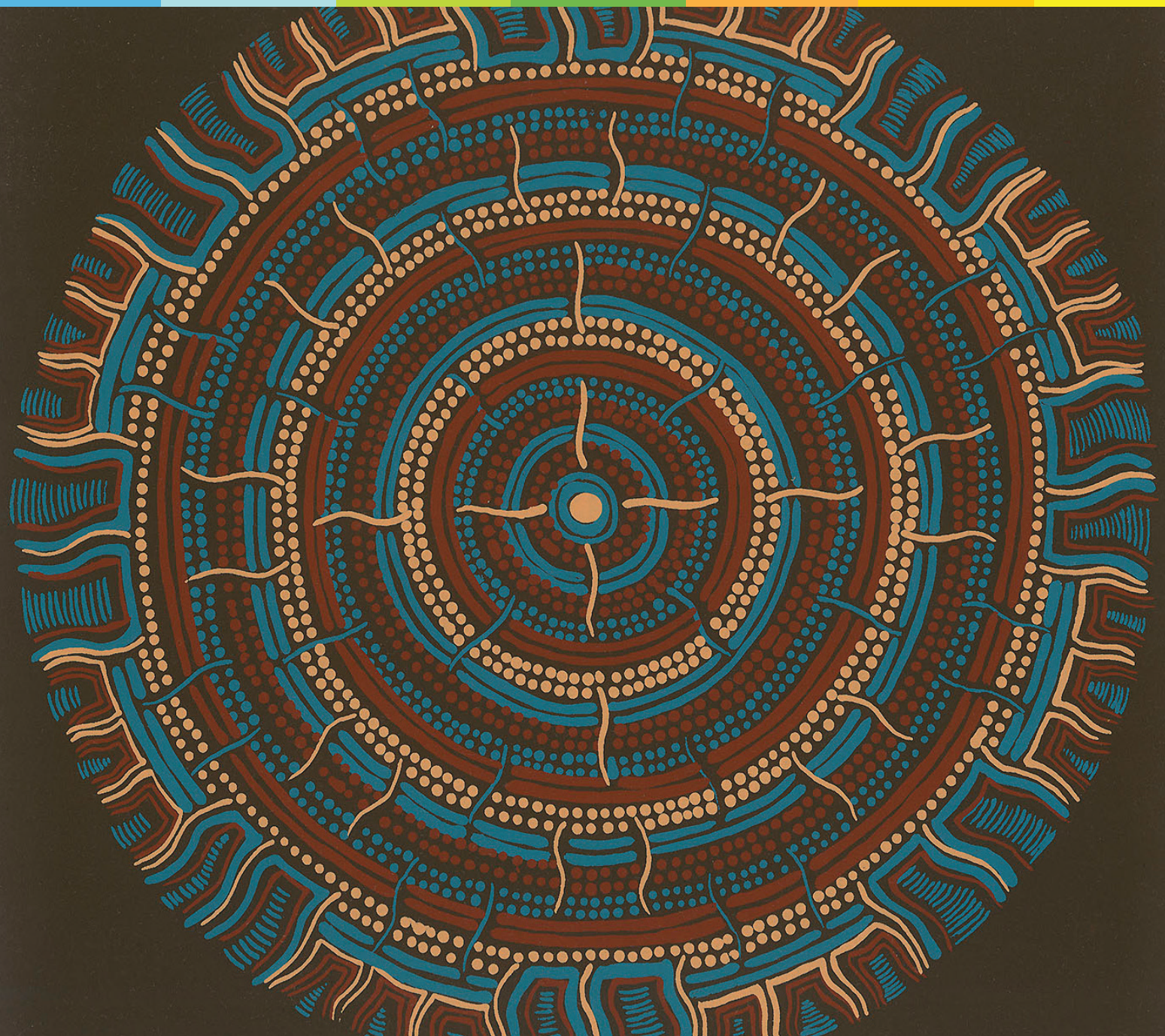


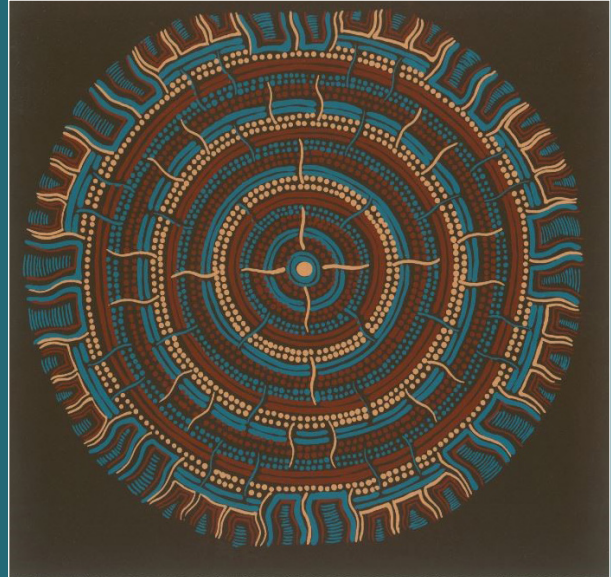


Access
Community
Housing

Reconciliation Action Plan 2017 - 2020



Access Community Housing Company (ACHC) acknowledges the First Nations peoples of this land and its surrounding waters. We recognise, respect and celebrate their cultural distinctions and value their rich and positive contribution to our broader society.



Unspoken Forgiveness

Artist - Naurita Briscoe

(language name Walbul Walbul (Ulysses butterfly))

Naurita is the granddaughter of Norma and Wilma Walker, respected Elders from the Kuku Yalanji people (Daintree Mossman area). Naurita was born in Innisfail to parents Jack and Pam Briscoe (nee Walker). Naurita is a self-employed, contemporary Indigenous Kuku Yalanji artist based in Cairns. Her artwork reflects that of her own personal life experiences while capturing the beauty of her cultural heritage, sea and rainforest surroundings.

Her mediums include acrylics on canvas, hand painted burny beans, souvenir products, screen prints and etching prints. The Mossman Gorge Centre is her focal outlet but her work can be found in Aboriginal Art shops and galleries in Cairns and Port Douglas.



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A Message from the Board of Directors

We are excited to introduce Access Community Housing Company's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). For over 25 years ACHC has built a history of commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and to Reconciliation. This RAP will formalise and shape the way that we can deepen our respect and relationships with First Nations peoples, as well as build opportunities for closing the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider community, especially in the area of housing. ACHC is passionate about diversity and recognises the importance of this for our communities and our company's culture, which we know will contribute to our success. We would like to commend the efforts of the RAP working group, who have been involved in this specific project. We look forward to working with staff, Board Directors and our partners, to achieve meaningful reconciliation with our region's First Nations peoples.



Our Vision for Reconciliation

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First People of this land and surrounding waters.

We acknowledge that since colonisation, successive government policies have systematically disadvantaged and marginalised First Nations peoples. We also acknowledge past injustices that continue to give rise to inequality and disadvantage.

First Nations peoples remain the most significantly disadvantaged group in this country, disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment, homelessness, chronic illness, disability, lower life expectancy and high levels of incarceration.

We affirm the special place and identity of First Nations peoples as the First Australians by:

- Recognising their culture and history, along with its diverse and dynamic nature.
- Acknowledging the deep connections with and custodianship of the land since time immemorial.
- Valuing the contributions First Nations people make to Australian culture and society.
- Honouring their resilience and strength.
- Valuing the opportunity to learn from them.
- Recognising that in order to influence the policies and practices of government and other decision makers, there must be multi-layered action at local, regional, state, national and international levels.

We are committed to working in a respectful and culturally appropriate way with First Nations peoples, organisations and communities to address their housing needs.

Poor housing and household overcrowding directly and indirectly underlie many of the health and social problems present in many First Nations communities. Improving this will reduce the extreme disadvantage experienced. These improvements are not only essential to improve housing and health outcomes, but are also a prerequisite to increased participation in the workforce, improved school attendance rates and the development of safe communities.

We commit to championing the push for improved housing for First Nations peoples and will support their voices on these issues.

Our Business

ACHC is the largest community housing provider in Far North Queensland with the majority of our tenants being First Nations peoples. Our aim is to improve their lives by supporting families and individuals in a culturally appropriate manner to attain suitable housing and assist them to sustain their tenancies.

Our Goals

Our current goals:

- To show respect, engage with dignity and listen with consideration.
- To collaborate with other agencies on the Close the Gap campaign to level life expectancy in Australia in the next 25 years.
- To campaign and advocate for the right to adequate housing and the acknowledgement of those rights by the public and government.
- To ensure our organisation, staff and volunteers actively participate in reconciliation through our policies, processes and actions.

Our Values

Respect, Integrity, People Focussed, Equity and Accountability.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

The first RAP for Access Community Housing Company has been developed through the participation and involvement of staff, board members and our RAP Working Group. This initiative has the support and involvement of senior management and the board. Advice, guidance and support for the ACHC RAP has also been provided from First Nations peoples and the wider community. The RAP identifies actions directly related to ACHC's operations and services. These actions will contribute to the health, wellbeing, equity and economic development opportunities of First Nations peoples.

This document provides details of our commitment to achieve real outcomes and actions within the timeframes indicated.

RELATIONSHIPS

Action	Deliverables	Timeframe	Responsibility
Establish a RAP working group	<p>Working group to include board directors and staff members with an emphasis on representation of First Nations members.</p> <p>Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan and review.</p>	<p>Established group in April, 2016.</p> <p>Meets monthly. Once RAP finalised meet quarterly to review performance.</p>	The Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
Create an environment that reflects First Nations culture	<p>Include acknowledgment to First Nation peoples in the reception area, in publications and in multimedia communications.</p> <p>Create a welcoming environment in the reception area and as you enter the building e.g. First Nations flags, acknowledgement plaque, bench at the front. When space is available in reception/ downstairs look at having areas for family groups.</p> <p>Variety of artwork on display.</p> <p>Obtain a uniform shirt for staff that reflects First Nation cultures. Artwork provided by a First Nations artist.</p>	In place by early 2017	<p>CEO to organise and confirm with committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Investigate art products and the possibility of artist's work on display. □ Contact Aboriginal Steel Art, Kuranda.
Build stronger external relationships with Indigenous organisations and leaders	<p>Meet representatives from First Nations organisations in their offices to discuss building closer relationships e.g. support services, legal, education. Where appropriate, First Nations directors/staff members to accompany/assist.</p> <p>Apunipima, Wuchopperen, ATSILS, RAATSIC, QITE, Employment services, QPILCH, PCYC, Gumba Gumba, Warringu.</p>	Ongoing	Staff, RAP members to organise meetings and establish MOUs, where appropriate
Engage First Nations contractors	<p>Maintain First Nations companies on contractors list.</p> <p>Utilise companies on the Supply Nation list/ Indigenous Business Direct.</p>	<p>Review quarterly.</p> <p>Target - First Nations contractors on the suppliers list by 2017. Maintain and grow by 2020.</p>	Housing staff, Manager Property & Assets

RESPECT

Action	Deliverables	Timeframe	Responsibility
<p>Ensure welcome and/or acknowledgement at all events.</p> <p>Invite and engage with relevant First Nation group when holding functions/ events on their land</p>	<p>Awareness of First Nation groups and organisations.</p> <p>Engage speakers, facilitators, dance groups, singers etc. for functions.</p> <p>Consult with native title practitioner yearly to ensure list remains current.</p>	2017 - 2020	RAP working group members, Staff & Board Directors
Obtain and display First Nations acknowledgement in reception area	<p>Install First Nation flags in reception.</p> <p>Purchase acknowledgement plaque for reception, after checking wording with Traditional Owners.</p>	<p>2016 - Flags</p> <p>2017 - Plaque</p> <p>2017 - Bench seat</p>	<p>CEO to contact Aboriginal Steel Art- Kuranda (certified Indigenous business) to create acknowledgement plaque and bench seat.</p> <p>Staff and Working group.</p>
Create a calendar of significant days e.g. Mabo Day, Reconciliation, Coming of the Light	<p>Identify events and create calendar. Calendar of events with significance on website and on signage in reception.</p> <p>Staff permitted to attend cultural days and activities.</p>	Prepared for 2017	RAP Working group to prepare. Staff and Board Directors involvement.
Participate in NAIDOC week celebrations and other relevant events	<p>NAIDOC in the park stallholder and participation in activities.</p> <p>Attendance at other events as appropriate eg sporting and cultural events, festivals.</p>	Each year	<p>Staff and Board Directors.</p> <p>Promote to tenants through newsletter.</p>
Deliver training in cultural awareness and understanding	<p>Cultural awareness training - ongoing for board and staff.</p> <p>Prepare a handbook of cultural awareness and protocols. Engage expertise to complete handbook.</p>	Each year (2016 - staff, 2017 staff and Board members)	<p>Tjengala Style - 24 August</p> <p>External consultant</p> <p>Cultural Liaison Officer</p>
Ensure referral agencies are representative of First Nations support services	<p>Updated referral list and bring to RAP meetings for review.</p> <p>Circulate list to staff.</p>	Quarterly review	RAP working group members, Indigenous Liaison Officer
Seek advice when working with First Nations peoples and communities	<p>Develop database</p> <p>Panel of First Nations peoples with diverse expertise.</p>	Quarterly review	External Panel - Advisory group of First Nations peoples.

OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverables	Timeframe	Responsibility
Identify employment & housing opportunities for First Nations tenants	List employment opportunities in newsletter and on Facebook page. Support tenants who may be transitioning to the private rental market.	Ongoing	Leadership team to work with employment agencies and networks
Develop understanding of First Nations protocols	Engage with First Nations groups where ACHC social housing exists.	2017, then ongoing	RAP Working Group and First Nations groups
Develop a strategic plan for sponsorships, awards and opportunities for young people to pursue, innovate or engage in community arts, culture, sport and/or educational activities	Plan with sponsorship developed. Plan implemented and recipients identified.	By 2018	Staff, Board Directors and RAP working group members
Recruit First Nations staff and board members	First Nations peoples are encouraged to apply noted on all advertisements. Staffing target for First Nations staff and Board directors. Advertise vacant positions on Facebook and forward to First Nations organisations. Increased First Nations staff and representation on the leadership team.	25 % by 2018 30% by 2020. One member of the Leadership team 25% of Board Directors by 2018	Board and CEO
First Nations lead solutions – First Nations voice	Engage consultant to interview tenants for feedback. Strategies to encourage more respondents who are First Nations peoples.	2017	RAP working group members and Indigenous Liaison Officer
Partnering with First Nations organisations	Look at options for the Babinda transition – elders/health service to be invited. Shared events between ACHC and First Nations organisations.	Ongoing	ACHC staff and Board Directors
Evaluate our logo to ensure it is inclusive	Develop a package of promotional material e.g. shirts, corporate logo, letterhead etc that reflects the focus of our community connections.	By early 2017	RAP working group members. Board Directors. Engage marketing company and/or Indigenous artist.

OPPORTUNITIES (continued)

Professional Development for First Nations staff and board members to expand opportunities for qualifications and training	Identify opportunities for training and development. As part of performance review outline training aspirations for staff. Mentoring options.	Commence with performance plans in 2017	First Nations staff and supervising Managers
Encourage First Nations people to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people at sign up	Collect information at sign up. Create database and statistics for reference. Support staff to work with tenants where there may be issues.	From 2016 - ongoing	Tenancy Officers at sign up and Indigenous Liaison Officer
Embrace the RAP and strengthen cultural competence	Email to all staff significant events e.g. Coming of the Light, Mabo Day, NAIDOC etc. Elders to attend staff meetings to share stories. Newsletter article from Elders Participate in First Nations events Champion the improvement of the social economic circumstances of our clients	Ongoing	Board Directors, CEO and all staff
Raise awareness of and promote right to adequate housing	Ensure protocols, policies and practices reflect that everyone has a human right to housing and respect for their culture and circumstances.	Ongoing	ACHC staff and Board Directors

Review of RAP

Action	Deliverables	Timeframe	Responsibility
Approval of RAP	Initial review by First Nations peoples. Place plan on website.	2017 launch	RAP working group members
Quarterly review of the RAP	Review, modify and approve changes to the RAP as the organisation extends activities in this area. Table review at Board meetings and AGM. Report after 12 months of implementation.	Quarterly review from 2017	RAP working group members and Board Directors
Involvement with Reconciliation Australia	Make contact with Reconciliation Australia and further develop plans and actions for the future.	Prior to 2020	RAP working group members and Board Directors



Access Housing acknowledges the
Traditional Owners of these lands, their
ancestors and Elders, past and present.



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