



Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

June 2026 – December 2027





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Acknowledgment of Country

NARI acknowledges and expresses its deep respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies and waterways on which we work, live and engage. We recognise Elders past and present, whose wisdom, leadership and enduring care for Country continue to guide us.

We honour the strength, creativity and generosity of all First Nations peoples, whose living cultures enrich our communities every day. NARI recognises that this stewardship, knowledge and dedication are a source of inspiration and should always be respected and celebrated.

Message from our Director & CEO



The National Ageing Research Institute's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (**RAP**) is an important step in our journey to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and embed reconciliation into every aspect of our work.

At NARI, our vision is a world where all older people are respected, included, and have the opportunity to age well. This vision aligns deeply with the cultural significance and importance of Elders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. At NARI, we are committed to ensuring that our research, advocacy, and partnerships reflect respect, equity, and self-determination.

For many years, NARI has worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve health and aged care outcomes. Through initiatives such as our Community Advisory Panel and collaborative research projects, we have learned that listening and co-design are essential to creating meaningful change. This RAP builds on that foundation and sets out actions over the next eighteen months to deepen our cultural understanding, strengthen partnerships, and create a workplace that is inclusive and culturally safe.

Reconciliation is not a single milestone - it is an ongoing commitment. By integrating First Nations perspectives into our research and organisational culture, we aim to contribute to a future where ageing is supported with dignity and respect for all Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the Custodians of the world's longest continuing culture, have much to teach us about connection, care, and community. I invite our staff, partners, and stakeholders to engage with this RAP and join us on this journey.

Professor Tracy Comans
CEO & Director



Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes National Ageing Research Institute to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

National Ageing Research Institute joins a network of more than 3,000 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 over 5.5 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 National Ageing Research Institute 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 National Ageing Research Institute, 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

Our Business

The National Ageing Research Institute (**NARI**) is Australia’s only leading independent, non-profit medical research institute dedicated to ageing. Recognised nationally and internationally for excellence in translational research, NARI builds evidence to improve health and aged care systems, policies, and practices that promote the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of older people. Our vision is a world where all older people are respected, included, and have the opportunity to age well.

Guided by our core values—Excellence, Collaboration, Inclusion, and Integrity—we work in partnership with the NARI Community Advisory Panel, older people, carers, communities, and stakeholders to ensure our research is relevant, meaningful, and impactful. NARI’s research spans five key program areas organised within our clinical and social gerontology divisions:

- Research that supports healthy ageing including preventative and early intervention programs;
- Research to reduce the morbidity and mortality of conditions associated with ageing;
- Research that enhances paid and unpaid carers’ skills, knowledge, confidence, health and well-being, and quality of life;
- Research that improves health and aged care systems, processes and practices; and
- Research that addresses societal issues associated with ageing.

We also lead the Melbourne Ageing Research Collaboration, a unique partnership of health, research, aged care, government, and advocacy organisations working together to improve the lives of older Australians through collaboration between organisations that support the health and wellbeing of older people.

NARI employs approximately 55 staff across research, administration, and support roles. We currently employ one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. Our Community Advisory Panel includes two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members who are part of NARI’s formal governance structures as volunteer advisors. Members of our staff and community advisory panel will be invited to provide input to our reconciliation working group to shape priorities, strengthen relationships and ensure our activities reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and knowledge. We are committed to building our understanding of staff demographics in culturally appropriate ways as part of our reconciliation journey.

Our geographic reach is national, with research partnerships and policy influence extending across Australia. NARI is based in Melbourne, Victoria, with our main office located in Parkville, within the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct. We also have staff working in Brisbane, Queensland and Sydney, New South Wales and internationally.

Through our research, advocacy, and collaborations, NARI plays a vital role in informing policy, shaping practice, and fostering a more inclusive and age-friendly society.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

NARI is committed to advancing reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of our broader mission to promote health, wellbeing, and quality of life for all older Australians. We recognise that reconciliation is essential to achieving equity in ageing and aged care, and that our research must be informed by the voices, experiences, and knowledge of First Nations peoples.

We are implementing our first RAP to formally begin this journey. This RAP represents our commitment to listening, learning, and building respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It will guide us in creating a culturally safe and inclusive workplace, and in ensuring that our research, partnerships, and advocacy reflect the principles of self-determination, respect, and equity.

Our approach to implementing the RAP will be collaborative and reflective. We will begin by building internal awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, and

contributions. We will also identify opportunities to strengthen relationships with First Nations communities and organisations, and embed reconciliation principles into our governance, research practices, and workforce development.

The RAP will be overseen by a dedicated reconciliation working group (RWG), with representation from across the organisation. This group will be responsible for coordinating actions, monitoring progress, and ensuring accountability. We will also seek guidance from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to ensure our efforts are culturally appropriate and meaningful.

This RAP is led by the NARI RWG with the full support of the Executive Team. NARI and the CEO Tracy Comans (RAP champion), are committed to embedding reconciliation into the strategic direction of NARI and fostering a culture of respect, inclusion, and continuous learning.



Photos: Left - NARI staff on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Walking Tour, Yarra River 2025. Image by Anita Goh. Right - Yarra River near Dights Falls 2025. Image by Anita Goh.

Our Reconciliation Activities

NARI is committed to advancing reconciliation through meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise the importance of building respectful relationships, promoting cultural understanding, and supporting initiatives led by First Nations communities. To date, our reconciliation activities have included cultural learning experiences, partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO), and collaborative research projects that amplify First Nations voices.

Cultural Engagement

As part of National Reconciliation Week, on 27 May 2025, our team participated in a Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Walking Tour at Dights Falls, led by Joe from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. This experience deepened our understanding of the Wurundjeri people’s enduring connection to Country and their cultural practices. Staff reflected on insights such as the meaning of “Yarra” in Woi Wurrung language (“hairy river”) and the traditional use of manna gum leaves in Smoking Ceremonies, where leaves are heated—not burned—to release their oils. This event was a powerful reminder of the importance of listening and learning from First Nations voices.

Staff Reflections

- “I learned so much during the cultural walk—from the meaning of ‘mob’ as a term of belonging, to traditional contraceptive practices and the significance of possum fur cloaks. It reminded me how much wisdom exists in traditional knowledge systems and how much we can all learn by listening.”
- “The theme of sustainability really struck me—only taking what’s needed and leaving the rest to regenerate. Practices like tree scarring for bowls and baby carriers show deep respect for Country.”
- “I discovered that Mount William, near where I live, was a major source of stone for axes and that its Woi Wurrung name, Wil-im-ee Moor-ring, means ‘tomahawk place.’”
- “I was fascinated by cultural burns—‘cool’ fires that only burn what’s ready and help sustain Country. It reinforces the interconnectedness of people, land, and culture.”



Photo: Weavers Artist Camp, Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women’s Council. 2011. Image by Jo Foster.

Support for the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) Accord

We are proud to endorse marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri: The Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medical and Wellbeing Research Accord, led by the VACCHO. This Accord sets out principles for ethical, culturally safe, and community-led research that benefits Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our commitment includes aligning our research practices with these principles, supporting stronger governance across the sector, and contributing to initiatives that uphold self-determination.

As part of this partnership, NARI will be acknowledged on the VACCHO Accord webpage alongside other research organisations committed to these values. We view this as an important step in demonstrating collective effort and accountability in research that respects and empowers First Nations communities.

Art Centres – Supporting Our Elders

In partnership with three Aboriginal community-controlled art centres—Ikuntji Artists (Haasts Bluff, NT), Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency (Fitzroy Crossing, WA), and Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women’s Council (NPY Lands)—and several other organisations - we explored how art centres support older people and those living with dementia in remote communities. Through interviews with artists, art centre staff, and aged care workers, and a survey of 90 art centres, the research highlighted that art centres:

- Keep culture, Country, language, and kin strong and connected
- Are safe spaces and foster belonging
- Encourage intergenerational teaching and learning
- Provide direct care and collaborate with aged care providers

This project produced a series of short films and a booklet (available at: www.nari.net.au/pages/category/art-centres-supporting-our-elders) showcasing these stories and outcomes. The study demonstrates how art centres embed cultural determinants of health and welcome opportunities for partnerships with aged care providers.

First Nations PITCH

NARI has been commissioned by Dementia Training Australia (DTA) to adapt an existing training program ‘Promoting Independence Through quality Care at Home’ (PITCH) for home care workers delivering care to First Nations older people and Elders living with dementia. While PITCH has been shown to improve home care workers’ confidence and knowledge of dementia care, the adaptation seeks to increase its responsiveness to the needs of First Nations peoples. Known as the First Nations PITCH Project, the training is being redeveloped in partnership with ACCO aged care services, as well as First Nations co-researchers, some of whom are embedded within the partner organisations.

Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander methods, we have co-facilitated Yarning Circles in these partner organisations to listen to and learn from the perspectives of First Nations older people and Elders, which will inform the redesign of existing materials and of future care. The newly designed program will be pilot tested at the collaborating ACCO aged care services.

Our Action Plan

Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	June 2026	Chair RWG
	• Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	June 2026	Divisional Directors
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	June 2026	Communications Officer
	• RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May-3 June, 2026	Chair RWG
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May-3 June, 2026	CEO, Divisional Directors
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	June 2026	CEO
	• Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	June 2026	Chair RWG
	• Identify organisations with a RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	October 2026	Chair RWG
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	• Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	February 2027	HR Manager
	• Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	March 2027	HR Manager with RWG Committee

Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	• Develop an action plan for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	September 2026	Chair RWG
	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	October 2026	HR Manager
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	August 2026	Chair RWG
	• Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2026	Chair RWG
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2026	Communications Officer
	• Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2026	Communications Officer
	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2026	Chair RWG



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	• Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	June 2027	CFO, HR Manager
	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2027	HR Manager
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	September 2027	CFO
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	September 2027	CFO



Photo: Volunteers training at the Seniors Exercise Park at Mount Martha, Mornington Peninsula Shire, 2025. Image by NARI ENJOY team.

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	May 2026	CEO
	• Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	May 2026	CEO
	• Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	May 2026	CEO
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	June 2026	CFO
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	June 2026	CEO
	• Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	June 2026	CEO
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	July 2026	Chair RWG
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June annually	Chair RWG
	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Chair RWG
	• Communicate our RAP progress to internal and external stakeholders.	April 2027	CEO
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP.	September 2027	Chair RWG

About the Artwork



Walking The Journey

This artwork tells the story of the National Ageing Research Institute and its commitment to walking alongside Elders from all cultures, supporting and guiding them home to healthier lifestyles.

The hands and footprints represent NARI employees and the ongoing work they carry forward – symbols of care, movement, and shared journeys over time.

At the centre is a meeting place, where people come together to listen, learn, and understand one another. It reflects connection, respect, and collaboration across cultures and generations.

The artwork is deeply connected to Mother Earth, the waterways, mountains and bush medicines. Through these elements, we seek guidance from our Ancestors, acknowledging their wisdom and the enduring knowledge that supports healing, wellbeing, and balance.

Title: Walking The Journey

Artist: Daniel Evans
(Walkabout Warriors)

About the Artist

Daniel Evans is the founder and owner of Walkabout Warriors, a proudly Aboriginal-owned business focused on youth mentoring, fitness, cultural education, and art. He is a proud **Gamilaroi (Kamilaroi)** man originally from **Coonabarabran, New South Wales, Australia**.

Walkabout Warriors was established in **2017** and combines Daniel’s three main passions:

- **Fitness and wellbeing** – using physical training as a tool to improve mental, emotional, and physical health.
- **Youth mentoring** – empowering young people with confidence, discipline, respect, and self-belief.
- **Aboriginal art and culture** – creating contemporary Indigenous artworks that tell stories from his life journey and cultural heritage.

Daniel is also known as a **mental health advocate**, openly sharing his personal journey through trauma, healing, and resilience. His lived experience has shaped his mission to help others—especially youth in rural, remote, and urban communities—develop stronger mindsets and healthier lifestyles.

His work spans:

- School and community workshops
- Cultural mentoring programs
- Fitness coaching
- Indigenous art commissions and collaborations





**For public enquiries about our
RAP please contact**

Name: Professor Tracy Comans
Position: CEO and Director
Phone: 0401 021 091
Email: ExecDirector@nari.edu.au



Melbourne Head Office

34 - 54 Poplar Road (via Gate 4)
Parkville, Victoria, 3052

PO Box 2127 Royal Melbourne
Hospital, Victoria 3050

+61 3 9969 6500
info@nari.edu.au

www.nari.net.au

ABN: 71 154 866 047

 **Facebook:** NatAgeingResearch

 **LinkedIn:** National Ageing Research Institute