



**Ngala**

**Reconciliation Action Plan**

**2016-18**



**RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN**

**INNOVATE**

**Ngala**

Parenting with Confidence

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Ngala acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Whadjuk Noongar Country, where Ngala's main offices are located, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respect to them and their cultures and to Elders past, present and future in the spirit of reconciliation. Ngala also acknowledges and pays respect to Traditional Custodians and Elders past, present and future from other Western Australian regions where Ngala often works.

### **Story behind the picture**

*by Peter Farmer*

“The artwork that I have created has a Birthing Tree in the centre of it with Noongar design and tracks surrounding the tree. These tracks and paths present the roads and journeys we take throughout our lives from childhood to adulthood and parenthood as well.

Included in this piece are circles that are connected to other circles. These represent communities such as our homes and families, as well as schools and towns along with cities, states and countries. The little white leaf in the centre of the painting represents the initial beginnings of life in the womb.

The symbolisms used have great significance within our communities, and I have been given permission by my mother and grandmothers to recreate them (not exactly) to use for this particular project.”

# Ngala's Commitment to the Reconciliation Process

Reconciliation means building positive, respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, working together to 'close the gaps' and achieve equity and justice. For Ngala, building these relationships will increase respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and practices, and create opportunities to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In turn, this supports our vision of creating culturally safe and inclusive environments, services and resources that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities in growing their children in healthy ways.

Ngala's Service Delivery Model (2012), which guides our services today, acknowledges Ngala's past history regarding out of home care and adoption practices and the impact of the Stolen Generations on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children. Ngala recognises the need to shift current perceptions of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that 'Ngala still does what it did in the past' to 'Ngala offers services that work for us'. The spirit and the process of reconciliation is an important part of healing the past and building shared respect and understanding.

In 2013, Ngala identified that an important step in the reconciliation process for Ngala was to develop a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The focus of this first RAP was building relationships and raising awareness, both internally and externally, to create shared understanding and ownership of the RAP within our organisation. The development of our Reflect RAP, launched in July 2014, was supported and guided by our Ngala Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, Simon Forrest, a Noongar/Yamatji/Wongi man and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

Ngala commissioned an artwork that represented our reconciliation story and developed a Statement of Commitment, which is displayed in our sites. In this statement, Ngala recognises and honours Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples. Ngala acknowledges the loss of lands, kin, languages and cultural identity experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the affect this has had on them and their families. We acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, languages and cultures that have existed across different lands and still exist today. We also acknowledge that true reconciliation is an ongoing journey that cannot be achieved through a single policy or action. Ngala has a long term commitment to the development of higher levels of engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations.

In 2016-18, our priority is strengthening our external relationships - especially with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and organisations - to achieve real, meaningful and sustained change, as articulated in our Innovate RAP. We will also identify and develop sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our organisation. Further significant relationships, opportunities and actions will be identified as awareness, understanding and shared ownership grows.

# Our Business

Ngala is a provider of Early Parenting and Early Childhood services, working with and for Western Australian families to enhance their experience of parenting and to promote the healthy development of young children. At over 125 years, Ngala is one of the oldest non-government organisations in Western Australia, and is widely recognised as a leader in early parenting.

At Ngala, we are committed to contributing to a community where children are:

- healthy, safe, respected and develop to their full potential;
- parents are knowledgeable, skilled, confident and supported; and
- parents and children enjoy positive interactions and relationships.

We deliver a range of universal, targeted and specialist services for families living in both metropolitan and some rural and remote regions of Western Australia. Our services are provided by a multidisciplinary and highly skilled professional workforce. Services provided include: a free telephone Helpline service (7 days a week, 52 weeks of the year); universally accessible community-based facilitated Parenting and Play Time sessions; Parenting Education workshops provided in various community locations; a parent support service at Bandyup Prison; and intensive residential services (Overnight Stay and Day Stay) as well as an individual consultation service.

Ngala employs 300 people. As at March 2016 this includes six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, the latter being employed in the following positions: Program Coordinator; Parenting Support Worker; Early Childhood Parent Educator; Aboriginal Liaison Officer; HIPPY Coordinator; Administration Assistant.

# Ngala's RAP journey so far: achievements and milestones

Our first Reflect RAP, launched in July 2014, has resulted in cultural, attitudinal, policy and practice change within Ngala. Along the way it has been identified that reconciliation takes time and requires systemic, individual and organisational commitment to change; strong and decisive leadership; and most importantly, support and guidance from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, leaders and community members. Close monitoring shows all but two deliverables of our first RAP were fully achieved. The two partially achieved deliverables have been carried over to our Innovate RAP. Some of our key achievements are:

- Ngala developed a "Reconciliation and You" page on our Intranet, with regular posts, key documents, links and articles.
- The RAP Working Group has grown from 7 staff in 2014 to 16 staff in 2016.
- A RAP Action Advisory Group was formed in April 2015; this group of Elders and community leaders meet regularly with Aboriginal staff, Ngala CEO and other leadership team members to challenge, guide and influence us.
- New policies and procedures were developed and implemented. These include:
  - Cultural Respect Policy;
  - Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Policy;
  - Respectful Communication with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people procedure; and
  - Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country procedure.
- Cultural training is provided for all staff including orientation presentations, cultural awareness workshops, 'Share Our Pride' e-learning and informal lunchtime sessions. By September 2015, 198 staff (69%) had participated in cultural training (online e-learning or workshops).
- Ngala developed an assessment tool to align with the 'Share Our Pride' modules to check staff understanding.
- A staff survey undertaken in June 2014 and repeated in May 2015 showed the following changes:
  - 38% increase in number of fully completed responses overall (from 63 in 2014 to 87 in 2015)
  - Significant decrease in poor or very poor understanding of the purpose of the RAP (23% of respondents in 2014 to 8% in 2015)
  - Decrease in those who are unsure about how they feel about Ngala's RAP commitment RAP or don't know what it means from 19% to 5%.
  - Overall increase in awareness of activities, particularly providing training opportunities to staff (46% to 84%)
  - Increase in respondents who have been present at a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country (78% in 2014, 94.5% in 2015).
- Strategies for access and inclusion are now embedded in service planning and reporting processes.
- Participation in celebrating significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural events has increased, with different areas of Ngala being involved in the organisation of events (previously this was the responsibility of the Indigenous Parenting Service team).
- Ngala has also been more active in community events; e.g. in 2015 we had a stall at the Sorry Day community event in East Perth for the first time.

An Aboriginal staff member testimonial (March 2016) suggests we are on the right path to address the issues of the past and develop more positive future relationships: ***"I've noticed an increased willingness from the organisation to listen to Aboriginal voices, both internally and externally, and to show a sense of value, respect and a desire to understand. There has been a significant shift in attitudes and perceptions from staff around the development of the RAP and the need to change our organisational culture"***. Ngala still has a long road ahead as we embark on our next RAP. Sharing this journey with Aboriginal Elders, colleagues, families and communities will help ensure we become an organisation that reflects our commitment to reconciliation, building environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families feel welcome and safe.

# Our RAP

## 1. Why Ngala developed a RAP:

- To be part of the national effort to acknowledge and address past and present injustices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- To work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples towards improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families;
- To create opportunities to build respectful, sustainable relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that celebrate culture, diversity, strengths, resilience and contribution to society; and
- To demonstrate an organisational culture that embraces an inclusive and equitable approach to all families.

## 2. Who champions our RAP internally:

The Ngala Executive has endorsed, and is committed to leading, the development and implementation of the Ngala RAP. To this end, a group of staff who have specific interest in the development and championing of the RAP formed a RAP Working Group. This group reports to the Services Management Group (all service managers and service directors), who are the steering group for the RAP.

## 3. Our RAP Working Group (as at January 2016):

Helen Carter (Director Strategy & Research), Elaine Bennett (Director Strategy & Research), Michael Bradley (Director Services), Kerryn Lewis (Coordinator, Indigenous Programs), Carol Bosman (Director Employee Relations), Cindy Davies (Coordinator, Child & Parent Centre Neerabup), Kim Wedge (Educator and Community Worker), Charlene Assan (Parent Education Administration Support), Shelley Coleman (Education Support Worker, Indigenous Parenting Service), Elsie Woods (Early Childhood Educator, Indigenous Parenting Service), Tresa Mundraby (Aboriginal Liaison Officer), Cheryllyn McMeekin (Project Support Officer, Director's Office), Keith Read (Father Inclusive Practice Educator, DadsWA), Kara Cheah (Social Worker), Sakina Bindahneem (Coordinator, Helpline), Kate Field (Parent Educator), and Kirsty Chambers (Centre Coordinator, Early Learning Development Service).

## 4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RAP Action Advisory Group:

The purpose of the RAP Action Advisory group is to challenge, guide and influence the development and implementation of Ngala's commitment to reconciliation. The group was formed in 2015, with the first meeting in April of that year. As at early 2016, the group consists of five Elders and community leaders. Aboriginal staff at Ngala also attend meetings, along with a Director. Ngala is privileged to have the opportunity to be guided by the wisdom, experience and knowledge in this group.



## Relationships

The development of genuine and equitable relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities will help to ensure Ngala's knowledge, practice and experience as an organisation reflects and supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and practices. Building strong relationships and shared understanding is also essential to shift current perceptions of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of what Ngala is and does. Actions include a focus on strengthening both internal and external relationships, increasing awareness of our RAP and promoting reconciliation more broadly. Our RAP Working Group, in partnership with the RAP Action Advisory Group, will directly support the implementation of our RAP.


	Action	Deliverables	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline
 <b>1. Relationships</b>	<b>1.1 The RAP Working Group (RWG) continues to actively monitor RAP development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are encouraged to join RWG.</li> <li>RWG meets at least twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation (May/Oct 2016, May/Oct 2017, May 2018).</li> <li>Review Terms of Reference of the RWG.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	Director Strategy and Research	30 May 2016 31 Oct 2016 30 May 2017 31 Oct 2017 30 May 2018 31 Mar 2017
	<b>1.2 Build and strengthen sustained relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal community members form a formal RAP Action Advisory Group to provide cultural advice and to guide, challenge and direct our RAP activities in partnership with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Ngala staff.</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and staff are invited to join and attend RAP Action Advisory Group meetings.</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members are invited to attend RAP Action Advisory Group meetings.</li> <li>Chair is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	RAP Coordinator	31 Mar 2018 (all)
	<b>1.3 Develop external relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities and organisations to support positive outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify potential future relationships with relevant organisations that support our RAP intent.</li> <li>Advocate for relevant strategic policy and practice change that supports reconciliation effort at relevant across government and agency forums.</li> <li>Organise community forums as two way learning opportunities to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to give feedback, tell their stories and to find out more about Ngala as an organisation today.</li> </ul>	Chief Executive Officer  Director Strategy and Research	Chief Executive Officer  Director Strategy and Research	31 Mar 2018  31 Mar 2018  31 Dec 2016

	<b>1.4 Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage all Ngala RWG members and staff to attend local community (external) NRW events and activities.</li> <li>• At least one internal event is held each year to celebrate NRW, with feedback provided to the RAP Action Advisory Group.</li> <li>• Register our NRW event via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.</li> <li>• The responsibility for coordinating internal National Reconciliation Week celebrations and events (27<sup>th</sup> May – 3<sup>rd</sup> June annually) is rotated across Ngala service areas.</li> <li>• Support an external NRW event.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	RAP Reference Group Director Project Support Officer	30 Jun 2016 and 2017
	<b>1.5 Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our organisation and sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display our RAP on Ngala's website.</li> <li>• Promote RAP and monitor staff attendance at internal two way learning opportunities e.g. lunchtime sessions.</li> <li>• Embed RAP initiatives in all service models and plans.</li> <li>• Include RAP as a standing item at all service manager and coordinator meetings under Access and Inclusion.</li> <li>• Invite RAP Action Advisory group members to all Ngala cultural events and celebrations.</li> <li>• As an organisation, attend four relevant community events a year to develop community relationships and to promote Ngala RAP and Ngala services.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	RAP Working Group Director Project Support Officer	31 Mar 2018 (all)



# Respect


Ngala respects the valued contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples bring to our understanding and learning of growing healthy children and thus building healthier communities in which we all can live. This respect will be demonstrated by walking together through cultural learning opportunities, participation in NAIDOC Week events, and a focus on creating culturally safe and inclusive environments and resources.

	Action	Deliverables	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline
 <b>2. Respect</b>	<b>2.1 Engage employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify cultural learning requirements specific to our staff's training needs.</li> <li>Ongoing provision of cultural awareness training, both generic and targeted, is endorsed by Ngala Executive.</li> <li>Promote Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride online tool to all staff as part of Orientation and professional development.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for staff to participate in formal cultural awareness training workshops and informal lunchtime two-way learning sessions.</li> <li>90% of Ngala staff have completed some cultural awareness training, either online or in face to face workshops.</li> <li>An Aboriginal staff member provides an introduction to Ngala's RAP at all Orientation sessions.</li> <li>Conduct an annual staff survey to monitor knowledge, understanding and cultural awareness.</li> </ul>	Director Employee Relations	Director Employee Relations	31 Mar 2017  30 Jun 2016  31 Dec 2016  31 Mar 2018  31 Mar 2018  31 Mar 2018  30 Jun 2016 and 2017
	<b>2.2 Celebrate and participate in NAIDOC Week</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG members participate in a community NAIDOC Week event (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in July each year).</li> <li>Organise at least one internal event annually to recognise and celebrate NAIDOC Week (responsibility to be rotated).</li> <li>Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	RAP Working Group, Director Project Support Officer	31 Jul 2016 and 2017

	<b>2.3 Increase internal understanding and use of cultural protocols to ensure there is a shared meaning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement and monitor the Cultural Respect Policy, Acknowledgement /Welcome to Country and Respectful Communication procedures and research guidelines.</li> <li>• Develop a list of contacts for organising a Welcome to Country.</li> <li>• Organise at least one Welcome to Country ceremony for an internal event annually.</li> <li>• Include Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of important external and external meetings.</li> <li>• Develop community contact and community engagement protocols to guide staff engagement and relationships.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	Research & Service Development Unit	31 Mar 2018 31 Dec 2016 31 Dec 2016 31 Mar 2018 31 Mar 2017
	<b>2.4 Ngala actively creates environments which are inclusive and culturally safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include photos of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with young children on Ngala's website and promotional material.</li> <li>• Actively promote reconciliation through our Facebook page and other Ngala approved forms of social media.</li> <li>• Display the banner outlining Ngala's Statement of Commitment at all community events and expos.</li> <li>• All staff members show Acknowledgement as part of email signature.</li> <li>• Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags outside all Ngala owned sites and internal flags at leased sites.</li> <li>• Increase the number of Ngala sites displaying local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork.</li> <li>• Develop a procedure for actively resisting and challenging racism and discrimination.</li> </ul>	Manager Business Systems & Technology       Director Strategy and Research	Manager Business Systems & Technology      Facilities	31 Mar 2018 31 Dec 2016 31 Mar 2018 31 Dec 2016 31 Mar 2018 30 Jun 2016 31 Mar 2018
	<b>2.5 Maintain Intranet page about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Reconciliation and You' Intranet page is easily accessed by staff from main page.</li> <li>• Page includes links to key documents and websites.</li> <li>• Page is updated regularly with relevant links and announcements.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	Director Project Support Officer	31 Mar 2018
	<b>2.6 Identify and develop culturally appropriate resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential early parenting resources through consultation with internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>• Investigate the development of Ngala branded resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	Research & Service Development Unit	31 Dec 2016 31 Mar 2018

# Opportunities

A commitment to creating opportunities for engaging and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is central to developing our understanding and building our relationships. In particular, this includes the areas of employment and procurement.

	Action	Deliverables	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline
 <b>3. Opportunities</b>	<b>3.1 Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention strategy.</li> <li>• Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.</li> <li>• Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to identify potential barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.</li> <li>• Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.</li> <li>• Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Explore piloting new approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment through a potential traineeship program.</li> <li>• Investigate agreements with universities for student placement and future employment with Ngala.</li> <li>• Consider offering partial scholarships for tertiary level students.</li> <li>• An interim target for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in both mainstream and 50D positions is set at 5% of total staff numbers (2.44% as at Dec 2015).</li> </ul>	Director Employee Relations	Director Employee Relations	31 Dec 2016 30 Jun 2016 31 Dec 2016 31 Mar 2018 31 Mar 2018 31 Mar 2018 31 Mar 2018 31 Mar 2018 31 Mar 2018
	<b>3.2 Consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research opportunities that benefit Aboriginal families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek opportunities to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers.</li> <li>• Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and RAP Action Advisory Group members to consult on funding submissions and relevant research projects relating to parenting, child development outcomes and early childhood.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	Director Strategy and Research	31 Mar 2018 31 Mar 2018
	<b>3.3 Recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to represent on Board and committees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively seek Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders to elect for Board membership.</li> <li>• At least one Ngala Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member participates in the Ngala Resource Review Group.</li> </ul>	CEO Director Strategy and Research	CEO	31 Mar 2018 31 Dec 2016

	<b>3.4 Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review procurement policies and procedures to identify barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to supply our organisation with goods and services.</li> <li>Develop a business case about how our organisation can develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity program.</li> <li>At least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business is identified and engaged annually to procure goods or services.</li> <li>Develop and communicate to procurement staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.</li> </ul>	Chief Financial Officer	Manager Corporate Services	31 Dec 2016
					31 Dec 2016
					31 Dec 2016 and 2017
					31 Mar 2017

	Action	Deliverables	Accountability	Responsibility	Timeline
<b>4. Tracking progress</b>	<b>4.1 Monitor and report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available resourcing for our RAP is identified.</li> <li>A Framework for reporting is developed.</li> <li>Our data collection measures our progress and successes.</li> <li>A report is provided to the RAP Aboriginal Action Advisory Group on RAP progress.</li> <li>Our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings are shared with the wider organisation and community.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	RAP Working Group Director Project Support officer	30 Sep 2016 and 2017
	<b>4.2 Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.</li> <li>Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	Director Strategy and Research Project Support Officer	30 Sep 2016 and 2017 Jun 2016
	<b>4.3 Review, refresh and update RAP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review, refresh and update RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.</li> <li>Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement.</li> </ul>	Director Strategy and Research	RAP Working Group	31 Oct 2017

## Contact details

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