

# **WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' EMERGENCY CENTRE**

# **RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN**



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**REFLECT**



## DJATJI: 'SISTER, 2020'- BY RACQUEL KERR

Djatji in my Traditional Djaara language means Sister. Throughout our lifetime as women, we travel many paths. The 7 Sisters in the top left corner are the keepers of the Sacred Fire- holders of knowledge, power and Lore. We descend from them- our paths surrounded the generations and thousands of women that came before us, and after them, and uphold us in every way. This artwork depicts the journey we take as Matriarchs in supporting our families, our power, our spirit and our identity.

Racquel Kerr is a Dja Dja Wurrung, Barapa Barapa and Boon Wurrung woman from Central Victoria. Her works are a mesh of contemporary and traditional linear works, reflective of her mobs identity. *Wartakan, Mangek Ngulek, Martuk. "I come with purpose, and speak my truth with strength."*

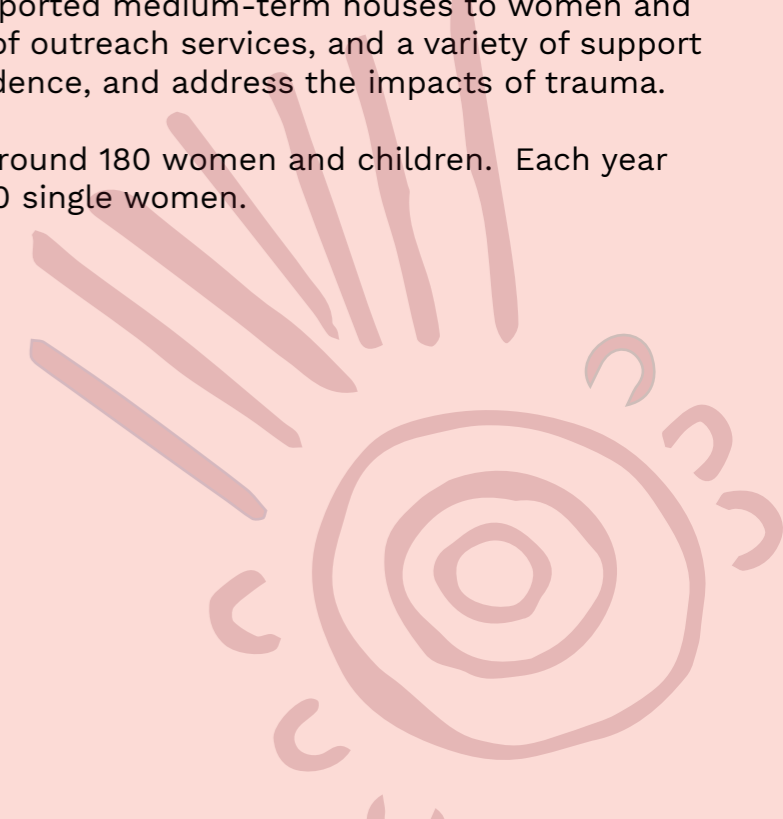
Always was, always will be, Aboriginal Land.

# OUR BUSINESS.

Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC) is a not-for-profit charity based in Redfern, New South Wales. We currently have a strong, compassionate and dedicated staff of 16 staff members employed by WAGEC and have a team of 15 case managers employed by our partners, from our whole of team, WAGEC currently has two Aboriginal staff members.

We have been operating for forty years, working with women and families who have been impacted by the effects of homelessness, domestic violence and systemic disadvantage. We work toward a safe future for women and families everyday by creating safe spaces for our clients and working with them to create enduring change in times of crisis through access to safety, housing and support. We operate three crisis refuges, an after-hours domestic and family violence service, 40 supported medium-term houses to women and children and 10 single women, a wide range of outreach services, and a variety of support programs that promote independence, confidence, and address the impacts of trauma.

On any given night, we are accommodating around 180 women and children. Each year WAGEC support around 400 families, and 600 single women.



# OUR RAP

WAGEC is developing a RAP because in our service delivery work we assist many people from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and want to be able to provide a more culturally inclusive and appropriate service.

We believe the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who present to homelessness or domestic violence services is a result of systemic issues rooted in racism and structural discrimination.

We hope that through our 'frontline' work we can have a positive impact on issues to do with intergenerational trauma, and create more opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families. WAGEC have identified that there are several 'gaps' in our service and many ways we can improve our response to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

Part of the aim of the RAP is to help guide us in building more connections with local organisations and the local community.

WAGEC has developed a reputation of trust within the local community of Redfern, many people approach WAGEC via 'word of mouth' for support when needed. We attempt to make our physical environment as culturally inclusive and safe as possible through posters and artwork and our staff interactions with new clients. Some staff have received relevant training. We have developed a reconciliation statement, WAGEC proudly supports the Warawarni-gu Guma Statement on violence against women, the Redfern Statement and constitutional reform for First Nations People through the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We also pledge our support in addressing Aboriginal Homelessness through signing the Redressing Aboriginal Homelessness Accord, developed by the NSW Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) Aboriginal Reference Group.

The RAP has strong endorsement from the Board of Management and the CEO, as well as frontline managers and an identified champion at each of our sites. Our RAP committee is chaired by key organisational staff members and represents a cross section of staff, management and Board representatives.

The RAP was initiated by the CEO Helen Silvia and Katie Young (Client Services Manager). A chair person, Fiona Murray (practice manager) was appointed and appropriate staff members were invited to be part of the working group. All Aboriginal staff members were approached first and invited to join or offer their feedback in an 'advisor' capacity. Two members of the board are also on the working group committee.

# OUR PARTNERSHIPS/ CURRENT ACTIVITIES

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

WAGEC currently have no formal partnerships. Have previously participated in NAIDOC events, and fostered informal referral pathways with Aboriginal controlled community services. We have an informal partnership with National Indigenous Centre of Excellence, Redfern (NICE) as well as 'Eora College.' We have commissioned culturally appropriate artwork through 'Boomalli Aboriginal artists Cooperative'

## INTERNAL ACTIVITIES/ INITIATIVES

WAGEC staff Attended the National women's NAIDOC conference 2018, and identified staff members attended cultural events within this conference.

All staff members attended 'in-house' cultural competency training. WAGEC has started an organisational practice to undertake an Acknowledgement of Country before all WAGEC meetings, and an Acknowledgement of Country has been added to all staff email signatures and printed material.

We have developed a reconciliation statement for the organisation. In our work sites and client engagement areas we have specifically sought culturally appropriate resources/versions of resources and posters for our 'drop in' space, and also displayed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and posters.



# RELATIONSHIPS



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish a RAP Working Group	Form a RAP Working Group that is operational to support the implementation of our RAP, comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and decision-making staff from across our organisation.	March 2019	Client Service Manager
2. Build internal and external relationships	Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2019	Client Service Manager
	Develop a list of RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2019	Client Service Manager
	Learn more about existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or services in Burwood / Inner West areas	April 2019	Client Service Manager
	Service Visits to WEAVE and Marrickville Women's Refuge.	March 2019	Client Service Manager
	Build working relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community services e.g. WEAVE, Aboriginal Women and Children's Crisis Service and WEAVE Woolloomooloo Community Hub.	Reported on by March 2020	Client Service Manager
	Engage with internal and external stakeholders, including the local land council to identify local Elders in Redfern/Waterloo area.	April 2019	Client Service Manager
	Build relationships with possible "advisors" on our RAP committee meetings and other staff members involvement.	Reported on by July 2019	Client Service Manager
	Engage with community leaders and organisers involved with the local community affected by redevelopment of Waterloo HNSW	Report on by July 2020	Client Service Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Encourage our staff to attend a NRW event.	27th May – 3rd June 2019	Client Service Manager
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	27th May – 3rd June 2019	Client Service Manager
	Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27th May – 3rd June 2019	Client Service Manager
	Support our state/territory based reconciliation council.	Report on by March 2020	Client Service Manager
4. Raise internal awareness of our RAP	Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness amongst all staff across the organisation about our RAP commitments.	March 2019	Client Service Manager
	Develop and implement a plan to engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP.	March 2019	Client Service Manager
	Deliver a presentation about the RAP explaining the reasons and the process to each individual team at WAGEC.	April 2019	Client Service Manager
	Disseminate a monthly update to all WAGEC teams about different activities from the RAP	Report on by March 2020	Client Service Manager
	Include the RAP as a standing agenda item on all BOM meetings as of August 2018	Report on by March 2020	CEO
	Engage our senior leaders (BOM) in the delivery of RAP outcomes.	Report on by March 2020	CEO
	Raise external awareness of our RAP.	Report on by March 2020	CEO
	Publically launch WAGEC's RAP	April 2020	CEO
5. Investigate opportunities to support the referendum council	Raise awareness of/explore opportunities to support the recommendations from the referendum council's report. <a href="https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/final-report">https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/final-report</a>	Report on by July 2020	CEO

# RESPECT



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development	Develop a business case for increasing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements within our organisation.	March 2019	Client Service Manager
	Capture data and measure our staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	March 2019	Client Service Manager
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training will be part of standard annual training calendar for all staff	Report by March 2020	Client Service Manager
	Conduct a review of cultural awareness training needs within our organisation.	March 2019	Client Service Manager
	Acquire best practice resources regarding social work practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and families and make available to all staff members	Report by July 2019	Case Manager
	Develop WAGEC specific best practice resource regarding social work practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and families and integrate as part of orientation process for new staff	Report by July 2019	Case Manager
	Regular WAGEC staff 'community of practice' theme around best practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community	Report by March 2020	Client Service Manager Case Manager
	Investigate cultural immersion programs.	March 2019	Practice Manager
7. Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.	June and July 2019	Client Service Manager
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local area.	7th – 14th July 2019	Client Service Manager Practice Manager
	Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external NAIDOC Week event.	7th-14th July 2019	Client Service Manager Practice Manager
	Promote NAIDOC week events on WAGEC social media	June and July 2019	Client Service Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	Explore, scope and develop a list of local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our organisations sphere of influence.	March 2019	Client Service Manager Case Manager
	Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols).	March 2019	Client Service Manager CEO
	Research the best way to involve a culture leader to inform WAGEC about local protocol and cultural understandings	March 2019	Practice Manager
	Develop and write an apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples and communities (specifically focussed on historical policies and practices in community service organisations)	Report by June 2019	Practice Manager
	Investigate ways to spiritually recognise residential sites.	Report by June 2019	Client Service Manager
9. Celebrate/ recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance	Identify and create a calendar for dates of significance	Report by March 2020	Client Service Manager
	Promote dates of significance to staff		
	Encourage staff to attend events commemorating significant dates		



# OPPORTUNITIES



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment	Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways (e.g. traineeships or internships).	March 2019	Client Service Manager
	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	Report By June 2020	CEO
	Identify current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and development opportunities.	March 2020	Client Service Manager
	WAGEC to investigate 'Indigenous Cadetship Program'	March 2020	Client Service Manager
	Identify ways to provide equitable professional opportunities for identified staff members	Report by March 2020	Client Service Manager
11. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity	Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	June 2020	CEO
	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	June 2020	CEO
	Investigate opportunities to become a member of Supply Nation.	June 2020	CEO
12. Include other unique opportunities actions related to our core business and vision for reconciliation.	Support and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees within our workplace.	April 2019	Client Service Manager Case Manager
	Investigate an internal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional mentoring network.	June 2019	Case Manager CEO Client Service Manager
	Support scholarships for, or opportunities to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying in relevant tertiary areas.	Report by March 2020	Client Service Manager
	Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership.	Report by March 2020	Client Service Manager

# GOVERNANCE & TRACKING



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
13. Build support for the RAP	Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation.	March 2019	CEO
	Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.	March 2019	CEO
	Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia.	By Sept. 2019	CEO
14. Review and Refresh RAP	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	November 2019	Client Service Manager
	Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review	March, 2020	Client Service Manager
	Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement.	June 2020	Client Service Manager



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Plan design by  Wartakan

