



# REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

DECEMBER 2021 - DECEMBER 2022





## FRONT COVER ARTWORK

This artwork acknowledges The Ngannawal Nations - Kambarry - Ngannawal word, meaning Meeting Place....my Brother's and Sisters across our Nation's and Meridian ACT.

Ngannawal Songlines spread across the whole entire Nation. Boss Men with all their Warriors, Family and Children travelled these ancient Songlines here to Country, Ngannawal Nations for Ceremony and Lore. My Great, great, great, great Grandfather King Andy Lane was the last Master of Ceremonies and Boss Man for Country and Lore.. I'm truly honoured, proud and blessed to carry on this ancient legacy.

The artwork, the green on the bottom are my Mountains, the blue River is the Murrumbidgee, Ngannawal word- Pathway of Bosses..my Ancestors are along the river, then the rainbow, these colours, the blue is the ocean, green my mountains, white our snow and Songlines to Victoria, yellows, orange and red, represents my people's to the west and north.

These are the colours of their landscapes and Country they cross to meet at our Ancient Gathering places. These colours also represent my LGBTI Brothers and Sisters across the Nation. The Milky Way up the top, our creator and Dreaming Mallein, she created the Milky Way protect high creator, Darramullan, ancient star and Lore man.... Darramullan, Dreaming is .... Higher Learning.....

Artist: Ngannawal Elder Tina Brown

**Always was, always will be, Ngannawal Nations.**

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Photo on page 4 taken by Kyla Harvey. Hands of Ngunnawal Elder with two local women on Ngunnawal Country





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

Meridian acknowledges the Ngunnawal peoples as the Traditional Custodians whose land we live and work upon. We acknowledge that these lands are Aboriginal lands and pay our respect and celebrate their ongoing cultural traditions and contributions. Meridian is committed to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to strengthen community and improve health and wellbeing. We also acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across Australia who have made this area their home. We pay our respect and celebrate their cultures, diversity and contributions to the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding region.





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As President of the Board of Meridian, I am proud to present this inaugural Meridian Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2021- 2022. Our Reflect RAP signifies Meridian's sincere intent to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety through a structured process of establishing and strengthening meaningful and respectful relationships with First Nations' community members. It was developed by Meridian in consultation with members of the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, Reconciliation Australia and Meridian service users.

Our goal is to work together to create a safer, more inclusive, welcoming and richer community where First Nations peoples can experience many more wonderful opportunities, greater health and well-being outcomes, respect, recognition and celebration. To achieve this, it is important for us to implement significant organisational changes, practice deep listening, educate ourselves and learn better ways to engage with, appreciate and fully embrace our HIV+ and sexuality, sex and gender diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait community members.

Meridian's Board is both humbled and proud to be embarking on this significant partnership opportunity with First Nations' community members and I sincerely thank our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, volunteers, community members and service users who have enthusiastically driven the development of this Meridian RAP.

**Andrew Robertson**  
**President**  
**Board of Meridian**



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It is with delight and pride that I present Meridian's first Reflect RAP. This considered plan of action for Reconciliation lays a solid foundation for enhanced cultural safety, learning, partnership and respect in our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. This RAP was designed by both First Nations people and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at Meridian, in consultation with external community members, Reconciliation Australia and Meridian service users, and provides Meridian with a solid framework and foundation for deepening our cultural learning, respect, relationships and opportunities in our work with First Nations peoples.

It is only through deepening our listening, understanding, learning and humility that we can deliver and enhance suitable services and programs that meet the needs of our sexuality, sex and gender diverse and HIV+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. We are passionately striving towards improving our services to be more inclusive, culturally safe, respectful and welcoming of First Nations people in the community as we humbly commit to the reconciliation actions within this Plan.

I welcome community feedback on this exciting Reconciliation journey as we humbly develop ourselves as an organisation to be better able to meet and respond to the health, wellbeing and advocacy needs of First Nations' communities and become an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. In making this strategic commitment to bettering ourselves, deepening our listening and learning, sharing power, strengthening cultural safety and building more respectful relationships with First Nations' communities, it is my firm belief that together we will overcome racism, injustice, oppression and systemic neglect that so many of First Nations' peoples continue to face every day.

Together we can build a more just society and this RAP reflects Meridian's genuine commitment to do our best work with First Nations' community members on this journey to liberation, reconciliation and inclusion for all.

**Philippa Moss**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Meridian**



## A STATEMENT FROM KAREN MUNDINE, RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA'S CEO

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Meridian to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP. Meridian joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives. The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes. These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Meridian to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Meridian, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

**Karen Mundine**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Reconciliation Australia**



# INTRODUCTION

## OUR BUSINESS

Meridian was formed as the AIDS Action Council in 1983 and incorporated in 1986 as part of the community response to the impact of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in Australia. Today we are Canberra's leading community-based, peer-led organisation for people living with and impacted by HIV and AIDS, and sex, sexuality and gender diverse people. Meridian takes action to prevent HIV, improve the health and wellbeing of people impacted by HIV and LGBTIQ+ people and create safe and inclusive communities.

### THE ORGANISATION PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING:

- Care and support, including case management for people living with and impacted by HIV and AIDS;
- Health promotion activities and programs to address sexual health;
- Increasing access to HIV and STI prevention, testing and treatment by promoting access, awareness, availability and affordability;
- Counselling, psychology, social work services;
- Events, community activities and health promotion;
- LGBTIQ+ awareness and inclusivity training;
- Aged care navigation, Silver Rainbow Aged Care training and a Community Visitor Scheme for LGBTIQ+ seniors;
- Meridian also hosts a community meeting space, the Pride Hub, which hosts a diversity of LGBTIQ+ community groups, including people with disability and our community elders.

Meridian works to improve the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people. From Rainbow Families dance parties and youth work including Encampment, to service navigation and aged care programs, Meridian supports LGBTIQ+ people across their lifespans. Meridian's Wellbeing Services provide high-quality, person-centred counselling and mental health supports. Additionally, Meridian provides education and training to corporate, non-government and government agencies to increase understanding across the ACT region about LGBTIQ+ communities and our health needs.

Meridian's Sex Worker Outreach Program (SWOP) aims to prevent HIV and other STIs among Canberra's sex work community, promote sex work as a valid occupation, and empower and support sex workers. Meridian also works with the LGBTIQ+ community to celebrate and nurture our rich diversity and to strengthen our collective resilience against the adverse effects of stigma and discrimination and the impacts of minority stress. Meridian is accredited to the National Standards for Mental Health Services (NSMHS).



Meridian is a community organisation, with Board Members elected by our community members. Meridian has a membership base of over 230 people and employs 22 staff. Meridian also relies on community volunteers to assist with community events and support for service provision. Meridian is part of a network of community organisations called the Canberra Inclusive Partnership (CIP). This network includes SHFPACT, Northside Community Service and A Gender Agenda, and is supported by a Service User Reference Group (SURG) who meet regularly to provide guidance and advice on service delivery for Canberra's LGBTIQA+ people.

Meridian employs two people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Meridian's membership, volunteer pool and Service User Reference Group Members also consist of community members who identify as First Nations peoples.

In development of this RAP, Meridian recognises and honours Sistagirl, Brotherboy, LGBTIQA+ and HIV+ Elders for their historical contributions, immense strength, courage, resilience, continued commitment and determination in building a just society for all people today and which guides our work at Meridian.

Meridian provides services for Canberra and surrounding regions. Meridian's reach is also global, via wellbeing, sexual health and community resources available on our web site: [www.meridianact.org.au](http://www.meridianact.org.au) and via our social media presence on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MeridianACT/>

Meridian is based centrally at Havelock House, 85 Northbourne Avenue (Gould Street entrance), Turner, ACT 2612.





# OUR REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP) 2021-2022

Meridian has developed a Reflect RAP in recognition that our community organisation is in the formative stages of our reconciliation journey.

Meridian's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a strategic document that will provide the framework for us to identify opportunities to establish and strengthen meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Meridian works with those who face structural inequalities associated with sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, sex work, people living with and impacted by HIV and AIDS. It will also provide strong foundations for the development of future RAPs.

Meridian is committed to implementing strategies, partnerships, and campaigns, that are inclusive and address gaps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living with and impacted by HIV and AIDS, and sexually and gender diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This document identifies clear actions and realistic targets detailing steps and priorities which respect the rights and dignity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A RAP working group has been established to oversee the progress of this plan. The working group consists of Manager HIV and Client Services, Special Projects Coordinator and two Senior and Aged care Project Coordinators. The RAP Working Group is overseen by a RAP Champion who is the Chief Executive Officer of Meridian. Meridian's Service User Reference Group (SURG) has also been consulted by the RAP Working Group in the development of this RAP.

Meridian recognises the importance of a structured, integrated approach in understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, identity, knowledge and beliefs. This understanding strengthens relationships based on trust. The actions outlined in the RAP are guided by Reconciliation Australia's key themes: Relationship, Respect, Opportunities and Governance, which enable us to build the cultural diversity of our organisation, so we are better placed to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, strengthen their communities, and improve health outcomes.




# ACTIONS AND DELIVERABLES

## Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1</b> Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, stakeholders and organisations within ACT and surrounding region to enable greater engagement between Meridian and LGBTIQ+ &amp; HIV+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</li> </ul>	March, 2022	Manager, Community Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	April, 2022	Manager, Community Engagement
<b>2</b> Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to staff.</li> </ul>	May, 2022	Events & Volunteering Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.</li> </ul>	27 May-3 June, 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> </ul>	27 May-3 June, 2022	Chief Executive Officer



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3</b> Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff during staff meetings</li> </ul>	December 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate significant historical events for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to all staff.</li> </ul>	December 2022	Manager HIV and Client Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	March, 2022	Senior & Aged Care Project Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	February, 2022	Senior & Aged Care Project Coordinator
<b>4</b> Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.</li> </ul>	May, 2022	Human Resources Consultant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.</li> </ul>	March, 2022	Human Resources Consultant



# Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1</b> Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.</li> </ul>	September, 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within the organisation.</li> </ul>	February, 2022	Special Projects Coordinator
<b>2</b> Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.</li> </ul>	April, 2022	Special Projects Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</li> </ul>	June, 2022	Senior & Aged Care Project Coordinator
<b>3</b> Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.</li> </ul>	June, 2022	Events & Volunteering Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.</li> </ul>	First week in July 2022	Events & Volunteering Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.</li> </ul>	First week in July, 2022	Chief Executive Officer





# Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1</b> Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.</li></ul>	August, 2022	Manager Meridian Wellbeing Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</li></ul>	September, 2022	Manager Meridian Wellbeing Services
<b>2</b> Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.</li></ul>	September, 2022	Corporate Support and Quality Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Investigate Supply Nation membership.</li></ul>	March, 2022	Corporate Support and Quality Officer



# Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1</b> Maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.</li> </ul>	February, 2022	Senior & Aged Care Project Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite Service User Reference Group (SURG) representation on RAP Working group.</li> </ul>	March, 2022	Special Projects Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.</li> </ul>	February, 2022	Special Projects Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.</li> </ul>	March, 2022	Senior & Aged Care Project Coordinator
<b>2</b> Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define resource needs for RAP implementation.</li> </ul>	April, 2022	Manager HIV and Client Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.</li> </ul>	February, 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.</li> </ul>	March, 2022	Manager HIV and Client Services

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3</b> Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.</li> </ul>	30 September, 2022	Special Projects Coordinator
<b>4</b> Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.</li> </ul>	July, 2022	Senior & Aged Care Project Coordinator





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