

SaxInstitute 

# Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

2023 – 24



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

**REFLECT**



## Acknowledgement

The Sax Institute acknowledges the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation as the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of this land on which our office is located.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise the strong cultural connections of all First Peoples to their land and water across Australia.

We value our partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and are committed to continuing our work together, enabling community-driven research that will make a difference to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

### Our mission

To improve health and wellbeing by driving the use of research in policies, programs and services.

### Our role

We are an Evidence Specialist working collaboratively to embed research into the fabric of policy, program and service delivery decisions. We develop, test and deliver best practice approaches to working at the interface of research and health decision-making.

### Our Values

#### Collaboration

We treasure our partnerships as an essential part of how we work and acknowledge them as central to our success.

#### Independence

Our overriding allegiance is to the evidence and what it tells us.

#### Innovation

We constantly seek new and better ways of working that increase the likelihood of beneficial change.

#### Impact

We are committed to making a positive contribution that helps bring about measurable improvements.

#### Respect

We listen to all points of view and work constructively to ensure communities, clients and stakeholders are actively engaged.

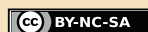
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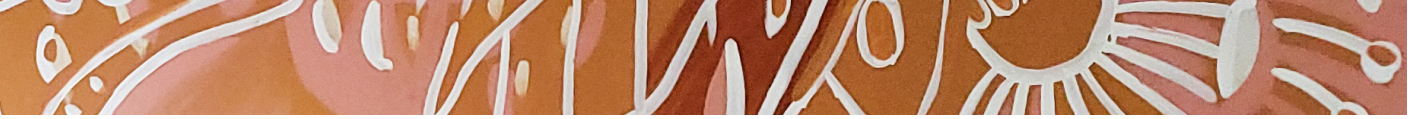
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# Message from our chair



All Australians are deserving of a healthy, fulfilling life. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples still face poorer health outcomes than the general population, and Australia is unable to reach its full potential until we address this imbalance.

At the Sax Institute, we aim to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians, by driving the use of research in policies, programs and services. Central to this vision is research that can meaningfully contribute to culturally appropriate changes that improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

We know there is a long way to go. The experiences of trauma, grief and loss inflicted by our colonial past on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will take many more years of healing. The Sax Institute is committed to being a part of this reconciliation journey.

We have already seen the progress that is possible when communities and researchers work together. Through the Sax Institute's strong working partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, we are seeing just how powerful Aboriginal-led research findings can be in changing health policy and practice. Over the past decade there has also been an encouraging rise in the number of people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds who are undertaking research training.

In our role as a supporter and ally of Aboriginal health research, we understand that now is the time to listen. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia have a connection to land and Country that can teach us how to be a better, healthier Australia. And stronger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are integral to shaping better health policies, programs and services for all Australians.

Through this, our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), the Sax Institute aims to build and strengthen our partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and find new ways to meaningfully empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples both here at the Institute, and in the work we do across Australia.

On behalf of the Sax Institute Board and RAP Working Group, we look forward to the implementation of our first Reconciliation Action Plan and advancing reconciliation at the Institute.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Olver', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Ian Olver AM

Chair



## Our vision for reconciliation

The Sax Institute's vision for reconciliation is one in which all Australians have the means and opportunities to live longer and healthier lives.

We recognise that genuine and appropriate efforts to undertake reconciliation are central to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In a reconciled Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should have the same life chances and choices as non-Indigenous people. Reconciliation and cultural respect contribute directly to improved health, as well as social justice. We must all play a part in fostering a more inclusive, diverse and supportive Australia that recognises the cultural significance of Australia's First Peoples.

We are privileged to be living in a country with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. This cultural knowledge and wisdom offers so

much potential for Australia, especially in the form of improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

However, the Sax Institute acknowledges that generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have experienced trauma and grief – ongoing injustices that have had a significant impact on the health and social rights of individuals, families and entire communities.

Guided by the Sax Institute's values of 'collaboration, respect, independence, innovation and impact,' our vision for reconciliation is an Australia in which all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples achieve their best possible health and have an equal opportunity to chart their own future.

We aim to work in strong partnership with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and communities, and in doing so, support Australia's journey towards reconciliation.

## Our business

The Sax Institute is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that improves health and wellbeing by driving better use of evidence in policies, programs and services.

Since 2002, we have built an international reputation as an Evidence Specialist, working with Australian governments, health organisations and a network of experts to analyse policy problems and find the best evidence-based solutions.

The Sax Institute is located in Glebe, NSW, and has 60 Members across Australia which include many of the country's leading research institutes. Our vision is to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – the Traditional Custodians of this country.

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is central to our organisation's ethos, and many of the programs and services we deliver involve meaningful engagement with communities. These include the 45 and Up Study, which is the largest ongoing study of healthy ageing in the Southern Hemisphere. The 45 and Up Study has a diverse cohort of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and is providing researchers with important insights into how a broad cross-section of Australians is ageing.

Our Evidence Check service is also helping shed light on the evidence around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, with evidence summaries ranging from maternity service delivery models to suicide prevention interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Furthermore, our commitment to Aboriginal health is reflected in strong research partnerships, the first of which began in 2003 with the Coalition for Research to Improve Aboriginal Health (CRIA). Out of this collaboration, came the Study of Environment on Aboriginal Resilience and Child Health (SEARCH), which is Australia's largest long-term study of the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal Children living in urban areas. SEARCH began in 2008 and is now regarded as a leading example of research partnerships that put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in charge of setting health priorities and implementing research that is of direct benefit to communities.

The Sax Institute currently employs 89 people, five of whom identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. We also provide funding support to employ a local Aboriginal researcher at each of our partner Aboriginal Medical Services.



# Our Reconciliation Action Plan

This is the Sax Institute's first Reflect RAP which is designed to clearly set out the steps we need to take to prepare our organisation for reconciliation initiatives in successive RAPs.

We acknowledge the 60,000 year connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with this land we now call Australia – peoples who have experienced over two centuries of injustices and inequities, and who still endure poorer outcomes in health. The Sax Institute recognises the strength and resilience shown by this country's First Peoples, and their continued connection to their land.

This Reflect RAP is an opportunity to scope and reflect on how the Sax Institute can contribute to reconciliation and champion the importance of listening to Aboriginal people's decision-making and knowledge within our organisation. The RAP Champion for the Sax Institute is Ms Kim Anderson, who sits on the Sax Institute Board.

To implement our Reflect RAP, we have consulted across our organisation's divisions and established a working group that will manage the implementation of the RAP to ensure ongoing support and feedback for the outlined actions and initiatives across the Sax Institute.

This Reflect RAP, marks the first phase of our reconciliation journey to build awareness of reconciliation within the organisation and developing cultural competency.

This Reflect RAP will shape our vision for reconciliation as an organisation, and will form part of our long-term effort to develop a stronger awareness and shared understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' histories, cultures and practices.



## Our partnerships

Since 2002, the Sax Institute has built strong and valuable partnerships that recognise the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to drive health research.

In 2003, the Sax Institute and the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW formed the Coalition for Research to Improve Aboriginal Health (CRIAHA). This collaboration brought together the expertise of the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector and researchers with the objective to improve Aboriginal health in NSW. CRIAHA established a new model for Aboriginal health research that focused on better health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

In 2008, CRIAHA developed the Study of Environment on Aboriginal Resilience and Child Health (SEARCH) – a longitudinal study that has been following more than 1,600 Aboriginal children and their families in urban and regional NSW to provide critical information about ongoing health, from otitis media, hearing and speech development, to housing, environment and resilience.

SEARCH is the only study of its kind, and is providing a holistic, ever-growing picture of the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal communities

in urban areas – evidence that is being used by communities to drive real improvements in health services.

Most importantly, SEARCH is owned and led by Aboriginal people. It functions as a long term, co-creative partnership between the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in NSW, the Sax Institute, and leading researchers from across Australia.

We recognise that genuine and appropriate efforts to undertake reconciliation are central to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In a reconciled Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should have the same life chances and choices as non-Indigenous people. There is solid evidence that reconciliation and cultural respect contribute directly to improved health, as well as social justice.

So now, as we begin our Reflect RAP, we look forward to enhancing our organisation's existing relationships with Aboriginal partners and staff, and building even more meaningful health research that will influence health policy, for the benefit of all Australians.





# Relationships

Working in close partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities lies at the very heart of our work at the Sax Institute. For over a decade we've been listening to communities and working together to produce meaningful health research that is made by – and for – Aboriginal Australians. To support this further, the Sax Institute will continue to foster mutually respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, sharing knowledge and expertise, and engaging in authentic collaboration.

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.	Quarter 3 2023	Head, Strategic Development
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Quarter 3 2023	Head, Strategic Development
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	Quarter 2 2023	Director P&C, Head, Strategic Development, Senior Adviser, Aboriginal
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June, 2023	CEO, Director P&C, Senior Adviser, Aboriginal Health
	Dedicate a day in NRW for an event at the Sax Institute.	Quarter 2 2023	CEO, Director People & Culture, Head, Strategic Directions

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Reconciliation Action Plan

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	Quarter 3 2023	Head, Communications
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Quarter 3 2023	Head, Strategic Development
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	Quarter 4 2023	Director People & Culture, Media Manager, Head, Strategic Directions
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.		



# Respect

Respect is one of the Institute’s guiding values, and we acknowledge the importance of respecting the uniqueness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, land and history. We will strive to further embed this in our working culture, increasing the understanding and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and the knowledge and skills they bring to our workplace

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 a presentation series featuring Aboriginal leaders and CEOs from Aboriginal organisations that highlight culture, history and knowledge.	Quarter 1, 2024	Head, Strategic Developments and Senior Adviser Aboriginal Health
	Develop a plan for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	Quarter 4, 2023	Senior Adviser, Aboriginal Health, Head Strategic Development
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Quarter 1, 2024	Senior Adviser, Aboriginal Health, Head, Strategic Development

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Invite the Metro Local Aboriginal Land Council and/or the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, to speak at an all-staff forum to increase understanding of the purpose and significance of cultural protocols.	Quarter 2, 2024	Senior Adviser Aboriginal Health, Director People & Culture, Head Strategic Development
	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation’s operational area.	Quarter 1, 2024	Senior Adviser Aboriginal Health, Director People & Culture, Head Strategic Development
	Increase staff’s understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Quarter 1, 2024	Senior Adviser Aboriginal Health, Director People & Culture, Head Strategic Development
	Continue to ensure Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols are followed at significant meetings and that this requirement be built into organisational policies.	Quarter 3, 2023	Senior Adviser Aboriginal Health, Director People & Culture, Head Strategic Development
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.	Quarter 2, 2023	CEO, Media Manager, Senior Adviser Aboriginal Health
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	Quarter 2, 2023	Senior Adviser Aboriginal Health, Head Strategic Development, Head, Communications

# Opportunities

Providing rich training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is an important part of the Institute’s working culture. In the years ahead, we aim to take this a step further by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and fostering new avenues for professional development.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing experiences to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Quarter 3, 2023	Director, People & Culture
	Develop a plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	Quarter 4, 2023	Director, People & Culture
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a plan for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	Quarter 4, 2023	CFO
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	Quarter 4, 2023	CFO

# 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	Quarter 1, 2023	Senior Adviser, Aboriginal Health, Deputy CEO
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.		
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.		
10. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Ensure resources are available for RAP implementation	Quarter 1, 2023	CEO
	Engage senior leaders within the Sax Institute in the delivery of RAP actions	Quarter 1, 2023	Senior Adviser Aboriginal Health
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Quarter 1, 2023	Senior Adviser Aboriginal Health
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	Quarter 1, 2023	Chair and CEO
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Quarter 3, 2024	CEO, Deputy CEO



## Artist acknowledgement

The artwork used in this document was created by Aboriginal artist Lucy Simpson and Sydney-based artist Meg Minkley.

“The mural explores notions around medicine, knowledge, healing, communication, and understanding of country,” explains Lucy, a Yuwaalaraay woman from North-West NSW. “It’s really interesting to create these spaces where people can communicate and connect. I think art has the ability to really transform the energy of a workplace.”







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