



Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

January 2025 - January 2027





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About our artwork



Title: Walking with Artist: Sasha Hill

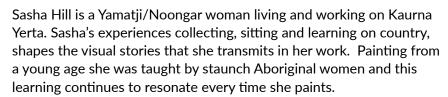
The artwork reflects the ethos of ARAS and the belief that 'we work with you; we listen to you and you make the decisions.

The concentric circle in the middle with the U-shaped symbols shows people moving within, not being listened to or heard and the confused and frustrated state when you feel like you are going round and round in circles.

The journey lines moving out from the concentric circles show the various avenues or journeys that you can move through, these are shown as people moving in one clear direction toward a safe base, to the people symbols representing ARAS and the advocates. The U-shaped symbols of the advocates are all holding a spear and shield, showing the protection and support that ARAS provides.

The red ochres and greens represent the colours of the ARAS logo and the commitment that ARAS has to supporting First Nations peoples through valuing individuals; culture and identity.

Artist Biography



Sasha's work is characterised by a mix of ochres and bright pops of colour, with heavy dot and symbol work.

Sasha is also a mother of two and a social worker, she draws on both roles when painting. Incorporating Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing in her art therapy practice and parenting.



Sasha Hill

Statement from CEO of **Reconciliation Australia**

Reconciliation Australia commends Aged Rights Advocacy Service on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Aged Rights Advocacy Service to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Aged Rights Advocacy Service will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Aged Rights Advocacy Service is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Aged Rights Advocacy Service's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Aged Rights Advocacy Service on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer Reconciliation Australia



Karen Mundine, Chief Executive Officer Reconciliation Australia



Message from our RAP Champion and Chief Executive

We are proud to launch our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2024–2026, marking our continued commitment to reconciliation and respect for First Nations peoples, their cultures, histories, and knowledge. This second RAP builds on the foundations of our Reflect RAP 2022, reflecting our progress in fostering meaningful relationships and advancing reconciliation.

Through initiatives like information sessions led by our Aboriginal Advocates, we are addressing key issues impacting First Nations peoples, demonstrating our dedication to building a community where all older people are valued and respected. Reconciliation is central to our mission, and we remain committed to strengthening relationships, promoting respect, and creating equal opportunities for all.

Our efforts include enhancing community engagement, raising awareness of Elder abuse and fostering early intervention through intergenerational gatherings and advocacy. By embracing these priorities, we aim to honour the cultural richness of First Nations peoples and ensure their Elders are respected for their wisdom.

We thank ARAS' Reconciliation Working Group and Reconciliation Australia for their invaluable contributions to this RAP. Together, we move forward in our reconciliation journey, striving for a future where cultural diversity is celebrated, and First Nations peoples are fully included and respected.

Thank you

Anne Burgess AM, RAP Champion Carolanne Barkla, Chief Executive



aras





Our vision for Reconciliation

ARAS envisions a community where all older people are valued and respected, and reconciliation with First Nations peoples is central to this. We are committed to strengthening relationships, promoting respect, and providing equal opportunities for all.

Our goal is to honour the rich cultural histories of First Nations peoples, ensuring their Elders are respected for their wisdom. Through collaboration with service providers, we aim to increase community engagement and foster education.

We are also focused on raising awareness of abuse of older people, and promoting early intervention through intergenerational gatherings and systemic advocacy.

In essence, ARAS strives for a community where reconciliation is embedded in every interaction, cultural diversity is celebrated, and First Nations peoples are fully respected and included.

Our business

ARAS provides a free, confidential, and state-wide service to older people (or their representatives) who are living in residential aged care or retirement villages, receiving or seeking Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) or Home Care Package (HCP) services, or at risk of, or experiencing abuse from family or friends. ARAS also runs the Home Care Check-In project, offering in-home safety checks for older persons vulnerable due to social isolation and at risk of harm or neglect. With 50 staff across offices in Dulwich, Berri, Nuriootpa, and Victor Harbor, including two Aboriginal advocates, ARAS provides culturally safe support services and hosts an annual Intergenerational Elders and Youth Gathering in regional South Australia.. As a member of the Commonwealth-funded Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), ARAS services the entire state of South Australia. ARAS is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP), Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), Office for Ageing Well, SA Health, and Adelaide PHN (APHN).

ARAS' sphere of influence (internal and external stakeholders):

ARAS is making meaningful progress in our reconciliation efforts, both internally and externally. By engaging with staff, board members, and the wider community, we have supported Elders through education and created a safe and inclusive environment. This dedication is reflected in initiatives such as our annual intergenerational gathering and ongoing cultural awareness training for staff, which foster cultural understanding and growth. Our contributions are also recognised in government reports, including the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services Report, highlighting our efforts on issues like financial abuse. Additionally, ARAS leadership actively participates in the National Aged Care Alliance First Nations Strategic Working Group, collaborating to shape a better future for aged care in Australia.

Our RAP

- ARAS is developing a RAP because we are transitioning from Reflect RAP to Innovate RAP as a natural progression in our reconciliation journey. This transition signifies our commitment to strengthening our relationships with First Nations peoples and creating a more inclusive and culturally aware organisation.
 - The move to the Innovate RAP represents our dedication to going beyond reflection and taking active steps to make a positive impact on First Nations peoples and their communities.
 - Furthermore, the Innovate RAP serves as an ongoing learning resource for all staff. It provides opportunities for continuous education, ensuring that our team remains informed about First Nations cultures, histories, and current issues.
 - Anne Burgess AM, Board Chairperson is also our RAP Champion.
- The following individuals internally and externally are involved in our **RAP Working Group**
 - Anne Burgess AM, Board Chairperson, RAP Champion
 - Alex Houthuysen First Nations community representative, **ARAS** Board member
 - Lyndon Prior ARAS employee, Corporate Services Manager
 - Julie Karidis ARAS employee, Aboriginal Advocate
 - Bridie Murphy ARAS employee, Aboriginal Advocate
 - Isabel Hoo ARAS employee, Business Support Coordinator
 - Annelise van Deth ARAS employee, Policy and Systemic Advocacy
 - Sakina Vohra ARAS employee, Education and Operations **Systems Coordinator**
 - Bisma Changez Policy and Compliance Officer
- Three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are represented on our RAP Working Group.





Our reconciliation journey

Since the development of our first RAP, ARAS has made significant progress in fostering meaningful relationships with First Nations peoples and embedding cultural respect throughout our organisation. This journey has been marked by several key milestones and learnings that have shaped our approach to reconciliation.

Successes

1. Cultural awareness and staff engagement

One of the most impactful initiatives has been the regular delivery of information sessions on First Nations peoples' issues of importance. These sessions have become integral to raising awareness and promoting understanding among staff, ensuring that cultural sensitivity remains at the forefront of our advocacy work. Staff participation in key events such as National Reconciliation Week and Apology Day breakfasts has further strengthened our commitment to reconciliation and connected ARAS with the broader reconciliation movement in Australia.

2. Increased engagement with First Nations communities

ARAS has seen a notable increase in First Nations clients, largely due to our grassroots outreach efforts. These initiatives, including visits to rural and remote communities, have allowed us to engage with vulnerable populations more effectively and spread awareness about the prevention of abuse of older people. We have strengthened our approach through the development of a First Nations Engagement Policy, which underlines our commitment to working closely with First Nations across South Australia.

3. Development of culturally appropriate resources

An important achievement has been the creation of resources in Pitjantjatjara, a language spoken by many First Nations peoples in South Australia. We have also developed "Is this happening to you?" magnets, a popular tool that educates clients and service providers on financial abuse and family pressures. These resources have been well-received and demonstrate our dedication to providing culturally relevant support to First Nations clients. We have also introduced polos featuring First Nations artwork, further embedding cultural recognition into the fabric of ARAS.

4. Embedding cultural recognition

Cultural recognition is now a part of ARAS's daily operations. We proudly display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in our email signatures and begin all meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country tailored to the location of the meeting. Additionally, we've displayed these acknowledgments in all ARAS offices, including remote locations. Our public support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart, featured in email signatures, reflects our broader advocacy for the rights of First Nations peoples.

5. Strengthening internal advocacy for Reconciliation

ARAS has established a strong RAP working group, guided by a RAP champion who also serves as the Chairperson of our board. This group plays a pivotal role in driving reconciliation initiatives within the organisation and ensuring that ARAS continues to make meaningful progress.

Challenges

1. Engaging staff in cultural conversations

Despite our successes, some challenges remain. During our information sessions, many staff members express discomfort in engaging in conversations about cultural issues. Encouraging broader participation remains a key focus for ARAS.

2. Staff capacity

With only two staff members dedicated to serving the entire state, ARAS faces challenges in adequately supporting First Nations clients across South Australia.

3. Access to translators

Finding qualified translators, especially for First Nations languages, remains a significant hurdle in delivering services that are accessible to all clients. This challenge is particularly acute in rural areas where specific language skills are needed to engage effectively with local communities.

4. Resource production costs

While ARAS is committed to creating culturally appropriate resources, the costs associated with producing high-quality materials, such as brochures with tailored graphics, can be prohibitive. Ensuring these materials remain accessible and widely available is an ongoing challenge.

Through these successes and challenges, ARAS continues to move forward in our reconciliation journey, learning from our experiences and striving to build stronger relationships with First Nations communities. We remain committed to our vision of a culturally safe and inclusive future for all older Australians.





Many First Nations communities, especially in remote areas, lack timely access to information and support. By fostering inclusiveness and cultural safety, ARAS aims to provide First Nations Elders with real choices in their care. Encouraging Non-Indigenous people to be welcoming and respectful promotes mutual understanding and ensures First Nations Elders feel supported and empowered, aligning with ARAS's core mission to protect the rights of older Australians.

Ad	ction	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and	 Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. 	May 2025	Aboriginal Advocate
		 Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	January 2025	Aboriginal Advocate
2.	Build relationships through celebrating National	 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. 	May 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
	Reconciliation Week (NRW).	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June, 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
		 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	27 May- 3 June 2025	Aboriginal Advocate
		Continue to organise at least one cultural event during the NRW each year	27 May- 3 June, 2025	Aboriginal Advocate
		 Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's <u>NRW website</u>. 	May 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
3.	event during the NRW each year 3 June, 2025 Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence. Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website. Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce. Communicate our commitment to February Education Coordinated Strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator		
	of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	February 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
		 Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes. 	May 2025	Aboriginal Advocate
		Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	February 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator

A	ction	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1	Promote positive race relations through antidiscrimination	 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti- discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	February 2025	Policy and Compliance Officer
	strategies.	Review and communicate our anti- discrimination policy for our organisation.	February 2025	Policy and Compliance Officer
		 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy. 	March 2025 (bi-annually)	Policy and Compliance Officer Corporate Services Manager
		Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	February 2025	•
5.	Collaborate with industry partners to enhance service provision for First Nations peoples.	Develop and targeted education resources to assist with raising awareness about ARAS' services and what services we offer for First Nation clients.	February 2025	Aboriginal Advocate
		 Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our educational training material. 	February 2025	Aboriginal Advocate
		 Deliver targeted education sessions to Aboriginal Veterans South Australia, Centrelink, Government agencies, COTA SA, Services Australia, KWY, and other organisations that support First Nations peoples. 	February 2025	Compliance Officer Policy and Compliance Officer Corporate Services Manager Aboriginal Advocate
		Strengthen engagement with health-related programs like the SA Dental Aboriginal Program and Breast Screen SA to ensure First Nations' clients in these programs are aware of the support available through ARAS.	February 2025	Aboriginal Advocate







Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights is integral to ARAS's mission of supporting the rights of all older Australians. By acknowledging and appreciating the rich cultural heritage of First Nations peoples, ARAS fosters understanding, learning, and pride within its staff and services. This respect strengthens relationships and ensures culturally safe and inclusive advocacy. ARAS's commitment to its RAP reinforces these values, guiding its efforts to celebrate First Nations successes, promote continuous learning, and advocate for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders in a meaningful and respectful way.

Ad	ction	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
un an of To cu kn rig	Increase understanding, value and recognition	Conduct an ongoing review of the cultural learning needs within our organisation.	February 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
	of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through	 Continue to consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy. 	February 2025	Aboriginal Advocate
	cultural learning.	 Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff. 	March 2025	Corporate Services Manager
		 Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning. 	February 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
6.	respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural	Continue with staff education on understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	February 2025	Aboriginal Advocate
	protocols.	Review and update our cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	February 2024	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
		 Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year. 	July 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
		Continue to include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	February 2025	Corporate Services Manager
		Continue to encourage staff to create their own Acknowledgement of Country to make it personalised	February 2025	Aboriginal Advocate

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait	 RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 		
Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	 Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. 	March 2025 (bi-annually)	Policy and Compliance Officer
	 Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff. 	July 2025	Corporate Services Manager
8. Enhance service provision for First Nations clients by fostering cultural confidence and competence among	 Continue to deliver bi-monthly (every two months) information sessions with open Q&A opportunities where non-Indigenous staff can ask questions and seek guidance from Aboriginal Advocates on culturally appropriate practices. 	February 2025	Aboriginal Advocate
our staff.	Organise annual or bi-annual meet and greet events with the First Nations Board Member, with dedicated time for Q&A.	July 2025	Corporate Services Manager
	Update intake training to identify First Nations clients and facilitate referrals to Aboriginal Advocates. Conduct monthly audits to ensure compliance with culturally safe protocols.	February 2025 Audits commence March 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator





Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are essential to ARAS's mission. By fostering cultural safety, providing professional development, and upskilling non-Indigenous staff on cultural matters, ARAS ensures more inclusive and respectful advocacy. This approach strengthens access to services and empowers First Nations clients and communities.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal	 Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	July 2025	Corporate Services Manager
and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Islander recruitment, retention, and professional Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development	July 2025	Corporate Services Manager
	 Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. 	January 2026	Corporate Services Manager Corporate Services Manager
	 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. 	February 2025 (review quarterly)	
	 Continue to monitor HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace. 	July 2025	•
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier	 Review and evaluate effectiveness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy. 	July 2025	
diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	 Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff. 	February 2025	Corporate Services Manager
	 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. 	June 2025	
	 Continue to source additional commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses. 	February 2025	Corporate Services Manager Corporate Services Manager Corporate Services Manager Corporate Services Manager Business Support Coordinator Corporate Services Manager



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective	 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	February 2025	Corporate Services Manager
RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the	Apply Terms of Reference for the RWG.	December, 2024	Corporate Services Manager
RAP.	 Meet at least four times per year to drive February and monitor RAP implementation. 	February 2025	Corporate Services Manager
12 Provide appropriate support for effective	Continue to monitor resource needs for RAP implementation annually.	March 2025	Corporate Services Manager
implementation of RAP commitments.	• Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	February 2025	Corporate Services Manager
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
	 Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management. 	February 2025	Corporate Services Manager
13 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and	 Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence. 	June annually	Corporate Services Manager
learnings both internally and externally. (Continues on next page)	 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey. 	1 August annually	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	March 2025 June 2025 September 2025 December 2025 March 2026 June 2026 September 2026 December 2026	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually. 	December 2025	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
	 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer. 	May 2026	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
	 Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP. 	December 2026	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	 Register via Reconciliation Australia's <u>website</u> to begin developing our next RAP. 	July 2026	Education and Operations Systems Coordinator

Contact details

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