

Innovate **RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN**

December 2021 - 2023

Western Queensland PHN

phn WESTERN QUEENSLAND



An Australian Government Initiative

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Western Queensland Primary Health Network acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Custodians on whose land we walk, work and live across Western Queensland. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living culture and their continuing connection to the land and waters of our catchment.

We pay respect to Elders past and present and commit to building respectful and inclusive partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve health outcomes in our region.



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RECONCILIATION AND WESTERN QUEENSLAND PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK

Western Queensland Primary Health Network (WQPHN) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters across our catchment and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the continuing connection to Country, traditions and living cultures within which lies unique strengths, identity and wisdom. We recognise that under the highways, fence lines, and railways that traverse our vast catchment lies the traditional lands of our many tribes and nations - always was and always will be First National peoples' land.

Like all other areas of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the length and breadth of Western Queensland have experienced trauma, grief and loss across generations as a result of the historical legacies of colonisation and its harmful policies. We recognise these influences continue to impact on people's health and are compounded through social and economic disadvantage, institutional racism, and poorly designed and configured systems of care. We recognise the significant health crisis that faces all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Queensland and acknowledge much more needs to be done to reduce health inequality, build relationships, improve access to care and enhance the cultural appropriateness of health services.

WQPHN is committed to building authentic partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through their health institutions and networks. We aspire to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented at all levels of governance and will work to see this maintained to inform design, implementation and evaluation of primary health care services within our catchment. We celebrate the diversity of our regions many languages and Traditional Owner groups and will strive to ensure these unique experiences, cultural knowledge and stories, inform the way we engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our region.

Our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) developed with Reconciliation Australia is a commitment that WQPHN will do things differently and take practical steps within our organisation to improve our knowledge and understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our region. It provides firm actions that will guide our engagement and maturity as an organisation and create a pathway for individual staff to build cultural awareness and competency. We will also consciously apply our sphere of influence within a wider primary health care ecosystem to enhance the capacity of service provider organisations and improve the cultural competency and responsiveness of the services we commission.

We, the Co-Chairs of the RAP Working Group, present this Innovate RAP as a working collaboration of all Working Group Members and take this opportunity to acknowledge their input, enthusiasm, and guidance to inform the many actions and milestones against which we will undertake our reconciliation journey in Western Queensland.

Dallas Leon Board Chair and RAP Working Group Co-Chair

Sandy Gillies

CEO,

RAP Working Group Co-Chair and RAP Champion



RAP ARTWORK



Our chosen art is *Healing Country – Yapatjarra Muu*, painted by Kalkadoon Artist, Brooke Sutton. This piece reflects her interpretation of "Yapatjarra Muu" which means in the Kalkadoon language "Healing Country".

"For thousands and thousands of years my Kalkadoon family and ancestors have kept our land alive and well by singing and cleansing the land and waterways, by firestick farming and ceremonial corrobboree's and only ever taking what was needed to survive. From the dreamtime to the present in Kalkadoon Country the song of Mother Nature has been heard, it is the thread that binds all things together. It can be heard as a whisper sung across the landscape, it can be heard blowing through the trees and it can be seen skipping invisibly across the billabongs and rivers forming little ripples.

Mother Nature is now not singing but crying for her beautiful lands and we all must hear her despair and sorrow and change our ways.

In order to survive "Healing Country" is now all of our business."

Connection to place is an essential paradigm for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is central to identity and culture. This relationship with land, customs and protocols, stories and tradition is unique to them as First Nations people.

Our reconciliation journey is to learn and understand the truth of the past, be informed how these realities have shaped the present, but most importantly acknowledge the vibrancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across Western Queensland and harness this strength as we walk together to improve the health and wellbeing of our Western Queensland populations.



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OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Western Queensland have a diversity of languages and cultures as distinct and imaginative as the vast landscapes of our remote catchment. The connection to their Country, traditions and stories are as alive today as they have been for countless generations. Their aspirations for strong families, good health and community wellbeing is supported by a strong Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector and a desire to achieve equal access to culturally responsive services and health equality for their people.

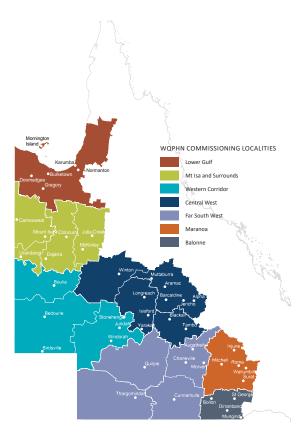
Our vision for Reconciliation is to ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Western Queensland experience high quality, culturally informed primary health care services that are respectful, responsive and designed to achieve the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals and their families.

As a commissioning organisation we understand our responsibility to guide the cultural competency of service providers, to recognise the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations (AICCHO) and to build authentic partnerships with them. We also have a responsibility to engage with communities and learn more of their experiences, traditions and cultures, and to consciously use our sphere of influence to promote a deeper understanding and respect for our region's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We aspire to move forward together to address inequality and strengthen our communities.

WQPHN recognises the harmful impacts of colonisation and cruel social policy and acknowledge the unique experiences of intergenerational trauma, grief and loss. We know we must be guided by our organisation's values and envisage a future where First Nations people experience fairness, equity, respect, integrity and acceptance. Our vision will raise awareness and call out discrimination and prejudice. We will strive to be a strong voice to support reconciliation as a dynamic and meaningful platform through which to improve health equality across all people in Western Queensland.



OUR BUSINESS



WQPHN is an independent not for profit organisation and one of 31 Primary Health Networks (PHNs) established and funded by the Commonwealth Government. Our organisation has a service delivery catchment covering almost one million square kilometres, which equates to more than half of Queensland. Although we have the smallest population of all the PHN regions, we have the second highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on a per capita basis. WQPHN is a 'commissioner' of services, not a health care provider. Our goal is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, through the adoption of an integrated, patient-centred Health Care Home Model of Care, in collaboration with partner organisations and communities of Western Queensland.

WQPHN has a skills-based Board and its organisational structure includes 5 functional areas of management including Business Commissioning and Support (BCSU), Service Provider Commissioning (SPC), Practice Capability and Innovation (PCI), Planning and Health Intelligence (PHI), and the Executive Support Unit (ESU). In addition, we also have a Clinical Council and Consumer Advisory Council which has representation from consumer and clinical leaders and advocates from across Western Queensland. These Councils assist the Board and management in the planning and commissioning activities of the organisation.

The GP led clinical council provides a direct link between clinicians and the WQPHN Board to ensure effective decision making. The purpose of the consumer advisory council is to provide a community perspective to the board and executive management team, with this knowledge transfer applied to planning, evaluation and performance functions of the PHN.

Of the 36 staff employed, there are two employees who self-identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Two members of the WQPHN Board also self-identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. There are four Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representatives on our clinical and consumer advisory councils.

The WQPHN has adopted seven localities that align with the twenty Local Government Areas (LGAs) and three Hospital and Health Services (HHS) within the network to inform place-based planning, commissioning approaches and co-design approaches.

WQPHN have three offices across the region, located in Mount Isa (Head Office), Roma, and Winton, with two other offices located in Brisbane and Townsville.

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP)

Our reconciliation journey so far

This Innovate RAP is WQPHNs first and its development commenced at the annual staff workshop in October 2019 with the assistance of Donna Jeffries (Wiradjuri), Yindyamarra Consultancy and subsequently through a dedicated RAP Working Group (RWG).

RWG members includes representatives from across the PHNs internal working units; representation from the Board and Consumer Council; and representation from our Nukal Murra Alliance (NMA) partners. However, we have been on a journey towards reconciliation through our operations since the inception of our organisation in 2015.

The membership of the RAP Working Group are as follows:

Name		Title	Role
Sandy Gillies	(Gunggari)	Chief Executive Officer	RWG Co-Chair & RAP Champion
Dallas Leon	(Kalkadoon/ Waanyi)	WQPHN Board Chair, First Nations Health Advisor, NQPHN	RWG Co-Chair
Sheryl Lawton	(Bidjara)	WQPHN Board Director, NMA Member, CWAATSICH CEO	
Renee Blackman	(Gubbi Gubbi)	NMA Member,Clinical Council Member, Gidgee Healing CEO	
Lane Brookes	(Mandandanji)	Consumer Advosory Council Member, Cultural Capability Officer, Qld Health	
Leisa Fraser		Executive Manager, Service Provider Commissioning, SPC, WQPHN	
Jess Silver		Policy Advisor, ESU, WQPHN	
Kathleen O'Hara		Diabetes Program Manager, Practice Capability & Innovation, PCI, WQPHN	
Heather Hall		Healthy Ageing Commissioning Manager, SPC, WQPHN	
Cameron Kratzing		Coordinator, Practice Capability & Innovation, PCI, WQPHN	
Lucille Hill		Coordinator, Contracts Management, BCSU, WQPHN	

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WQPHN has strived to have a positive and productive relationship with each of the four Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (AICHHO) in our region. Together we established the Nukal Murra Alliance, a culturally informed partnership to improve the health, social and emotional wellbeing of our communities. The naming of "Nukal Murra" combines two traditional languages from the Western Queensland catchment: Nukal, meaning 'plenty or many' in the language of the lower gulf and Murra meaning 'hand or hands' in the language of Central West and South West.

Nukal Murra also reflects our joint aspirations to create greater service alignment, integration, and consumer engagement to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Western Queensland.

Closing the Gap is a priority in our WQPHN Strategic Plan, where we articulate the aim to support authentic collaboration and partnership with the AICCHO under the Nukal Murra Alliance to strengthen primary care capacity and cultural safety. Taking action also includes ensuring our data collection and data analyses prioritise First Nations peoples.

From commencement we have consistently maintained Indigenous representation on our Board and at our Clinical and Consumer Advisory Councils. It is standard practice to acknowledge Traditional Owners at the commencement of formal meetings.

Through its implementation we will use our RAP to;



Guide our programs, services, and partnerships, allowing us to work more effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities



Ensure that we can plan and organise our work to promote deep and powerful change in communities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve the best possible social and emotional wellbeing



Support our journey to learn more about the world's oldest continuing culture and develop new relationships and partnerships; and



Connect and integrate with WQPHN's existing internal strategies, frameworks, and policies.

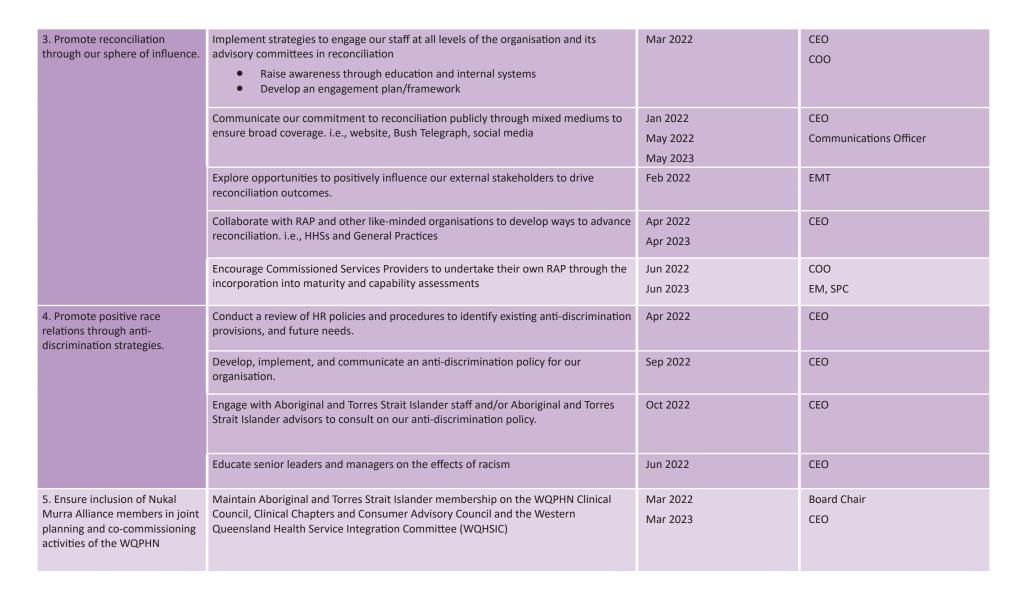


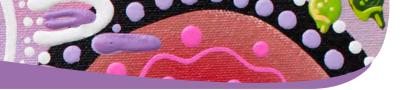
RELATIONSHIPS



WQPHN believe that when we get to know each other through listening, truth telling, and courageous conversations, we will develop equitable partnerships. It is these equitable partnerships that will allow us to build and maintain strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These strong relationships will facilitate an environment where we can work together, share knowledge, gain authority to represent, and have integrity to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across our service area. Uniquely the WQPHN has established an Alliance with its four AICCHO within the catchment to enable a co-commissioning collaboration and as community-controlled health organisations, provide cultural authority in the design and delivery of primary health care services.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement	July 2022	CEO Executive Manager, Service Provider Commissioning (EM, SPC)
stakeholders and organisations.	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Dec 2022	CEO EM, SPC
	Support and strengthen Nukal Murra Alliance partnership through quarterly partnership meetings	Feb 2022, May 2022 Aug 2022, Nov 2022, Feb 2023, May 2023, Nov 2023	CEO EM, SPC
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2022 May 2023	CEO
Reconciliation week (INIW).	RAP Working Group members participate in an external NRW event	27 May – 3 June 2022 27 May – 3 June 2023	CEO
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	27 May – 3 June 2022 27 May – 3 June 2023	CEO
	Collaborate and co-design with our Nukal Murra Alliance partners, at least one NRW event each year across the combined WQPHN/AICCHO catchment.	27 May – 3 June 2022 27 May – 3 June 2023	CEO EM, SPC
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2022 May 2023	Communications Officer
	Incorporate attendance at NRW events as approved activities, measurable under the Commissioned Services Provider contracts in accordance with Commissioning for Better Health Principles.	May 2022 May 2023	СОО





RESPECT



WQPHN recognise, respect and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as fundamental to improving our services and health outcomes.

We embed cultural awareness and sensitivity as part of our core beliefs and values. This will ensure we create an inclusive, respectful and engagement within the diversity of communities in which we work and live.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Increase understanding, value	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Feb 2022	CEO
and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	May 2022	CEO EM, SPC
and rights through cultural learning.	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy to all staff.	Oct 2022	CEO
	Provide opportunities for RWG members, HR managers and other key leaderships staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	Feb 2023	CEO
	Establish network of Traditional Custodian representatives across the Commissioning Localities and put in place remuneration arrangements where appropriate.	May 2023	CEO EM, SPC
2. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Oct 2022	CEO
cultural protocols.	Develop, implement and communicate cultural protocol documents, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	Oct 2022	CEO
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	Feb 2022, May 2022 Aug 2022, Dec 2022, Feb 2023, May 2023, Oct 2023, Dec 2023	CEO
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings using cultural learning resources tailored to locations.	Oct 2022	CEO
	Develop protocols on how to engage with Traditional Owner groups.	Feb 2023	CEO EM, SPC



and Tor culture	3. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	Jul 2022 Jul 2023	CEO
		Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	May 2022 May 2023	CEO
		Promote, encourage and support participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	Jun 2022 Jun 2023	CEO



OPPORTUNITIES



WQPHN is committed to creating employment and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of our organisation and as well as through its procurement and commissioning approaches. We recognise the intrinsic cultural value employment and workforce development bring to the design and implementation of quality health services. We also recognise the important partnerships that have been established across our organisation, particularly the Nukal Murra Alliance, and we acknowledge the importance of pursuing a deliberate strategy to advance the commercial opportunities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses in our region. Further, as a regional commissioning organisation, we also acknowledge we can influence Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment within the many mainstream organisation with which we contract and collaborate to improve health outcomes in Western Queensland.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Improve employment outcomes by increasing	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Oct 2022	CEO
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Sep 2022	CEO COO
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Nov 2022	CEO
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Nov 2022	CEO
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	Nov 2022	COO
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	Oct 2022	CEO
	 Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on WQPHN recruitment and selection panels Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work placements and cross-cultural exchange and professional experiences within our organisation and Nukal Murra Alliance partner organisations Explore partnerships with TAFE and local universities to offer placements and school-based apprenticeships 		
	Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce.	Feb 2022	CEO
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce strategy in partnership with the Nukal Murra Alliance to maximise career pathways and expand the role of Nukal Murra Alliance as a regional facilitating workforce agency.	Dec 2021	CEO EM, SPC

2. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	Jun 2023	соо
and social outcomes.	Investigate Supply Nation Membership.	Jun 2023	соо
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff. i.e., develop register of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporate business and clinical providers working in or supporting WQ communities.	Jul 2023	COO
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Aug 2023	COO
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Sep 2023	CEO COO
	Support AICCHOs as preferred providers for all services specifically commissioned for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Jun 2022 Jun 2023	CEO
3. Situate cultural awareness measures into organisational systems.	Collaborate with the Nukal Murra Alliance partners to develop a cultural capability assessment as an expansion of our existing cultural capacity assessment to understand how cultural awareness and competency is being achieved by our commissioned service providers.	Oct 2022	CEO EM, SPC
	Integrate cultural information into the localisation of HealthPathways.	Oct 2022 Oct 2023	EM, PCI
	Ensure the unique population health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the defined commissioning localities are identified in the Health Needs Assessment process.	Nov 2022 Nov 2023	ЕМ, РНІ

GOVERNANCE



WQPHN has committed to integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge and intelligence at all levels of the organisation's governance. It will work to ensure the Reconciliation Action Plan provides meaningful and transformational capability that is embedded within our organisations ethos and informs the way in which we influence and shape our commissioned services and stakeholder relationships. With the adoption of actions outlined in the RAP, the Board and Management will be in a position to charter a trajectory toward greater cultural competency and awareness informed by the unique characteristics and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Western Queensland.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Feb 2022, May 2022 Aug 2022, Dec 2022, Feb 2023, May 2023, Oct 2023, Dec 2023	Board Chair CEO
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Jan 2022	CEO
	RWG meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Feb 2022, May 2022 Aug 2022, Dec 2022, Feb 2023, May 2023, Oct 2023, Dec 2023	Board Chair CEO
2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Jan 2022	CEO
	Engage senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Jan 2022	Board Chair CEO
	Define and maintain appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Feb 2022, May 2022 Aug 2022, Dec 2022, Feb 2023, May 2023, Oct 2023, Dec 2023	Board Chair CEO
	Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	Dec 2021, Dec 2022 Dec 2023	Board Chair CEO

3. Build accountability and Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to 30 Sept 2022 CEO transparency through reporting 30 Sept 2023 Reconciliation Australia. RAP achievements, challenges, Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly. Feb 2022, May 2022 CEO and learnings both internally and Aug 2022, Dec 2022, Feb 2023, externally. May 2023, Oct 2023, Dec 2023 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings Nov 2022 Board Nov 2023 Prepare a RAP Report Card and provide key highlights throughout the year CEO ٠ • Ensure a report on progress against key milestones and outcomes across the 4 RAP domains are reported in the Annual Report Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Oct 2022 CEO Barometer. May 2023 Oct 2023 4. Continue our reconciliation Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. May 2023 CEO journey by developing our next RAP. 5. Support Aboriginal and Within Board Skills Matrix ensure defined criteria for Aboriginal and Torres Strait May 2022 Board Chair Torres Strait Islander leadership Islander Directors. **Company Secretary** and engagement in WQPHN governance structures Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership criteria for clinical and Oct 2022 CEO consumer advisory councils. Oct 2023 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership is mandated for WQPHN Clinical Feb 2022 CEO Chapters.

CONTACT

Western Queensland Primary Health Network

Chief Executive Officer/RAP Champion: Sandy Gillies

- Head Office: 11 Barkly Highway (PO Box 2791) Mount Isa, QLD 4825
- (*) 07 4573 1900
- admin@wqphn.com.au

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Western Queensland PHN acknowledges the traditional owners of the country on which we work and live and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures and to elders past and present.