Gurung Wellama to support the Footprints Together Working Group to regularly disseminate reconciliation information and resources to their teams 	September 2023, 2024, 2025	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and Engagement and Giving	All portfolio Senior Leaders Manager Gurung Wellama

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of employee awareness raising and educational activities on significant First Nations topics such as the Uluru Statement from the Heart using such discussion formats as 'lunch and learn' sessions and online formats, amongst others 	September 2023, 2024, 2025	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and Engagement and Giving	All portfolio Senior Leaders Manager Gurung Wellama
	<p>Communicate Barnardos commitment to reconciliation publicly by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posting at least five social media communications each year, referencing our RAP. Posting six monthly RAP implementation updates on the Barnardos internal communications platform Posting an annual update promoting our RAP work and outcomes on Barnardos Australia website 	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and Engagement and Giving	Manager Gurung Wellama and Head of Communications
	<p>Implement strategies to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least once each year, share information about our RAP experience and journey with corporate partners establishing their first RAP. Across Barnardos services collaborate with five RAP and other like-minded organisations each year on activities to advance reconciliation 75% of Barnardos service sites invite Aboriginal community leaders and organisation representatives to social gatherings and events each year 	September 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Engagement and Giving, Children and Families, and Practice Quality	Head of Philanthropy and Giving General Managers Children and Families Manager Gurung Wellama
	Participate in at least two RAP Leadership Gatherings per year	September 2023, 2024, 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
4. Implement best practice knowledge and skills in building the cultural connections and identity of Aboriginal children and young people using relationship based practice approaches	Develop culturally safe best practice guidelines and frameworks throughout all Safety and Prevention and out-of-home care services using culturally informed evidence and practice wisdom	June 2023	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and Children and Families	Manager Gurung Wellama and General Managers Children and Families
	Meet with a representative group of practice teams, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and carers, to review the quality and usefulness of the practice tools	June 2024	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and Children and Families	Manager Gurung Wellama and General Managers Children and Families
5. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and external advisors on the development of a Barnardos anti-discrimination policy	June 2023	Executive Leaders People and Culture, Practice Quality and Children and Families	Human Resources Managers Manager Gurung Wellama
	Implement and communicate a Barnardos anti-discrimination policy	September 2023	Executive Leaders People and Culture, Practice Quality and Children and Families	Human Resources Managers Manager Gurung Wellama
	Continuously improve HR policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barnardos employee Code of Conduct Barnardos carer Code of Conduct Respectful workplace policy Workplace, health, safety and wellbeing policy 	September 2023 and 2025	Executive Leader People and Culture	Human Resources Managers
	Implement employee and carer learning and development training on racism and Barnardos anti discrimination policy	September 2023	Executive Leaders People and Culture and Children and Families	Manager Learning, Development and Talent Manager Carer Recruitment and Intake
	Barnardos employees and leaders will support anti-discrimination initiatives against racism within guidelines determined by Executive Leadership	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader People and Culture	All portfolio Senior Leaders

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
6. Promote and support self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Barnardos CEO and Executive Leadership Team will advocate for increased government investment to enable our First Nations clients to receive services and supports from their local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations	June 2025	CEO and Executive Leader Children and Families	Executive Leader Children and Families
	Barnardos will support the transition of OOHHC to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing equal relationships with ACCOs to build mutual awareness and trust collaborating with NSW and ACT governments in transition arrangements advocate OOHHC transition to ACCOs within OOHHC interagency networks working with other OOHHC RAP organisations who have the same aspirations to co-ordinate efforts. 	June 2025	Executive Leader Children and Families	General Managers NSW OOHHC and ACT Together



Barnardos Children's Family Centre Western NSW

Case study

Audrey, a proud Wailwan woman originally from Coonamble, NSW, and her three children came to the Wellington Yalmambirra Learning Centre late one afternoon, shaking and trembling, visibly distressed and heightened. The children were scared and afraid that their 'father would turn up at any moment and try to take them away from or hurt their mum.' The youngest child at that time was only a small baby.

Audrey asked if they could all come inside and hide as they were escaping her partner and his rage – she spoke of violence and abuse. She spoke of his 'associates' and how they would also be looking for her.

This was to be the start of a healing journey for Audrey and her children with Barnardos. Audrey and her three children were referred into the Brighter Futures early intervention program and began intensive work to untangle themselves from a complex, abusive, coercive and violent relationship.

Both Audrey and her partner were addicted to daily, crystal methamphetamine use, commonly known

as 'Ice.' For Audrey, this drug use was both an escape and a way to appease her partner in order to protect herself and her children from harm.

Audrey could still remember what life was like before addiction and was a young woman who had experienced multiple touchpoints of trauma and abuse throughout her life, including the removal of a child from a previous relationship. Audrey revealed that her arrival in Wellington had been the result of fleeing Coonamble as her partner was wanted on numerous warrants. Wellington was to be a place where they could hide, unseen and unknown.

During Audrey's time with Barnardos she agreed to participate in 'Safe Care' – an evidence-based parenting capacity program that Barnardos Wellington was piloting in partnership with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and other agencies, through the Brighter Futures program. Audrey learnt and demonstrated so many changes in the way she was able to parent and become the mum she always wanted to be for her children.

In her words, it was like "making up for the mistakes of the past and learning things she didn't

know how to do when she was a mum the first time around."

At one point, very early on in her journey with Barnardos, Audrey made the decision to stop her drug use completely and went 'cold turkey' (as she put it). Audrey reflected that she rediscovered that she is a strong, vocal and resilient survivor of abuse and trauma. She displayed acts of resistance towards her abuser and as such, gained her independence from him. Audrey said that she was once again, "in control of her life, the lives of her children and her future."

While attending Barnardos playgroup, Audrey had heard other mums in the community of Wellington talk about a program in Barnardos called HIPPIY. Audrey enrolled her 2 youngest children in HIPPIY. When the children finally went to school, fully prepared and with a love of learning following their participation in HIPPIY,, Audrey was encouraged to apply for the Age Four HIPPIY Tutor position being advertised. Hippy tutors are paid and must have been parents in the program. Audrey had not been in the workforce for several years.

Audrey was successful in obtaining the role from a very competitive interviewing cohort. She was now no longer a client of Barnardos but an employee. This opportunity for employment and study within that employment contract is exactly what HIPPIY wants for parents and their families. As a HIPPIY Tutor Audrey completed her Certificate III in

Community Services and for her two-year contract was an exceptional team member. Audrey was much loved by her client families.

The Yalmambirra Aboriginal Learning Centre also featured in Audrey's new life in Wellington. Her oldest child started attending each afternoon and was later followed by his siblings. The dedicated Yalmambirra team ensured that the children attended school each day with a healthy breakfast and then joined the homework program after school along with lots of fun, craft and culture.

Audrey's recovery and healing and the outcomes for herself and her children did not happen overnight or, at times, without immense challenge. However, her family's participation in HIPPIY, Yalmambirra and Brighter Futures, all Wellington services in the Barnardos Western NSW Children's Family Centre, have enabled the family to feel safe, engaged in learning and work, and stronger as a family unit.





Respect

Growing our knowledge and deep understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, their connection to land and community, and our shared history, is an important way for our employees, volunteers, carers and partners to show respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Genuine respect is a core component of our partnerships with First Nations communities and organisations. Only from a position of respect will Barnardos be able to improve the safety and well being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

How Barnardos 'Towards 2025' Strategic Directions focuses on 'Respect':

- We will seek out the voices, expertise and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in policy consultation and create culturally safe pathways that develop culturally competent practices and cultural decision making
- We will encourage safe, open communication and provide more opportunities for staff to network, connect and yarn, so they can exchange ideas and creatively develop solutions that strengthen our practices

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
7. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation	June 2023	Executive Leaders People and Culture and Practice Quality	Managers Learning, Development and Talent and Gurung Wellama
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors, together with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, on a Barnardos cultural learning strategy	September 2023	Executive Leaders People and Culture and Practice Quality	Managers Learning, Development and Talent and Gurung Wellama
	Implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy to our employees	December 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders People and Culture and Practice Quality	Managers Learning, Development and Talent and Gurung Wellama
	Leadership teams, employees, volunteers, carers and Board members will undertake formal and structured cultural learning as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of all new employees will complete the compulsory orientation online module on First Nations cultural awareness 	June 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders People and Culture and Practice Quality	Managers Learning, Development and Talent and Gurung Wellama

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
7. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning (contd.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of cultural immersion and more advanced cultural awareness learning activities using localised place based, face to face group and online learning platforms will be developed by Gurung Wellama and People and Culture 	June 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders People and Culture and Practice Quality	Managers Learning, Development and Talent and Gurung Wellama
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of Barnardos leadership teams and employees will demonstrate that they have participated in at least one recognised cultural learning activity (not including the online orientation module) each year during their Barnardos employment 	June, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders People and Culture and Practice Quality	Managers Learning, Development and Talent And Gurung Wellama
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of carers and volunteers will demonstrate that they have participated in at least one recognised cultural learning activity each year which is facilitated by Barnardos 	June, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Children and Families, Engagement and Giving and Practice Quality	Senior Leadership teams Children and Families, Engagement and Giving and Manager Gurung Wellama
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of all Board members will participate in a recognised cultural learning activity each year arranged through their own networks or by Barnardos 	December, 2024 and 2025	CEO and Executive Leader Practice Quality	Company Secretary Manager Gurung Wellama
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% of all leadership teams and employees will participate in a cultural immersion activity each year within their Barnardos workplace 	September 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and People and Practice	All portfolio Senior Leaders Manager Gurung Wellama
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Footprints Together Working Group and RAP Leadership Group will complete a recognised cultural learning activity each year within their Barnardos workplace 	September 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Share children's cultural learning resources, which have been developed in Barnardos early learning services, across other Barnardos Safety and Prevention and Out of Home Care services	June 2023	Executive Leaders Children and Families and Practice Quality	General Managers Children and Families and Manager Gurung Wellama

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
8. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols (contd.)	Annually review and update the Barnardos Hub to explain the significance of cultural protocols including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Engagement and Giving and Practice Quality	Head of Communications and Manager Gurung Wellama
	Communicate the cultural protocols throughout all teams. Include local community variations as applicable	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Engagement and Giving and Practice Quality	Head of Communications and Manager Gurung Wellama
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at a minimum of 10 significant events each year, including the Barnardos AGM, significant staff professional development events, major cultural community celebrations e.g. NAIDOC, and fundraising events	December 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Leaders and employees to provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocol at the commencement of public events and relevant meetings	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Display Acknowledgment of Country plaques in all Barnardos offices or on our buildings from our Head Office and throughout all regions and sites in NSW and the ACT	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Children and Families and Finance and Corporate	General Managers Children and Families and Business Services Manager
9. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	Review and update HR policies, procedures and practices to remove barriers to employees participating in NAIDOC Week activities	Deliver: June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader People and Culture	Executive Leader People and Culture Managers Human Resources
	All Barnardos employees will participate in at least 1 internal Barnardos NAIDOC week event	Deliver: July 2023 and 2024, 2025	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and People and Culture	All portfolio Senior Leaders
	In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders support all employees to participate in at least 1 external NAIDOC Week event during work hours in their local area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flag raising ceremonies, morning teas in community organisations, yarn ups, and community events 	Deliver: July 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and People and Culture	All portfolio Senior Leaders

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
9. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week (contd.)	Members of the Executive and Leadership Teams will acknowledge NAIDOC Week and its importance in any internal meetings and public events that are attended	Deliver: July 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and People and Culture	Manager Gurung Wellama
	In team meetings, Barnardos employees will be encouraged to share and reflect on the NAIDOC week events they have attended	Deliver: July, August 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and People and Culture	All portfolio Senior Leaders
	All Barnardos Children and Families programs will conduct NAIDOC children's activities to celebrate NAIDOC Week	Deliver: July 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Children and Families	General Managers Children and Families
	Reflect and review upon NAIDOC activities and plan for next year's events	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
10. Strengthen all Barnardos Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy and practice development using co-design consultation approaches	Complete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation guidelines which provide guidance to Barnardos leaders and employees on culturally safe consultation and co design approaches with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, families, children and young people, community representatives and external organisations	June 2023	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Implement the consultation guidelines, with annual review and employee training on their application	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Ensure that compliance with the cultural consultation guidelines is mandatory in the development of Barnardos operational and HR policies and procedures	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders People and Culture, Children and Families and Practice Quality	Managers HR, General Managers Children and Families Manager Gurung Wellama
11. Ensure organisational compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle	Increase employee awareness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle across all OOHC and Safety and Prevention programs through learning and development opportunities and implementation of practice guidelines and tools	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Children and Families, Practice Quality and People and Culture	General Managers Children and Families Managers Gurung Wellama and Learning, Development and Talent

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
11. Ensure organisational compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (contd.)	Annually review compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in NSW and ACT OOHC programs and develop a plan for remediation if there is less than 80% compliance	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Children and Families and Practice Quality	General Managers Children and Families and Manager Gurung Wellama
	Ensure all OOHC employees initiate cultural support plans for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people within 1 month of entering care and then review annually	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Children and Families	General Managers NSW OOHC and Act Together



Barnardos Aboriginal Learning Centres

For well over 10 years Barnardos has provided afterschool learning support services for Aboriginal children in three NSW communities. The centres are Yurungai in Waterloo in Sydney, Yalmambirra in Wellington in the Central West, and the Queanbeyan Centre in Southern NSW which operates in five local primary schools. These services are all located in communities where there are large Aboriginal communities and are all staffed predominantly by Aboriginal people who live locally. The learning centres are provided as part of the Barnardos Children’s Family Centres located in those communities.

Many of the children attending the learning centres face significant challenges to their learning and general wellbeing including exposure to substance abuse, family breakdown and violence. Their home lives can limit access to reading and learning materials, and parental engagement in their child’s learning and school journey is often limited.

The main objectives of the Aboriginal learning centres are to improve:

- school attendance
- literacy and numeracy skills to enhance their learning
- socialisation skills
- self-confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing
- knowledge, connection and pride in their culture and community

The centres also aim to:

- engage parents and carers in their child/ren’s education and
- provide balanced nutritious meals

The activities provided in the learning centres include:

- homework support
- cultural art, craft and engagement in community events
- sport, recreational and traditional games
- visits to local libraries, pools and parks
- visits by local Elders and performers
- concerts presented by the children
- healthy afternoon teas and meals

All of the centres pick up the children from their schools each afternoon. Yalmambirra also takes children to school and provides a healthy breakfast. All the centres provide additional support and referral to other Barnardos and community services for the children and their families in times of need.

The Barnardos Aboriginal Learning Centres provide successful services in their local communities. They work co-operatively with the schools, are strongly connected to Community and are in high demand.





Opportunities

Developing Barnardos as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, and as an organisation where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families feel comfortable to engage with services are high priorities for our agency. We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel more comfortable and connected with services that are culturally engaging and respectful. Employing more First Nations people will assist Barnardos to improve our cultural safety and relevance.

As a procurer of goods and services, Barnardos will also be known as an organisation which supports First Nations-owned businesses and innovation with a view to supporting the economic empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

How Barnardos 'Towards 2025' Strategic Directions focuses on 'Opportunities':

- We will offer more identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions and senior leadership opportunities to provide greater visibility to our strong commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, especially in areas of high Aboriginal populations
- We will utilise Gurung Wellama to equip our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous staff with the language, tools and resources they need to embed cultural practices, planning and research to their work with children and families

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
12. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development opportunities	Following consultation with Barnardos First Nations employees and First Nations industry partners, design, implement and review Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment, Retention and Learning, Development and Talent strategies	June 2023 and 2025	Executive Leaders People and Culture, Practice Quality and Finance and Corporate	Managers Human Resources and Gurung Wellama and General Manager ABRS
	Advertise job vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and community networks to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Finance and Corporate	General Manager ABRS and Barnardos Talent Acquisition
	Review HR and recruitment and retention procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace	September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders People and Culture and Practice Quality	Managers Human Resources and Gurung Wellama

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
12. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development opportunities (contd.)	Within a culturally safe mentoring and supervision framework, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. identified for promotion and professional development opportunities and b. supported to take on leadership positions, through a written development plan that will be monitored and discussed on a quarterly basis 	June 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader People and Practice	Managers Human Resources and Gurung Wellama
	The Louise Voigt award which annually awards a tertiary education training scholarship to successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, will be promoted widely on the Barnardos Hub and by the leadership teams to attract applications	December 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader People and Practice	Managers Human Resources and Gurung Wellama
	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within Barnardos to 10%.	June 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader People and Practice	Managers Human Resources and Gurung Wellama
	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeships by 25% each year	December 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader People and Practice	Managers Human Resources and Gurung Wellama
13. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will feel culturally safe, respected and valued throughout their employment experience with Barnardos	In collaboration with Barnardos Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and partners, design, implement and annually review a cultural mentoring and supervision policy	June 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders People and Culture, Practice Quality and Children and Families	Managers HR and Gurung Wellama and Children and Families Senior Leadership teams
	All Barnardos Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will be surveyed each year regarding their experiences of cultural safety and respect in their employment	December 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders People and Culture and Practice Quality	Human Resources Managers and Manager Gurung Wellama
	Cultural advice and mentoring will be provided by Gurung Wellama to Barnardos non-Indigenous leaders on culturally safe supervision and management using individual and group based support and training techniques	December 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Three group based culturally safe mentoring and supervision sessions in either face to face or online format, will be conducted by Gurung Wellama each year for Barnardos leaders	December 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
14. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy	December 2023	Executive Leaders Finance and Corporate and Practice Quality	Managers Finance and Corporate and Gurung Wellama
	Set targets for annual procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses within our new procurement strategy and begin to work towards their achievement	December 2023	Executive Leaders Finance and Corporate and Practice Quality	Managers Finance and Corporate and Gurung Wellama
	Communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to employees	December 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Review and update procurement strategy and practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	June 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Finance and Corporate and Practice Quality	Business Services Manager and Gurung Wellama
	Maintain commercial relationships with a minimum of 15 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses/suppliers	June 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Finance and Corporate and Practice Quality	All portfolio Senior Leaders
	Train all relevant employees in contracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation	June 2024	Executive Leaders Finance and Corporate and Practice Quality	Business Services Manager and Gurung Wellama



HIPPY Wellington

The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters or HIPPY is a home-based, early learning and parenting program for four and five year old children. HIPPY Wellington empowers parents and carers to be their child's first teacher.

HIPPY Wellington is a culturally safe program that ensures children develop a lifelong love of learning, provides parents with confidence to teach their children and watch their confidence and self-esteem grow. In doing so, this strengthens emotional bonds and shared experiences with their parents and carers. As five year olds, children will have higher levels of confidence and preparation in their readiness for school.

The HIPPY curriculum is based on the Early Years Learning Framework and runs for 60 weeks (right through from age four to age five.) The program helps build parents' and carers' confidence as their

child's first teacher through FUN and FREE activities that are delivered to parents by professional HIPPY tutors. HIPPY learning activities are designed to be 'play' based and easy to teach, requiring as little as 10 minutes a day but with benefits that will last a lifetime. HIPPY is completely complimentary to a child's attendance at preschool or can be a 'stand-alone' pre- school learning experience.

HIPPY parents also have the opportunity to become paid HIPPY tutors which assists many parents who have been out of the workforce for extended periods to resume paid work.

In Wellington 40% of the children in the HIPPY program are Aboriginal. 75% of the tutors are Aboriginal and the HIPPY Co-ordinator is a proud Wiradjuri woman.



Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
15. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group known as the Footprints Together Working Group (FTWG) to support governance of the RAP	Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are equally represented in the Footprints Together Working Group (FTWG) with non-Indigenous employees	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Annually review the FTWG Terms of Reference to maintain its focus on RAP implementation support	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	The FTWG will meet a minimum of four times per year to discuss and report on implementation of the RAP	March, June, September and December 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
16. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	Annually review budgetary resource needs for RAP implementation with the Executive Leadership Team	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Executive Leader Practice Quality
	Review the Barnardos RAP governance structure to strengthen and align existing components and to add external First Nations representation and input	June 2023	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations of Executive and Senior Leadership and all staff	June 2024	Executive Leader People and Culture	Managers Human Resources
	Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments	June 2023	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama and Manager Strategy
	Maintain a RAP Champion from the Executive Leadership Team who coordinates collaborative Executive oversight of the RAP	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	CEO	Executive Leader Practice Quality
	Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at Leadership, Team and Centre meetings	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Ensure RAP implementation and communication is supported by a cross portfolio RAP Leadership group	June 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama

Action	Deliverable	Reporting timeline	Executive accountability	Operational responsibility
17. Build accountability and transparency by reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. To support annual reporting requirements:	Deadline to submit report: 30 September 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure our contact information with Reconciliation Australia is up-to-date so that we continue to receive crucial notifications 	June 2023, 2024 and 2025		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure we have received our information to report in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire 	August 2023, 2024 and 2025		
	Provide 6 monthly RAP progress reports on the Barnardos Hub and to Executive Leaders	June and December 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leaders Practice Quality and Engagement and Giving	Manager Gurung Wellama and Head of Communication
	Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually to Reconciliation Australia and on the Barnardos website outlining achievements, challenges and learnings	December 2023, 2024 and 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality and Engagement and Giving	Manager Gurung Wellama and Head of Communication
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of the RAP	November 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
18. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer	April 2024	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama
	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP	January 2025	Executive Leader Practice Quality	Manager Gurung Wellama



For more information about the Barnardos RAP contact:

Tina West, Manager Gurung Wellama

Ph: 0437 938 297 | (02) 4352 5900

Email: twest@barnardos.org.au

Contact

60-64 Bay Street, Ultimo NSW 2007
GPO Box 9996, Sydney NSW 2001
(02) 9218 2300

barnardos.org.au

