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Message from Board Chair and Acting Chief Executive



Mr Dipak Sanghvi Chair of Board



Mr Martin Keogh Acting Chief Executive

We are pleased to present Monash Health's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2023–2025.

This new plan expands our vision for reconciliation across our health service, and into the community we serve. It speaks to our commitment to walk alongside First Nations communities as leaders in the reconciliation journey and in closing the gap. This roadmap will strengthen our relationships with communities, engage our people in the journey of reconciliation, and develop and pilot innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We achieved important changes across the health service with our previous RAP, such as our mandatory cultural awareness training, doubling the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our workforce, and improving access to dental care for all First Nations people. Yet we know there is more work to be done. The 2022 Closing the Gap Report showed the nation is not on track or is falling behind in 14 of its 17 targets.

Working together, we can close the gap. Our shared history continues to impact current health outcomes, and so we reaffirm our commitment to creating an inclusive environment and experience for all. We strive to become an employer of choice

for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, providing a culturally stronger place to work, and better experiences for our patients.

This action plan embeds that spirit of reconciliation in the work that we do. We welcome the benefits it will have for our community.

Board Chair Dipak Sanghvi and Acting Chief Executive Martin Keogh





"This roadmap will strengthen our relationships with communities, engage our people in the journey of reconciliation, and develop and pilot innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."





Reconciliation Australia commends Monash Health on the formal endorsement of its third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Monash Health continues to be part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and transformed it into action.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate allow RAP partners to continuously strengthen reconciliation commitments and constantly strive to apply learnings in new ways.

An Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build the strong foundations and relationships that ensure sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

An integral part of building these foundations is reflecting on and cataloguing the successes and challenges of previous RAPs.
Learnings gained through effort and innovation are invaluable resources that Monash Health will continuously draw upon to create RAP commitments rooted in experience and maturity.

These learnings extend to Monash Health using the lens of reconciliation to better understand its core business, sphere of influence, and diverse community of staff and stakeholders.

The RAP program's emphasis on relationships, respect, and opportunities gives organisations a framework from which to foster connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rooted in mutual collaboration and trust.

This Innovate RAP is an opportunity for Monash Health to strengthen these relationships, gain crucial experience, and nurture connections that will become the lifeblood of its future RAP commitments. By enabling and empowering staff to contribute to this process, Monash Health will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long term.

Gaining experience and reflecting on pertinent learnings will ensure the sustainability of Monash Health's future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, providing meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Monash Health on your third Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia





Our Vision For Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is for all Aboriginal and Torres Islander communities to enjoy long and healthy lives.

To us, reconciliation means recognition and truth-telling. We believe that all Australians benefit from celebrating and enjoying the richness of Aboriginal cultures and histories. For reconciliation to progress, we must acknowledge that the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians is evidence of continued injustice within our nation. Our view of reconciliation is the continued collaboration within our organisation and our communities to work towards closing these gaps. As Victoria's largest health provider, we strive to provide culturally safe care for all Aboriginal patients and their families.

Areas of action and commitment within the 2023–2025 Monash Health RAP are:

 Partnership with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, leaders and peak bodies. This involves collaboration with
Dandenong and District Aborigines
Co-operative Limited (DDACL) and
a significant expansion to Monash
Health's Aboriginal Health Strategic
Partnership Advisory Committee
membership to encompass a wide
representation of Aboriginal voices,
leaders and organisations.

- Grow the Healthy Koori Kids clinic to meet the rising demand of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care who require holistic and culturally appropriate medical care.
- Establish Monash Health as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
 Deliver the Monash Health Aboriginal Employment Plan which aims to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees within Monash Health to 2% of total employees,

to approximately 440 employees. Establish and fund the Aboriginal Health and Engagement Education and Conference Scholarship to support a wide range of learning and development opportunities including interstate conferences, coaching, and courses. Establish and maintain a state-wide Aboriginal Health Employment Network Community of Practice to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.

 Construct culturally safe spaces for Aboriginal patients and families within Monash Health sites. This will include a visitor and family space for Aboriginal patients, a refurbishment of the Aboriginal Healing Gardens at Monash Medical Centre, and the installation of Aboriginal artworks into 26 Maternity and Newborn service sites across Monash Health. Prioritise Aboriginal cultural awareness for Monash Health senior leadership. From 2023, Monash Health will provide 100 per cent of the Board, Executive Leadership and senior staff face-toface cultural competency training. This will form an ongoing professional development program of cultural awareness and mandatory training for new appointments. In addition, Monash Health will renew our Acknowledgement of Country policy to support all staff to acknowledge Country in a manner that inspires commitment to reconciliation action. Throughout the year, Monash Health will celebrate National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week as well as days of significance.

We are excited to push our reconciliation journey into new areas over the next two years.



Our Business

Monash Health is Victoria's largest public health service. We are proud to provide healthcare to approximately a quarter of Melbourne's population, across the entire lifespan from newborn and children, to adults, the elderly, their families, and carers.

We provide services to metropolitan Melbourne and specialist services throughout regional and state-wide Victoria. Our employees work at more than 40 care locations, including Monash Medical Centre, Monash Children's Hospital, the Victorian Heart Hospital, Moorabbin Hospital, Dandenong Hospital, Casey Hospital, the Kingston Centre, the Cranbourne Centre, and our extensive network of rehabilitation. aged care, community health and mental health facilities. Our academic health science centre partnership - Monash Partners - and translational research hub - Monash Health Translation Precinct are world renowned for turning scientific research into clinical practice to benefit patients locally and internationally.

Since establishing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Policy in 2018, we have quadrupled the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees within Monash Health. We currently employ 111 diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across a range of disciplines. We have continued to expand our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce through our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cadetship and Graduate Programs, as well as internship and work experience opportunities. We strive to create an environment of opportunity, enrichment and respect for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.



Leadership in Aboriginal Health

In 2022, Monash Health promoted the Aboriginal Health and Engagement team to report directly to our Chief Operating Officer.

This brings Aboriginal health issues to the forefront of our organisation's strategic discussions. The Monash Health RAP is championed by our Chief Operating Officer who has taken on the role of ensuring the delivery and accountability of our 2023-2025 RAP. The same year, we established a new Aboriginal senior leadership role with Monash Health: Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor. This is an identified role that leads Monash Health's Aboriginal health strategies.





Monash Health's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–25 renews our investment in reconciliation and is driven by working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

As senior leaders of the organisation, our roles reflect Monash Health's commitment to ensuring high level changes across the health sector occur, from the top of the organisation right through to the front line of patient-facing services.

Key to our work in strengthening health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is the work we undertake together in partnership with our community. Their collective voice is pivotal to what we do. The success of these collaborations is built on

Monash Health's commitment to work with communities and lead agencies in acknowledging shared respect, shared meaning, and shared knowledge. In doing so, Monash Health will be able to work in a concerted approach to remove barriers and achieve optimal health outcomes.

This strategy has been developed in collaboration and consultation with First Nations communities and we look forward to delivering this work together.





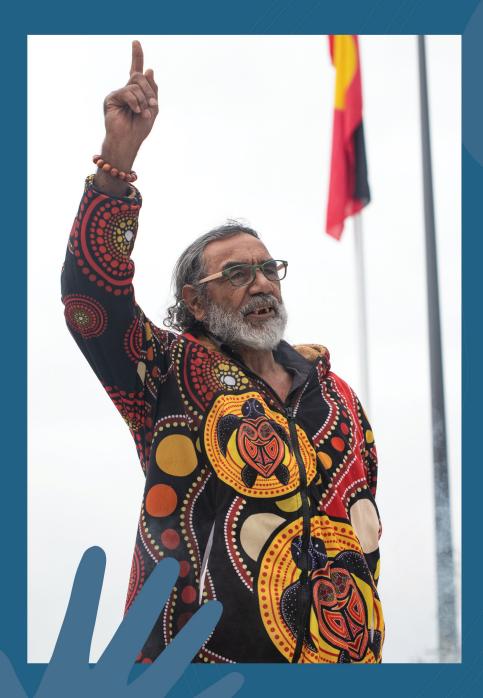
Dan Carter Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor

Dan Carter is a proud Ngarrindjeri/Wergaia man and recently joined Monash Health as the Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor. Dan was formerly our Director of Aboriginal Health, and for over 15 years, Dan has worked across local and state government, not-for-profit and community-controlled organisations, as well as health services around the country. Dan has a strong connection to community and is passionate about improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



Sarah Ong Operational Director of Aboriginal Health Operations

Sarah Ong is the Director of Aboriginal Health Operations at Monash Health. Sarah was integral to the development of the Monash Health Aboriginal Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Cadetship and Graduate Program from 2011 to 2014. Sarah has held several leadership roles with the Department of Health and oversaw the Koolin Balit policy implementation across Southern and Metro regions and Gippsland. Throughout her career, Sarah has a proven track record of supporting initiatives that address priority Aboriginal health issues and has extensive experience in the health sector.



The Monash Health Aboriginal Health Working Group

Monash Health's Aboriginal Health Working Group functions as the RAP Working Group.

The group meets monthly and contributes to all RAP processes. The Working Group is made up of clinical and non-clinical employees, of which fifty per cent are Aboriginal people. This year, we opened membership to all interested Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, which increased the diversity of voices contributing to Aboriginal health discussions.

The group's membership is comprised of representatives from key areas of Monash Health:

- Aboriginal Health
- Allied Health
- Monash Children's Hospital
- Jessie McPherson Private Hospital
- Monash Community Health

- Education and Strategy
- People and Culture
- Social Work and Spiritual Care
- Women's and Newborn Program
- Monash Health Research
- Communications and Engagement

The RAP is overseen by the Aboriginal Health Strategic Partnership Committee. The Monash Health leaders of this committee can disperse reconciliation responsibilities across the organisation. Representatives from DDACL provide expert advice and guidance about health priorities for First Nations communities. The Aboriginal Strategic Partnership Committee extends the multidisciplinary approach of our RAP Working Group to incorporate

perspectives from our consumers, State Government, and local Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. The Aboriginal Health Strategic Partnership Committee is made up of:

- Board Chair, Monash Health (Chair)
- Board Chair, Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-operative Limited
- Board Director, Monash Health
- Board Director, Dandenong and District Aborigines
 Co-operative Limited
- Chief Executive, Monash Health
- Chief Executive, Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-operative Limited
- Manager Aboriginal Engagement,

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

- Deputy Chief Aboriginal Health Adviser, Aboriginal Health, Department of Health
- Chief Operating Officer, Monash Health
- Consumer Advisor
- Manager Aboriginal Health Services, Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-operative Limited
- Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement, Monash Health
- Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor, Monash Health

Aboriginal Health Board Aboriginal Health Strategic Partnership Committee Aboriginal Health Working Group Chair, Monash Health Board Chair Chair, Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor

Monash Health's Reconciliation Action Journey

The Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer program was created in Victoria, with Monash Health soon adopting the service to offer support and improve access for First Nations patients and their families.

1982

2006

Monash Health created the inaugural Aboriginal Health Team and signed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Chronic Conditions Partnership agreement with the Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-Operative Limited. Policy published relating to Acknowledgment and Welcome to Country ensuring this is carried out at all of Monash Health's significant meetings and major events.

2013

Monash Health launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan.

At this stage, Monash Health had 20–25 First Nations employees, less than 0.15% of the workforce.

2016

2015

Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Cadetship program launched.

2017

Established the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment Policy to increase the number of identified employees within the organisation.

The Healthy Koori Kids clinic was established to provide holistic care for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and adolescents in out-of-home care.

The Bubup Clinic and Aboriginal Midwives Team was established to offer culturally safe antenatal care for Aboriginal families. Monash Health launched its second Reconciliation Action Plan.

Mandatory Cultural Awareness e-learning was introduced for all Monash Health staff and is part of the induction package for all new employees. Aboriginal Health and Engagement Directorate elevated to report directly to Monash Health Chief Operating Officer.

The Bubup Clinic expanded to provide antenatal support for First Nations families at Dandenong and Casey Hospitals.

2022

Monash Health signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-Operative.

2018

2019

2020

12 months since the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment Policy,

Monash Health's First Nations workforce grew from 24 to 57 employees. 2021

Monash Health began improving access to dental care for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aboriginal People and Culture Cadetship launched.

2023

Aboriginal employees at Monash Health exceed 100 for the first time.

Monash Health creates a voice for First Nations strategy and employees by creating an identified role in Monash Health senior leadership; the Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor.

Aboriginal Health Scholarship was launched, and secondment roles were created to support the professional development of First Nations employees.

Monash Health offers any interested employee the option of taking an alternative date for the 26 January public holiday.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Monash Health continues to believe in the value of Reconciliation Action Plans to inspire us to achieve equity in all areas of our organisation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to feel confident and safe in accessing Australian healthcare, and the system must be able to respond to their needs. For this reason, we have collaborated with Reconciliation Australia to adapt the RAP Innovate Template to better suit our goals as a health organisation. The updated template reflects the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS) created by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and the Victorian Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Framework.

The NSQHS recognises that there are tangible and deep health disparities within the healthcare system. Our organisation is united in recognising that it is every Monash Health employee's responsibility to

work towards providing equitable care – not only the responsibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and teams.

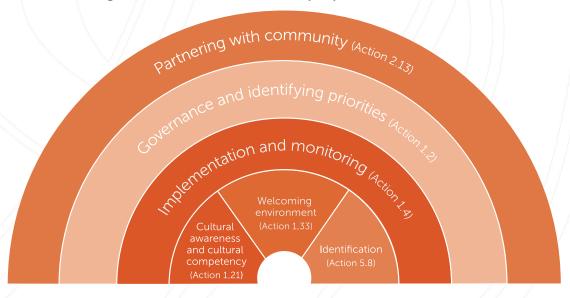
Through the Victorian Department of Health's Cultural Safety Grant, Monash Health invests strategically to promote accountability and Aboriginal self-determination. This is seen through our organisation's governance structures, which involve Aboriginal people leading and making decisions about Aboriginal health issues and resource allocation. Our RAP addresses the eight action areas that align with the Department of Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Framework.

In each section of the RAP, we have identified how our Actions and Deliverables link to counterpart goals in the NSQHS and Victoria's Cultural Safety Framework (Figure 1).

The Eight Actions Areas of the Victorian Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Framework

- 1. CEO and Executive Leadership
- 2. Employment of Aboriginal hospital liaison officer and Aboriginal health staffing
- 3. Engagement and partnerships with Aboriginal communities
- 4. Identifying the health needs of the Aboriginal population and plans to address these
- 5. Cultural safety training
- 6. Creating a welcoming environment
- 7. Improving patient identification
- 8. Monitoring and accountability.

Figure 1: Approach to addressing the six actions that specifically meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care 2017, User Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Sydney.





Relationships

First Nations peoples have lived happy and healthy lives on this continent for over 65,000 years. We need to listen deeply to their wisdom. When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not consulted and given autonomy in their care, it is to the detriment of our whole community.

In this Reconciliation Action Plan, Monash Health aims to strengthen collaboration with a range of Aboriginal communities across our catchment. At the heart of any meaningful relationship is mutual trust and respect. We recognise the ongoing impact of unjust and prejudicial policies in the health care system. Therefore, today, Monash Health aims to move at the 'speed of trust'. This means taking the time to build relationships. We continue to foster authentic and sustained partnerships by involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in determining their own health priorities.

Within Monash Health, the Aboriginal Health Working Group guides and supports all major Aboriginal health innovations and strategies. This acts as the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. It is sponsored by the Chief Operations Officer and is comprised of 50% First Nations staff alongside leaders from across the organisation. Through these relationships, we work to ensure accountability and shared responsibility for reconciliation.

The following actions address the following targets:

- NSQHS Standards Action 2.13:
 Partnering with Community
- Cultural Safety Plan Action Area 3: Engagement and partnerships with Aboriginal communities and Action Area 5: Cultural Safety Training.

Relationships

1.	Partner with Aboriginal and	Torres Strait Islander	stakeholders and communit	ies

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1.1 Collaborate with at least 3 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) and/or Gathering Places to improve service delivery for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.	Collaboration completed by Dec 2025	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement, with Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor
1.2 Develop working connections with peak bodies such as the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) to further our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Progress Reported Dec 2024	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement, with Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor
1.3 Collaborate with Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-operative Limited (DDACL) to understand and respond to community needs. This will include 3-monthly face-to-face meetings between Monash Health and DDACL to develop and implement joint health initiatives.	Meetings continue to be scheduled every 3 months	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement, with Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor
2. Expand engagement with Aboriginal and Torres strait islander communities		
Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
2.1 Expand membership of the Aboriginal Health Strategic Partnership Advisory Committee to a wide representation of Aboriginal leaders and organisations. The Committee will also review its performance review to increase reach and capacity.	Membership expansion commenced 2023/2024. Progress reported Dec 2024	Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor
2.2 Monash Health will recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumer representatives.	Membership expansion commenced 2023/2024. Progress reported Dec 2024	Director, Patient Experience and Consumer Partnerships
3. Recognise National Reconciliation Week (NRW)		
Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3.1 Monash Health is to hold a NRW event for all staff each year.	Delivered by 27 May – 3 Jun 2024 and 2025	Monash Health Chief Operating Officer

Relationships (continued)

3. Recognise National Reconciliation Week (NRW) (continued)

5. necognise National neconciliation week (NNW) (continued)		
Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3.2 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	Delivered by 27 May – 3 Jun 2024 and 2025	Monash Health Chief Operating Officer
3.3 Aboriginal Health Working Group members and Monash Health senior leaders will be encouraged to participate in an external NRW event.	Delivered by 27 May – 3 Jun 2024 and 2025	Monash Health Chief Operating Officer
4. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence		
Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
We will communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly by:		
4.1 Promoting and educating all Monash Health staff to deliver a meaningful and heartfelt Acknowledgement of Country.	Completed by Dec 2023	Monash Health Chief Operating Officer
4.2 Launching our Reconciliation Action Plan through social media, and by publishing our Reconciliation Action Plan on Monash Health and Reconciliation Australia websites.	Completed by Dec 2023	Director, Communication and Engagement
4.3 Celebrating employee achievements in reconciliation through awards and staff news articles.	Ongoing, with progress reported by Dec 2024	Director, Communication and Engagement
4.4 Increase awareness of Monash Health Aboriginal Health services to staff and community.	Ongoing, with progress reported by Dec 2024	Director, Communication and Engagement
4.5 Developing recordings that acknowledge and educate staff on the significance of National Sorry Day.	Ongoing, with progress reported by Dec 2024	Director, Communication and Engagement
4.6 Collaborating with at least two organisations in the RAP network, and/or other like-minded services, to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	Progress reported Dec 2024	Director, Communication and Engagement

5. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies			
Del	liverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5.1	Conduct a review of People and Culture policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	Review completed by Jul 2024	Executive Director, People and Culture
5.2	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	Completed by July 2024	Monash Health Chief Operating Officer
5.3	Our Executive Team, Board members, and senior leaders will attend face-to-face cultural safety training that includes anti-racism education.	Dec 2023 with ongoing dates for future training in 2024	Monash Health Chief Operating Officer
i. Imp	prove the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and	their families	
Del	liverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6.1	Collaboration between Monash Health Community Engagement, Patient Experience and Aboriginal Health and Engagements teams to review the feedback and complaint process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families.	Progress reported by Dec 2024	Director, Patient Experience and Consumer Partnerships, with Director, Consumer Engagement, and with Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor
6.2	Develop improved feedback and complaint process suitable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families.	New system implemented by Nov 2025	Director, Patient Experience and Consumer Partnerships, with Director, Consumer Engagement, and with Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor

"We continue to foster authentic and sustained partnerships by involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in determining their own health priorities."

Snapshot Yarning Circles

Monash Health is committed to providing a culturally safe environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with the continuation of face-to-face Yarning Circles.

Our deliverable in the 2020-2022 Reconciliation Action Plan was to hold six Yarning Circles each year, which we have increased to 10 throughout 2023.

Our Yarning Circles provide a safe meeting place for First Nations staff to come together to debrief, share experiences and network with other Aboriginal employees who work across various areas of Monash Health. In addition to creating a welcoming environment, our Yarning Circles strengthen connections to cultural

identity by providing opportunities for the learning and preservation of cultural knowledge and customs. Our meetings are facilitated by a local community member and Wayapa Practitioner, a practice rooted in the ancestral knowledge of Aboriginal people, centred on nurturing and connecting to Country. This year, our Yarning Circle focus has been to support the continuation of traditional practices with activities such as emu feather crafts and using native plants to create smoking sticks.







Respect

Monash Health strives to provide a welcoming environment in all hospitals and health centres.

Beyond physical spaces, providing a welcoming environment encompasses the emotional and relational attributes of patient care. To do this, we are focused on embedding cultural safety education for employees, acknowledging days of significance and installing Acknowledgement of Country plaques across all sites.

Monash Health is improving the experience of patients along the antenatal journey through the Culturally Safe Maternity Spaces project, which involves installing Aboriginal art across 26 spaces at four Monash Health sites. These 'Respect'

Actions will create an environment where all people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, feel respected and safe.

These actions address the following targets:

- NSQHS Standards Action 1.33: Creating a welcoming environment, and Action 1.21: Improving cultural competency
- Cultural Safety Plan Action Area 5: Cultural safety training, and Action Area 6: Creating a welcoming environment.

Respect

7. Increase understanding, value and recognition of aboriginal and torres strait islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning

Deli	verable	Timeline	Responsibility
7.1	100 per cent of the Monash Health Board, Executive Leadership and senior staff will undertake targeted cultural awareness training. This will form an ongoing professional development program of cultural awareness and mandatory training for new senior appointments.	Education sessions begin Nov 2023	Monash Health Chief Operation Officer
7.2	Monash Health will create a full-time, ongoing position that will create and implement an organisation-wide Aboriginal cultural education strategy. The role is a designated role.	Position created. Recruitment will begin Dec 2023	Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor and Operations Director, Aboriginal Health and Engagement
7.3	Monash Health will use the national Cultural Respect Framework 2016–2026 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health to develop, implement and evaluate cultural awareness and cultural competency strategies.	Progress reported by Dec 2024	Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor and Operations Director, Aboriginal Health and Engagement
7.4	Monash Health's Community Engagement, as the team driving our organisational engagement with priority stakeholder groups, will achieve 100 per cent participation in further cultural safety training.	By Dec 2025	Director, Community Engagement
7.5	Monash Health education departments to ensure tailored Aboriginal Cultural Awareness modules are included appropriately into the existing learning curriculums for students, trainees and early career nurses and doctors.	By Dec 2025	Monash Health Chief Operating Officer and Aboriginal Health and Engagement
7.6	Celebrate NAIDOC week and embed days of significance into the annual Monash Health communications and events calendar. The calendar consists of: National Close the Gap Day Anniversary of the Apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples National Sorry Day National Reconciliation Week NAIDOC week National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day Indigenous Literacy Day	Ongoing	Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor with Director, Communication and Engagement

Monash Health Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-25

Respect (continued)

8.	B. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols			
	Deli	verable	Timeline	Responsibility
	8.1	Recreate Monash Health's Acknowledgement of Country policy to support all Monash Health staff to acknowledge Country in a manner that is meaningful, respectful and inspires commitment to reconciliation action.	From Jan 2024	Monash Health Chief Operating Officer
	8.2	Install Acknowledgement of Country plaques throughout all Monash Health facilities and update staff signature blocks with appropriate Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners.	From Jan 2025	Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor
	8.3	Continue to invite a Bunurong Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events such as AGMs.	Ongoing	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement
9.	Res	pect for cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week		
	Deli	verable	Timeline	Responsibility
	9.1	Review People and Culture policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	Progress reported by Dec 2024	Executive Director, People and Culture
	9.2	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events for all staff.	By Jul 2024	Executive Director, People and Culture
	9.3	Commitment from leadership to participate in external NAIDOC Week events.	By Jul 2024	Executive Director, People and Culture
10.	Crea	ate a welcoming environment		
	Deli	verable	Timeline	Responsibility
		ease support for Aboriginal patients and their families use Monash Health maternity services by:		
	10.1	Implementing the Culturally Safe Maternity Spaces project, which involves installing Aboriginal art in 26 maternity and newborn service spaces across all Monash Health maternity sites. This project involves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and community members in the evaluation of Monash Health maternity spaces.	Project completed Aug 2025	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement, and General Manager, with Women's & Newborn Program and Moorabbin Hospital, Monash Health

10.2	Providing more First Nations families access to culturally appropriate antenatal care through expanding the Bubup Program to Monash Medical Centre in Clayton.	Progress reported by Dec 2024	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement, and General Manager, with Women's & Newborn Program and Moorabbin Hospital, Monash Health
10.3	Commissioning of original local Aboriginal artworks for Monash Health with a focus on increasing the cultural safety of inpatient and community mental health spaces. Locations include Community Psychology, Monash Health's Early Parenting Centre, the Child Health and Wellbeing Local Hub, and child and youth mental health services.	Progress reported by Dec 2024	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement, with Monash Health Procurement and program managers
10.4	 Monash Health will prioritise capital-building projects that have significant benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by: Building an Aboriginal family and visitor space and co-locating the Aboriginal Health and Engagement offices at Monash Medical Centre. Redesign and refresh the Monash Medical Centre Aboriginal Healing Garden. Providing smoking ceremony areas in new hospital builds, noting that Aboriginal community consultation has already been provided to the design team. 	Ongoing	Director, Capital and Infrastructure



Snapshot

Meet Tamara Porter, our Aboriginal Midwifery Coordinator

"I started my career as a NICU nurse in New South Wales and then Victoria," says Tamara Porter, who is the Aboriginal Midwifery Coordinator at Monash Health and a proud Gamilaroi woman.

"I loved that role and working with babies, but I also noticed that I loved working alongside the mother and the family network. So, I decided that a good pathway for me to have an outlet from NICU was maternity."

Tamara joined the Aboriginal
Midwifery team in January 2023.
"We have two different streams:
we have a pregnancy clinic which
currently runs from Casey and
Dandenong and a secondary support
service. Our clinic is midwifery lead
and provides continuity of care to our
patients throughout their pregnancy
and into the postnatal period."

The team also provides integral cultural and emotional support. "Sometimes pregnancy is the first time Aboriginal women walk into a hospital setting, so being able to support them from their booking through to after they're discharged from hospital is really important to us."

Tamara explains that unconscious bias and historical trauma continue to be a barrier for some First Nations mothers accessing care. "We're trying to build a bridge and create culturally safe environments for families."

By incorporating activities such as belly casting, possum skin cloak crafting, and placental burials, the Aboriginal Midwifery team helps mothers feel more comfortable and connected to culture. "I am a Gamilaroi woman from NSW, so I'm still learning the culture, lore and traditions within the Naarm/Melbourne community," Tamara explains. "However, I think everyone comes from different backgrounds, and they're all learning about their own culture and how they fit into the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community."

"We try to offer different opportunities for families to either continue what they're already doing culturally, or to learn and understand more about who they are."

The team are also involved in a project to create more culturally safe maternity spaces. "We're looking at bringing in artwork for women's business into the maternity areas of care, as well as therapeutic cultural artifacts like framed possum skins, cultural music and essential oils. It's about creating a safe and more welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their families within a hospital setting."

This project is funded through the Cultural Safety Fixed Grant, which aims to enhance the cultural capability of Monash Health.



Monash Health Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–25







The Opportunity pillar of the RAP combines a range of innovation and ambition.

Over the next two years, our organisation strives towards equity in employment, procurement and through quality improvement in service delivery such as Emergency Departments and the Healthy Koori Kids Clinic. As the State's largest provider of health to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we will contribute to the narrative of Aboriginal Health in our nation by collecting data with respect and responding purposefully. Our priority areas have been informed by Closing the Gap Targets and discussions with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations. Monash Health will continue to enhance organisational capacity through

focused opportunities that will grow our Aboriginal senior staffing profile in the areas of employment, education and health and wellbeing outcomes.

The actions in this pillar address the following targets:

- NSQHS Standards Action 1.21: Improving cultural competency; Action 1.2: Addressing health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and Action 5.08: Identifying people of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.
- Cultural Safety Plan Action Area
 2: Employment of Aboriginal hospital liaison officer/Aboriginal health staffing, and Action Area 7: Improving patient identification.



Opportunities

11. Build employment and leadership pathways through recruitment, retention and professional development

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11.1 Establish and maintain a state-wide Aboriginal Health Employment Network Community of Practice to build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing and to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. Participation is welcomed from health services statewide with the aim of building partnership.	The first meeting was held June 2023, future meetings held bi-monthly	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement
 11.2 Redevelop Monash Health's Aboriginal Employment Plan which aims to: Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees within Monash Health to 2% of total employees, which is over 400 employees. Improve recruitment processes to support and engage with all applicants. Review recruitment and People and Culture procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal participation in our workplace. Guide training and ongoing professional development processes. Strengthen workforce support, including systems to retain employees and provide appropriate employee assistance programs. Recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to positions at all levels of the organisation. Increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders by establishing leadership development programs and pathways. Reach and attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prospective employees. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. 	Launch of new Aboriginal Employment Plan by 30 Jun 2024	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement with Executive Director, People and Culture
In addition to the Aboriginal Employment Plan, Monash Health will create career progression through the Aboriginal Health and Engagement Directorate through:		
11.3 Creating secondment positions for First Nations Monash Health employees into leadership roles within Aboriginal Health and Engagement.	Secondee position active since Mar 2023	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement

Opportunities (continued)

Deliv	verable	Timeline	Responsibility
11.4	Supporting two senior Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in an external Leadership Development Program.	Progress on Leadership graduates reported by Dec 2024	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement
11.5	Recruit to the newly created job position of Aboriginal Employment Officer. The role is a designated position and will lead innovation in employment, retention and employee support.	Progress on recruitment reported by Dec 2024	Executive Director, People and Culture
11.6	Hold monthly Yarning Circles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to create a cultural network for our Aboriginal employees.	Progress on staff gatherings reported by Dec 2024	Operation Director, Aboriginal Health and Engagement
11.7	Develop and implement cultural leave policies to enable our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to: Participate in significant events such as NRW and NAIDOC events. Observe Sorry Business. Employees can choose to observe or abstain from the public holiday of January 26 in line with their relevant Enterprise Agreements.	Progress on staff gatherings reported by Dec 2024	Executive Director, People and Culture
11.8	Establish and fund the Aboriginal Health and Engagement Education and Conference Scholarship. This Scholarship was launched in 2023 and is open to all Aboriginal employees. It offers access to a wide range of learning and development opportunities including conferences, coaching, and courses.	Ongoing. This Scholarship was launched Mar 2023	Director of Operations, Aborigin Health and Engagement
11.9	 Provide cultural and professional support for Aboriginal Graduates, students, cadets and trainees, including: Formal evaluation of current cultural support offered to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander graduates and cadets employed at Monash Health. Benchmarking of cultural support offered to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander graduates and cadets employed at other public health organisations. Scoping of internal and external opportunities for cultural support in line with the Department of Health Aboriginal Cadetship Guide. Develop evidence-based, collaborative plans and structures for cultural support of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander graduates and cadets employed in Victoria. 	Completed by Jun 2024	Workforce, Innovation, Strategy, Education & Research (WISER) Unit Coordinator, Graduate Programs Workforce & Professional Practic

• Improving diabetes management as a collaborative public health initiative.

13.2 Develop and implement a strategic response to addressing the

Close the Gap targets relating to health and wellbeing.

Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
	p and implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific action the Monash Health Social Procurement Strategy, including:	Monash Health's Social Procurement	Director, Procurement Services
	nmunicating opportunities for procurement of goods and services Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	Strategy will launch Dec 2023	
	eloping commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/ orres Strait Islander businesses.		
	easing Aboriginal procurement through the use of Aboriginal and Torres it Islander suppliers, such as Kinaway Chamber of Commerce.		
	nching a new Social Procurement Strategy that supports Aboriginal and es Strait Islander procurement across the entire organisation.		
Addressing l	health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples		
Deliverable		Timeline	Responsibility
health p	boration with Aboriginal communities, Monash Health will address the unique priorities of the South East Metropolitan region. From 2023, these projects are: and the Healthy Koori Kids clinic to meet the rising and of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care.	Progress on targeted health initiatives to be reported by Dec 2024	Director of Operations, Aborigina Health and Engagement, with Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor

Progress on targeted Director of Operations, Aboriginal

health initiatives to be Health and Engagement

reported by Dec 2024

Opportunities (continued)

Deliverable Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3.3 Develop research capacity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health within Monash Health by:	Progress on targeted health initiatives to be	e Research Strategy
 Working alongside VACCHO to implement the 	reported by Dec 2024	
 Victorian Aboriginal Research Accords at Monash Health. 		
 Exploring avenues to increase the cultural awareness capacity of Monash Health Human Research Ethics Review Committee. 		
 Presenting a poster and/or paper at an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing conference or seminar. 		
 Enabling Healthy Koori Kids to undertake a research project with the assistance of the Monash Health 'Researcher in Residence program. 		

14. Improve the way our services identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families to ensure it is culturally safe and appropriate

D	liverable	Timeline	Responsibility
14	1 Raising awareness within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service user cohort of the benefits of recording Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.	Update on progress Dec 2024	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement
14	2 Training the workforce to collect identification information in a culturally appropriate manner.	Update on progress Dec 2024	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement
14	3 Implement an evaluation system to monitor improvements in Identification.	Update on progress Dec 2024	Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor

Snapshot

Aboriginal Health Secondments

Meet Maia Sanderson, who is a Palawa woman and NICU Nurse on secondment with the Aboriginal Health and Engagement team.



"It's been a really positive experience for me," says Maia.
"We've got a strong network in our team, and everyone's so supportive, which has helped me to adjust to a completely different role."

As Project Lead, Maia has developed a Community of Practice with 16 health services around Australia to improve the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, who are chronically underrepresented.

The Community of Practice had their first meeting in June. "It's been a long process with a lot of planning to get to this point. Our group is made up of people from Diversity and Inclusion teams, People and Culture, people from the education space, and, importantly Aboriginal Elders. We're there to discuss what's working and what can make positive changes and remove some of the barriers we find when recruiting Aboriginal staff."

"We have the opportunity to share what we've learned, but also learn from other leaders in this space, like St Vincent's in Sydney."

During her secondment, Maia has also had the opportunity to work on other projects, like a business case for culturally safe birthing suites across Monash Health's birthing sites. "I never pictured myself to be someone working in an office behind a computer. But it's actually so much more than that, and that's one of the unexpected takeaways. Each of these small changes is making Monash Health a more culturally safe place for our team, our patients and our families."

However, Maia isn't ready to hang up her nursing scrubs yet.

"I've loved this work, but I'm also really passionate about my nursing role in NICU," says Maia. "Ideally, I would work half my time in NICU and half in Aboriginal Health and Engagement."

Snapshot

Bright Futures for Healthy Koori Kids

In Victoria, Aboriginal kids are 17 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children.

Less than half are living with Aboriginal carers. The 2022 Closing the Gap Report shows that the nation is falling behind on this important target.

Our Healthy Koori Kids team provides a fortnightly clinic for Aboriginal children who are in out-of-home care. The team includes two paediatricians, a paediatric fellow, a paediatric psychologist, a social worker, a speech pathologist and a teacher, as well as First Nations staff, a Clinic Coordinator and an Aboriginal Health Nurse.

Through an initial Paediatric Broader Needs Assessment, the team works with children to find out what health services they require. The team asks questions about daily habits and lifestyle, and assesses the children for speech delay, underimmunisation, development and behaviour issues, hearing issues and visual issues, and dental health.

Lynne Harrison is a Senior Speech Pathologist and one of the Clinic Coordinators of Healthy Koori Kids. "A significant proportion of the clinic's focus is on building relationships and supporting engagement," says Lynne. "The clinic aims to provide continuous, culturally responsive and flexible health and developmental care for children despite their changing circumstances."

Healthy Koori Kids is located at Cranbourne Intergrated Care Centre, but children from as far as Moe and Sale travel to the clinic. The team do a lot of work to maintain the children's continuity of care, despite the disruptive changes in their lives. Healthy Koori Kids offers telehealth for children who cannot travel to the clinic.

In 2023, the Monash Children's Hospital School teamed up with the Healthy Koori Kids.





"We looked at where we could add value in the multidisciplinary approach that Healthy Koori Kids has," says Colin Dobson, Principal of Monash Children's Hospital School. "We brought an education lens to the clinical conversations with the caregiver, the young person and the clinician themselves.

"We also reached out to the classroom teachers and the coordinators to get an idea of where the young person was at in terms of their education."

Instead of a quiet waiting room, kids get to play with a range of educational games, and even socialise with other First Nations children in a fun and colourful environment. Katherine Lingard-Smith is the Education Consultant from Monash Children's Hospital who works with the Healthy Koori Kids clinic. "Kids are often quite nervous, and they don't know what to expect when they come to their first appointment," says Katherine. "We've set it up so kids can come together and play games and 'getting to know you' activities. That way I can build a relationship with the kids, and learn about who they are, what their strengths are, how developed their communication skills are, and feed that back to the team.

"The kids also get the chance to connect with other children about their shared identity and Aboriginality." "The kids also get the chance to connect with other children about their shared identity and Aboriginality."





Governance

Governance underpins the core reconciliation standards of relationships, respect and opportunity.

Monash Health pledges to track and make publicly available our reconciliation action progress. We recognise the genuine challenge and complexity of making authentic progress. Therefore, the following monitoring mechanisms are in place to help keep us accountable to ourselves and to our community. Only through a coordinated response can we evaluate progress towards improving the quality of care and access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

These actions address the following targets:

- NSQHS Standards Action 1.4: Implementing and monitoring targeted strategies
- Cultural Safety Plan Action Area 1:
 CEO and Executive Leadership, and
 8: Monitoring and Accountability.

Governance

15.	15. Establish and maintain an effective governance structure that will oversee RAP commitments.				
	Deli	verable	Timeline	Responsibility	
	15.1	RAP progress is supported through: • The Monash Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group (which functions as the RAP Working Group)	Reporting mechanisms are established and ongoing. To be reviewed annually	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement, with Chief Aboriginal Health Advisor	
		 The Aboriginal Health Strategic Partnership Advisory Committee. Monthly program meetings chaired by Monash Health's Chief Operating Officer with Aboriginal Health and Engagement leaders. 			
		Reporting updates to strategic governance committees.			
16.	Prov	vide appropriate support for RAP delivery			
	Deli	verable	Timeline	Responsibility	
	16.1	Our Chief Executive will continue as Monash Health's most senior RAP Champion and be accountable for the implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan. They will support the provision of resources required for successful implementation.	Ongoing via the Aboriginal Health Working Group and Aboriginal Health Strategic Partnership Committee	Monash Health Chief Operating Officer	
	16.2	Engage a cross-section of non-Aboriginal business units in the delivery of RAP commitments. Monash Health will achieve this through Quality and Business Improvement Plan (QBIP) reporting targets.	QBIP targets created by Jun 2024	Monash Health Chief Operating Officer	
17.	17. Accountability and transparency through reporting on commitments publically				
	Deli	verable	Timeline	Responsibility	
	17.1	Ensure Reconciliation Australia has updated contact and governance information.	Review Dec 2024	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement	
	17.2	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer in May 2024.	May 2024	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement	
	17.3	Conduct and submit annual reporting requirements to Reconciliation Australia via the RAP Impact Survey.	Reporting portal opens: Jul annually. Reporting portal closes 30 Sep, annually		

Governance (continued)

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
17.4 Publish our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	Dec 2024	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement
17.5 Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	Dec 2025	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement
3. Continue our reconciliation journey		
18.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia to begin developing our 2026 - 2028 RAP.	Jul 2025	Director of Operations, Aboriginal Health and Engagement



Artist - Dixon Patten

Artwork Narrative

The three large circles in the middle represents community coming together to help one another on their health journey.

The central flower-shaped symbols represent the sites of Monash Health that are guided by its values and principles.

The smaller circles represent the diverse communities that form our broader society.

The pathways show the connection between communities and the various sites.

The feet represents walking in reconciliation and caring for Country.

The waterways represents healing.

The dots and lines depict the familial connections and knowledge being passed down and shared for millennia. They also represent the energy and flow of life.

The 'U' shape symbols represent the RAP committee meeting to implement the RAP actions and to build relationships and work in collaboration to ensure that Indigenous people are able to share their culture and tell their stories and respecting all modalities of healing and cultural values.

The three artefacts represent the different stages of our lives:

- The coolamons represent women and children and the connection between birth, life and death.
- The shields represent the strength and resilience of Indigenous people and the large hands represent the elders who share their knowledge.
- The boomerangs represent returning to culture to find counsel and wisdom.

The gum leaves are significant to Kulin people, the traditional Custodians of the land and are used for ceremony and in particular; 'Welcome to Country'. They are extended to guests of the Kulin Nation and remind us that while this is home to many, we

have joined their community and it is always important to honour and respect Traditional Custodians.

The silhouette figures represent the ancestors guiding our journeys.

Dixon Patten was commissioned by Monash Health to produce the artwork contained within this document.

Dixon Patten is a proud Yorta Yorta and Gunnai man and has family bloodlines from Gunditjmara, Dhudhuroa, Wiradjuri, Yuin, Wemba Wemba, Barapa Barapa and Monaro.

