



Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
South Australia



# Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

September 2020 – September 2021



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

**REFLECT**

# Foreword from the Board Chairperson and EO

Having a child sick in hospital and being away from home is extremely challenging for anyone. Families come to us in a time of great distress, when their child is ill or injured, when they are worried and distressed. The love and support provided by the staff and volunteers at Ronald McDonald House South Australia makes this experience just that bit easier.

At Ronald McDonald House Charities SA we help keep families close by providing accommodation and learning programs to support them as their child is receiving or recovering from medical treatment. As a family-centred organisation, it is vital that families feel culturally safe when accessing our services.

More recently we've demonstrated a commitment to cultural inclusion with a focus on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families explicitly named in our strategic plan (2020-2026). This is our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan and we are proud to be taking this opportunity to take positive action in the advancement of reconciliation in Australia.

Ronald McDonald House Charities SA welcomes families from all cultures, across South Australia and greater Australia. Many of the families we cater for are from regional and remote areas of Australia, and 20% of the families who stay with us (91 families in 2019) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**Our RAP follows Reconciliation Australia's well-established pillars of relationships, respect and opportunities, which align well with our own organisational values.**

- I - Integrity**
- C - Compassion**
- A - Attitude**
- R - Respect**
- E - Excellence**

We look forward to our Charity's continuing journey towards reconciliation and seeing the actions within our RAP come to life within our programs and the community. Reconciliation is everyone's business and we encourage our stakeholders, staff, volunteers, partners and supporters to join us to implement lasting change.



**Chris Baker**  
Board Chair, RMHCSA



**Julie Black**  
Executive Officer RMHCSA

# Our Business

Ronald McDonald House Charities South Australia (RMHC SA) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that provides accommodation and practical support to families with seriously ill children (from in-utero to age 18). Our mission is to achieve the best outcomes for families by reducing the impact of their child's illness. We aim to reduce this impact in two ways, through our Ronald McDonald House and our Ronald McDonald Learning Program.

The House, located in North Adelaide, just outside the CBD, provides a home-away-from-home for regional families of South Australia, as well as neighbouring States and Territories, who are accessing medical care at the Women's and Children's Hospital. When families travel to Adelaide for medical treatment, seeking accommodation in an unfamiliar place only adds to their stress and anxiety. Treatments can sometimes take weeks, months or even years and children need their families close by for comfort and reassurance. Our House offers families a warm, safe, clean, and friendly place to stay during the course of their child's health journey.

The House is a short walk from the Women's and Children's Hospital, which means that children undergoing treatment can have their family nearby at all times with very little out of pocket expenses. Our House can accommodate 20

families per night and currently we are operating at a 95% occupancy rate.

Our Learning Program supports children who have missed a significant amount of schooling due to serious illness. Children receive services including one-to-one tuition with a registered teacher to assist them catch up on their missed education, educational assessments, Speech Therapy or Occupational Therapy. Independent of the House, children can be referred from both regional and metropolitan areas. The Learning Program supports approximately 80 students annually in South Australia.

Our Organisation employs the equivalent of approximately 9 full-time staff members, all based in our offices adjoining the House in North Adelaide. We have a diverse team, but currently do not have any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members of staff. Our organisation is generously supported by over 70 volunteers, and we are keen to address our current workforce and volunteer status as part of our RAP to encourage Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to join our team. We acknowledge that as a part of our Reflect RAP journey, we will be laying the foundations of cultural safety within the organisation, inwardly reflecting on making our current workforce culturally safer, in order to encourage Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to want to join our team.



A family participating in school holiday painting activities in our Learning Centre.

# Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia is delighted to welcome Ronald McDonald House Charities South Australia to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program and to formally endorse its inaugural Reflect RAP.

As a member of the RAP community, Ronald McDonald House Charities South Australia joins over 1,000 dedicated corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have formally committed to reconciliation through the RAP program since its inception in 2006. RAP organisations across Australia are turning good intentions into positive actions, helping to build higher trust, lower prejudice, and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Reconciliation is no one single issue or agenda. Based on international research and benchmarking, Reconciliation Australia defines and measures reconciliation through five critical dimensions: race relations; equality and equity, institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. All sections of the community—governments, civil society, the private sector, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities—have a role to play to progress these dimensions.

The RAP program provides a framework for organisations to advance reconciliation within their spheres of influence. This Reflect RAP provides Ronald McDonald House Charities South Australia a roadmap to begin its reconciliation journey. Through implementing a Reflect RAP, Ronald McDonald House Charities South Australia will lay the foundations for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

We wish Ronald McDonald House Charities South Australia well as it takes these first critical steps in its reconciliation journey. We encourage the organisation to embrace this journey with open hearts and minds, to grow from the challenges, and to build on the successes. As the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation reminded the nation in its final report:

"Reconciliation is hard work—it's a long, winding and corrugated road, not a broad, paved highway. Determination and effort at all levels of government and in all sections of the community will be essential to make reconciliation a reality."

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Ronald McDonald House Charities South Australia on its first RAP, and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.



**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia

Ronald McDonald House Charities South Australia's (RMHCSA) vision for reconciliation is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be restored to a place of equity, dignity and respect. We aspire to the healing of our national soul and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to be fully valued, with broken relationships restored and social inequalities eradicated.

## Our RAP

**Under the guidance of the David Liddiard Group and Reconciliation Australia, our Reflect RAP has been developed with staff, volunteers and key stakeholders. Our RAP is a result of communication and consultation with our RAP Working Group. The plan will be monitored and maintained by the RMHC members of this Working Group, driven by staff member and RAP Champion, Verity Gobbett.**

RAP Working Group	
Andrea Hams	David Liddiard Group – RAP Consultant
Julie Black	Executive Officer – RMHC SA
Verity Gobbett	Educational Projects Manager – RMHC SA
Amelia Kettle	Community Engagement and Events Coordinator – RMHC SA
Robert Dann	Manager Aboriginal Liaison Unit - WCH
Renee Woolman	Family and Volunteer Coordinator – RMHC SA
Colleen Billows	Volunteer Representative - RMHC SA
Uriel Whipp & Terrel Rigney	Hospital School Representatives - HSSA
Sarah McRae	Board Member – RMHC SA

Our RAP marks the beginning of an important journey. Actions will include cultural awareness training for staff and volunteers to build knowledge of the lasting impacts of the colonisation of Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the incorporation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives to ensure our physical spaces are more inclusive, and the creation of new policies to recruit and support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce. Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, or RAP, is an agreed strategy on how on RMHCSA intends to contribute to reducing the gap in supporting and understanding the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.

## Our Partnerships and Activities

Ronald McDonald House Charities SA has been involved with the Port Adelaide Football club and its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players. We've been grateful to have been provided with access to their Cultural Competency Training for our Staff and Volunteers in 2019, and we will be undertaking this session again with new Staff and Volunteers annually.

Our NAIDOC participation has included promoting films such as 'In My Blood It Runs' to our staff and volunteers, featuring our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and their stories on our social media including Facebook, trying foods that use Australian native plants and seeds such as wattle seed scones. With this year's COVID19 restrictions, we look forward to participating in the November 8 – 15th 2020 NAIDOC activities in our local area.

We have a strong relationship with the Aboriginal Liaison Officers at the Women's and Children's Hospital where we work closely with the Aboriginal Liaison Officers to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the families we care for.

Wiltja Boarding School, catering for Aboriginal students and youth from remote communities are involved with our Meals from the Heart Program.

We regularly provide an Acknowledgement of Country at all internal and external meetings and events.



Students from Wiltja Boarding School participating in our Meals from the Heart Program



# Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations	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 and invite to participate in shared activities	October 2020	Head of Fundraising and Marketing
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2020	Community Engagement and Events Coordinator
	Enhance our close working relationship with Women's and Children's Hospital. Aboriginal Liaison Unit to ensure we are offering the best support we can to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in culturally appropriate ways.	December 2020	Family and Volunteer Coordinator
	Build stronger internal relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families staying at the House to encourage greater participation in special events and family experiences (such as meal programs, school holiday programs etc)	February 2021	Family and Volunteer Coordinator
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our key target groups including Board members, staff and volunteers through staff meetings, the Volunteer newsletter and through the March and April Board meeting papers	April 2021	Family and Volunteer Coordinator
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June, 2021	RAP Working Group Chair
	Facilitate and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June, 2021	Executive Officer
	Facilitate participation in reconciliation activities via RMHC SA media channels including social media and newsletters, and share our participation in a NRW activities edition.	June 2021	Marketing and Events Assistant
	3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	As part of all of our staff meetings and all Board meetings, the RAP will be an agenda item to communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff	March 2021
Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all volunteers through a regular segment in the Volunteer Newsletter		March 2021	Family and Volunteer Coordinator
Enhance our culturally appropriate working relationships with local First Nations Organisations to broaden the family experiences being offered in the House (for example, school holiday activities)		March 2021	Family and Volunteer Coordinator

3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Review all local marketing material to ensure accurate representation of diversity in the House, including that of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and make recommendations through the RAP Working Group for suggested changes	March 2021	Head of Fundraising and Marketing
	Organise and invite our Board members, Kurna representatives, key stakeholders and suppliers and members of the local community to the launch of our RAP and include a media release on the launch.	June 2021	RAP Working Group Chair
	Ensure our Reflect RAP is visible and clearly accessible on the House's website and print copies in the House reception area.	December 2020	Head of Fundraising and Marketing
	Hold a special event, unveiling a newly commissioned Aboriginal Artwork depicting our commitment to Reconciliation in the House	June 2021	RAP Working Group Chair
	Identify external stakeholders, and those with a RAP, that we could engage with on our reconciliation journey.	October 2020	Head of Fundraising and Marketing
	4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	October 2020
Conduct a review of policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.		November 2020	Executive Officer



A family from the Northern Territory who called Ronald McDonald House their home-away-from home for many months.



# 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 a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	February 2021	Executive Officer
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation via stakeholder survey	January 2021	RAP Champion
	Embed a cultural safety element in the content of the materials used for staff and volunteers in the mandatory onboarding process.	January 2021	Volunteer Coordinator
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 and invite a Traditional Owner as a guest speaker to a House event for this purpose.	December 2020	Educational Projects Manager
	Increase the understanding of our staff of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2020	Educational Projects Manager
	Connect with Kurna Elders to learn the Acknowledgement of Country in local Kurna language for those staff involved in regular speaking engagements	April 2021	Executive Officer
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff and volunteers about the meaning of NAIDOC Week through the regular Volunteer newsletter and staff meetings.	November 2020, July 2021	Family and Volunteer Coordinator
	Facilitate the involvement of our staff and Board members in NAIDOC Week activities by promoting external events in our local area.	November 2020, July 2021	RAP Working Group Chair
	Staff to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	November 2020, July 2021	Executive Officer
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	November 2020, July 2021	RAP Working Group Chair

8. Show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures within our physical spaces	Install the three flags of the Nation on our premises (Aboriginal LHS, Torres Strait Islander placed centre, Australian RHS)	May 2021	Operations Manager
	Erect a plaque recognising the Traditional Owners of the land, the Kurna people on which our House is situated	June 2021	Operations Manager
	Display a map of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups of Australia in a prominent location in the House.	December 2020	Educational Projects Manager
	Subscribe to an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander news publication for the House (Koori Mail)	October 2020	Family and Volunteer Coordinator
	Engage Aboriginal representatives to have input in the layout, design and decor for the new House	July 2021	Consumer Advisory Committee Chair
	Commission a local Aboriginal Artist to create an artwork sharing the story of our RAP and our organisation.	September 2021	Executive Officer



A family enjoying some much needed "down-time" between hospital appointments



# Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development	Develop a business case for developing an employment strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	May 2021	Business Manager
	Create and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Policy and promote internally and externally.	May 2021	Executive Officer
	Actively recruit Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander volunteers through current volunteering network to engage in volunteering with RMHCSA	June 2021	Family and Volunteer Coordinator
	Actively recruit at least one additional Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representative on internal committees	June 2021	Executive Officer
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	Consider a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses	February 2021	Operations Manager
	Develop a directory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses that may be able to be added to our supply chain by building onto local data from the:  SA Industry Advocate office, <a href="http://www.industryadvocate.sa.gov.au">www.industryadvocate.sa.gov.au</a>  Supply Nation <a href="http://www.supplynation.org.au">www.supplynation.org.au</a>  and the Aboriginal Business Industry Chamber of SA <a href="https://abicsa.org.au/">https://abicsa.org.au/</a>	April 2021	Operations Manager
	Organise a Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus House family meal program twice annually in November and March, (Meals from the Heart) using Native produce and an Aboriginal supplier.	March 2021	Marketing and Events Assistant



Children from two different families enjoy playing together at the House.



# Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	RAP Working Group to meet six times per year to ensure commitments are being met through reviewing activity and feedback.	November 2020, January, March, May, July, September 2021	RAP Working Group Chair
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	October 2020	RAP Working Group Chair
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	October 2020	Executive Officer
	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	October 2021	Executive Officer
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation for the following budget period.	December 2020	Business Manager
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments and report on their engagement to the staff and to the RAP Group	July 2021	RAP Working Group Chair
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	November 2020	RAP Working Group Chair
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Share on RAP progress at each Staff Meeting and Board Meeting.	September 2021	RAP Working Group Chair
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2021	RAP Working Group Chair
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	June 2021	RAP Working Group Chair



The Muller family called Ronald McDonald House their home-away-from-home for over 435 days

# RAP Artwork

**Title: Keeping Families Close**  
**Artist: Elizabeth Close**

My artwork is informed profoundly by the concept of keeping families close. Ronald McDonald House Charities allows families to stay together while they navigate possibly some of the hardest experiences that any parent or caregiver can ever have. I chose warm, vivid colours to give the overall palette a playful feel, perfect for a children's charity. The warm tones also evoke feelings of warmth and comfort - not unlike the way the staff and volunteers make the experience of engaging with the RMHC services, warm, supportive and comforting during a difficult time.

The central, smaller red circle represents both child and family. The nesting together around the small red circle demonstrates the way the Charity and the connected health systems and services stand in solidarity with the child and family. Keeping families together and close, and supporting the whole family, the service supports and empowers the family so that they are free to focus on their child's wellbeing, and other siblings too, and feel involved in the patient journey, making informed decisions, rather than feeling like by-standers.

In the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, that support is culturally safe and inclusive. The circles also have a dual meaning, in that they also represent the understanding that Ronald McDonald House Charities has regarding the importance of connection to country and community that is especially important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, particularly in times of crisis. The rings also signify the oasis that Ronald McDonald House is for families that stay there; and the dots representing the many incredible staff and volunteers.



Title: Keeping Families Close



Artist: Elizabeth Close

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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