



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

mieact

A safe space for
mental health education



REFLECT

Reconciliation Action Plan

Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)
February 2024 to February 2025



MIEACT acknowledges Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples continuing connection to Country and their ongoing contribution to our community.



OUR BUSINESS

Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT) is the primary local mental health and well-being provider for schools, workplaces and community groups across the Canberra region and surrounding area, the lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples. For more than 25 years, MIEACT has delivered evidence-based programs, partnered with lived experience stories that increase mental health literacy, promote early intervention, reduce stigma and emphasise recovery.

Vision: People are empowered through education to sustain mental health and wellbeing.

Mission: As a recover driven organisation we embrace the lived experience to provide mental health education awareness programs in schools and the wider community to address stigma, increase knowledge and promote help seeking.

MIEACT is an incorporated association based in Civic, Canberra. We employ 34 people, the majority of which are casual employees who deliver MIEACT mental health education programs. MIEACT is also immensely fortunate to have 20 Volunteer Educators who deliver MIEACT's flagship Lived Experience programs, Mental Health 101 & 201 which involve the safe sharing of stories about living with and managing mental ill-health. At this point in time, MIEACT does not have any employees or volunteers who identify as being from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We look forward to creating a culturally safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to engage with MIEACT during the course of our Reflect RAP.

Although we are Canberra based, in 2023, MIEACT has extended its reach past Canberra's borders, taking our DoNOHarm Framework national. In 2011, MIEACT developed the DoNOHarm Framework, which humbly started out as the tool our Volunteer Educators used to safely share their Lived Experience stories but has since been evaluated by the University of Canberra a best practice approach to communicating about mental health and lived experience. This framework, which is trauma informed and recovery oriented, is being adopted by community groups, organisations and government departments across Australia, as it empowers participants to become mindful, safe and effective communicators.



STATEMENT FROM OUR CEO

For all of MIEACT, our RAP is a deep-felt expression of our commitment to fostering reconciliation and advancing the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our organisation acknowledges the historical injustices suffered by First Nations communities and recognises the importance of reconciliation in healing these wounds.



MIEACT's Reconciliation Action Plan compliments and strengthens the efforts we continually make to understand, learn about, and to embed cultural safety, responsiveness, and recognition of lived experience into our programs and ways of working.

Possessing this mindset, we are excited to discover, through the RAP, the changes our organisation can make to practices, procedures and policies that will elevate our engagement with First Nations communities, that will ensure MIEACT is always a safe place for indigenous Australians, and that promote mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples.

I am proud to endorse MIEACT's RAP and embrace the journey MIEACT will undertake in implementing it. I thank MIEACT staff and volunteers for their enthusiasm and dedication to bringing this RAP to life and to supporting meaningful change.

Dr Bradley Shrimpton
Chief Executive Officer
Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)

STATEMENT FROM CEO OF RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Mental Illness Education ACT to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.



Mental Illness Education ACT joins a network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.



These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Mental Illness Education ACT to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Mental Illness Education ACT, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

MIEACT is committed to elevating the voices and stories of First Nations communities and developing strong and sustainable partnerships.

MIEACT's ethos is 'see yourself in our stories' and we pride ourselves on creating a safe space for mental health education. While we achieve this in many areas, we do not currently have policies, guidelines or strategies in place in relation to our engagement with First Nations communities. We also do not have a staff/volunteer base who identify as being from First Nations communities. We hope that by committing to the development and implementation of a RAP, MIEACT will continue to make progress toward both reconciliation, and creating a safe space for First Nations voices to be heard and elevated.

In working towards a more inclusive workplace, we have identified that increasing our cultural competency, building relationships with and creating opportunities for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, will only enhance our programs and extend our reach. As an organisation seeking to address the destructive nature of stigma around mental ill-health, we have a responsibility to contribute to reconciliation and ensure our engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is genuine and constructive, recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to be overrepresented in mental health statistics.

In developing a Reflect RAP, we aim to solidify our commitment to inclusivity, contribute to mental health and wellbeing literacy in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and lay the groundwork for meaningful engagement with First Nations peoples and organisations moving forward.

No single person or functional area is responsible for delivering on our commitments and we aim to involve every team member in some aspect of the RAP. The RAP Working group comprises of people from across the organisation, each who bring a unique perspective and insight into the development and implementation phase. Over the course of the RAP delivery period, the RAP Working Group will hold monthly reporting on progress, ensuring consistent oversight and commitment at the executive level. The RAP Working Group will also provide support and guidance, facilitating the sharing of knowledge across the organisation.



While we strive to be inclusive of all people, MIEACT recognises that we need to do more in our efforts to engage with First Nations peoples, especially in advocating for true reconciliation and supporting self-determination among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise that we are late in adopting a RAP and are committed to taking meaningful steps towards reconciliation, understanding that the purpose of developing and committing to a RAP is to turn good intention into positive action. It is our hope that MIEACT can evolve as a true ally in the mental health space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, engaging, promoting – and where possible – partnering with First Nations organisations and amplifying those voices.

MIEACT intends to apply our values and DoNOHarm framework across our RAP. These include:

- DoNOHarm: First and foremost, that our evidence-informed practice always puts the safety of people and community front of mind.
- Life-changing: We work together to always focus on changing the lives of people for the better.
- Connected learning: That we learn through empathy, authenticity and deep human connection through real stories.
- Be human: We are open to vulnerability and own our humanity every day. We recognise that vulnerability brings trust.

MIEACT's RAP Champion is our Volunteer Engagement and Development Manager, Beth Garwood who is passionate about bringing together a working group from across the MIEACT community to implement this RAP.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS/CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Although we are only commencing our formal reconciliation journey now, we have been engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations over the past 12 months in an effort to begin our journey of understanding and to develop a strong foundation of cultural competency and knowledge within the organisation. We look forward to expanding on these initiatives over the course of our RAP.

Our reconciliation journey has included identifying and embedding day-to-day practices that pay acknowledgement and respect to, and solidarity with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This has included integrating an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of every meeting and education session MIEACT delivers as standard practice. We encourage these to be an authentic, educational and intentional part of our formalities rather than a “tick and flick” exercise.

We respectfully facilitate First Nations Elders to attend events and to provide Welcome to Country and we compensate them for their time and service.

In 2022, MIEACT staff overwhelmingly supported a move to no longer recognise 26 January as a public holiday. Instead, staff are invited to nominate an alternative day of leave in lieu of the official public holiday, in solidarity with First Nations peoples. MIEACT will continue to uphold this option to staff in support of the ‘Change the Date’ campaign.



YOUR MOB CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING

All MIEACT staff and volunteers were offered the opportunity to complete this comprehensive, online, and self-paced learning. The strong uptake of this training has enabled MIEACT to gain an understanding of and appreciation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. Furthermore, it has equipped our community of decision makers, staff and volunteers with foundational knowledge when working with people from First Nations backgrounds, and to be work-ready when engaging with First Nations communities.

WALK ON COUNTRY TRAINING

MIEACT's core staff team and CEO undertook a three-hour Walk on Country training session facilitated by Ngunnawal leader, Richie Allan, Cultural Director for the Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (TOAC). The group gained a greater understanding, appreciation and cultural awareness of Ngunnawal history, peoples, Country and culture, equipping the team with the tools to promote and engage with reconciliation in a genuine, appropriate and meaningful way.

MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY: FIRST NATIONS EXPERIENCES OF DEMOCRACY TOUR

MIEACT's core staff team and CEO had the privilege of hearing stories of how First Nations Australian's and their supporters have taken different pathways to bring about change, many of which led them to Old Parliament House between 1928 and 1988. It was also an opportunity to reflect on the complex history of Australia's democracy, its impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the critical role truth telling plays in reconciliation.



<i>RELATIONSHIPS</i>			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	February 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	March 2024	Project Officer
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May-3 June 2024	RAP Working Group 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 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator




RELATIONSHIPS



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	February 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	March 2024	Senior Operations and Governance Manager
	Incorporate appropriate indigenous anti-discrimination provisions in MIEACT's WHS policy and Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination policy.	May 2024	Senior Operations and Governance Manager





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 and adopt practices that support increased understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	July 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	July 2024	RAP Working Group 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.	April 2024	RAP Working Group Relationships Lead
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	April 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator



<i>RESPECT</i>			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator



OPPORTUNITIES 			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop and/or adopt culturally safe and supportive recruitment and retention protocols.	November 2024	Senior Operations and Governance Manager
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	November 2024	Senior Operations and Governance Manager
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop and/or adopt procedures that support service procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	August 2024	Senior Operations and Governance Manager
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	August 2024	Senior Operations and Governance Manager

GOVERNANCE 			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	February 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	February 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	February 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	February 2024	CEO
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	February 2024	CEO
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	February 2024	CEO
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	February 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator



GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	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 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	December 2024	RAP Working Group Coordinator





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Reconciliation Action Plan, please contact:**

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