



St Vincent de Paul Society
NSW
good works

— RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN — GUIDING PRINCIPLES



ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY NSW

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the custodians of this land, with deep respect. May the Elders, past, present and emerging be blessed and honored. May we join together and build a future based on compassion, justice, hope, faith, and reconciliation.

RAP ART AND ARTIST

Traditional artist and proud Gamilaroi man and 2015 NAIDOC artist of the year, Darren Dunn, has created a unique design for the St Vincent de Paul Society of NSW. Darren's work reflects our beliefs that the reconciliation journey is one of conversations. The circular patterns represent campfires while the hands symbolise belonging. We are very proud to have Darren's artwork as the centerpiece of our RAP design.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In designing the very first Innovate RAP Strategy for the period 2018-2020, the Society issued a strong statement of their commitment to building capacity across the organisation to establish and foster meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

We will continue to honor this commitment in our second Innovate RAP Strategy 2021-2023 by providing our people with the appropriate tools to build knowledge and understanding on how to engage effectively with First Nations Peoples.

These Guiding Principles, including the Society's Community Engagement Plan, adds to a raft of initiatives that have been designed to inform, support and guide our people across the Society on how to embed cultural awareness and understanding into everyday work practices.

OUR PURPOSE

To embed cultural perspectives throughout the Society, by providing the necessary support and guidance on how to engage more effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and communities.

OUR GOAL

To create a culturally safe and friendly environment where First Nations Peoples are welcomed and respected, contributing to Vinnies aspiration to become an employer of choice.



STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Guiding Principles relate directly to two strategic priorities from the Society's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan.

- 🌀 **Advocacy and Partnership:** We aim to advocate for reform of the structural causes of poverty and disadvantage by partnering with the public, not for profit, and private sectors in relation to both service provision and advocacy. We seek positive and enduring relationships with First Nations Peoples and will use our reputation and influence to advocate for stronger recognition and respect for culture, community, and equal opportunity.
- 🌀 **Our People:** We aim to nurture and support all our people so that they are fully engaged and empowered to work together towards addressing poverty and disadvantage. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and respect their cultures, lands, waters, histories; and their right to live in a society free of economic, social, and cultural oppression. All Society employees, members, and volunteers will acknowledge and be expected to support this vision in all aspects of their work.

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our vision for reconciliation is for a just and equitable society. A society characterised by strong and meaningful relationships between Australia's First Nations Peoples and non-indigenous Australians.

A society in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, histories, knowledge, and connections to Country are valued and celebrated.

In meeting these ideals, the Society has built a **Cultural Competency Framework** which, by design, will inform, guide and support our people here at the Society on how to effectively engage with First Nations Peoples and communities.

Walking alongside our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters, we renew the pledge we made in our first Reconciliation Action Plan, that we will deliver reconciliation actions aimed at closing social and economic gaps to make a substantial difference in the lives of the people we engage, employ, or assist.

We recognise that only by working in partnership with First Nations Peoples and communities can we begin to successfully address the causes and consequences of poverty and exclusion.

We will therefore make every effort to ensure our workplaces, services, shops, and community assistance through conferences are culturally safe places to work or engage with our services.



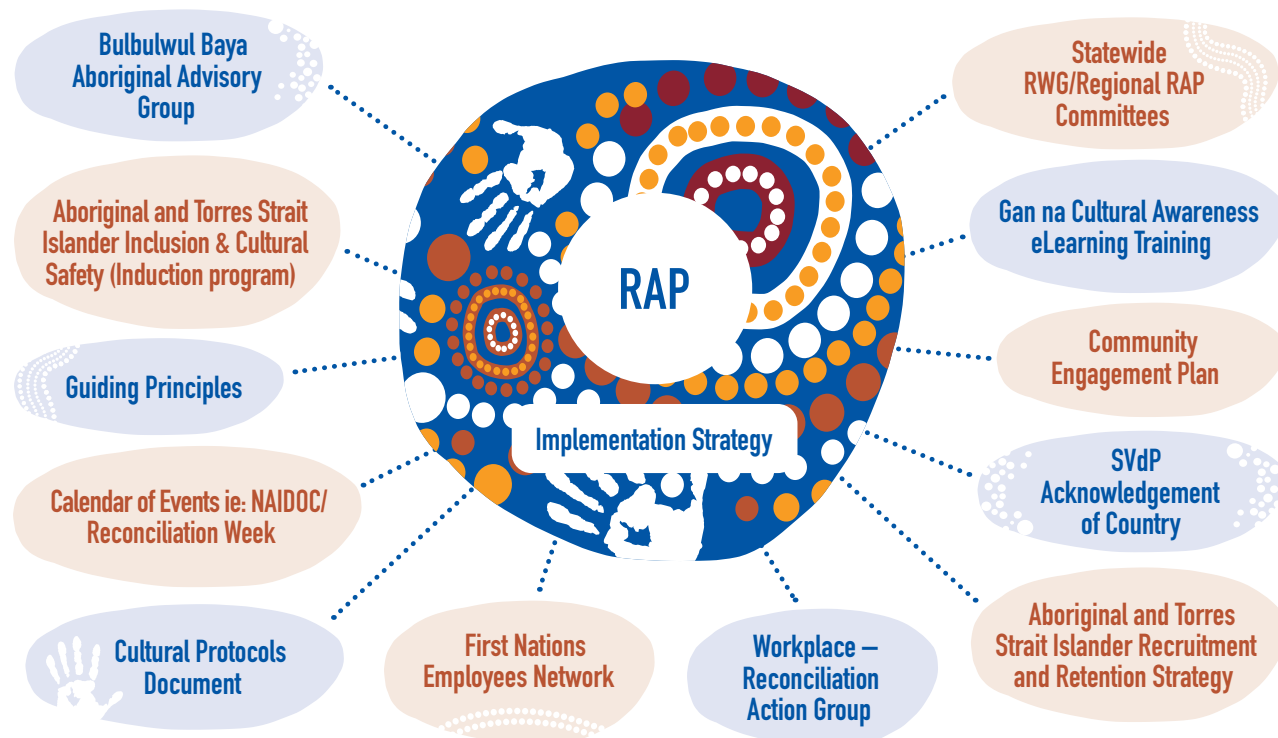
CULTURAL COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

A Cultural Competency Framework (CCF) represents a conceptual framework designed to inform the strategic initiatives that have been developed to embed cultural safety within the organisation.

The St Vincent de Paul Society's Cultural Competency Framework (CCF) offers a suite of strategies and guide documents to improve

knowledge, understanding and acceptance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's identities and connections to culture. This framework enables the Society to assess and make improvements to every aspect of our organisation from management and governance structures to service delivery and employee development. It will help ensure that all clients receive high quality and culturally appropriate services and care.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY NSW CULTURAL COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Our Community Engagement Plan provides guidance and support on appropriate community protocols and cultural considerations when working closely with First Nations Peoples. This will ensure that employee work practices and ongoing communications are both respectful and empowering to communities.

The development of the Society's Community Engagement Plan has taken place in consultation with our First Nations Employees Network, drawing from their experiences and understanding of how to effectively engage with community.

This Community Engagement Plan will deliver on six key fronts:

- 🌀 Historical Awareness
- 🌀 Know Your Community!
- 🌀 Respecting Cultural Protocols
- 🌀 Building Relationships and Partnerships
- 🌀 Service Delivery
- 🌀 Social Justice

The plan will be reviewed annually by our Reconciliation Working Group and First Nations Employees Network.



St Vincent de Paul Society
NSW
good works

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

HISTORICAL AWARENESS

- ☉ Respect that transgenerational trauma is a real issue within First Nations communities.
- ☉ Understand that the church has had varying influences on First Nations Peoples, both negative and positive.
- ☉ Be aware that perceptions of the church are still linked to the Missions and their 'role' in the Stolen Generations.
- ☉ If people seem hesitant then 'Be Patient'! They will let you know when they are ready to engage.



- ☉ You can break down people's perceptions through conversations and maintaining strong and meaningful relationships with community representatives and elders.
- ☉ Ensure you have completed the Society's Mandatory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion and Safety program.
- ☉ Learn more by undertaking the Society's Ganna Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness program.
- ☉ If you are unsure or have questions, contact First Nations employees or members within the community first for clarification or direction.

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

- ☉ What Aboriginal organisations are in your area?
- ☉ Are there any identified Aboriginal liaison officers within government departments or community organisations that you can connect with?
- ☉ Identify any local advisory groups and seek an invitation to attend... listen and learn i.e., interagency groups.
- ☉ Join in or establish your own local Reconciliation Committee and invite First Nations member/s to provide advice on current issues and ways of working cooperatively together.

- ☉ Understand the diversity within the community. People may come from different language groups and will have varying knowledge and understanding of their culture. Just because you identify as Aboriginal doesn't mean you are an expert on all aspects of Aboriginal history or culture. Remember that removal of children and denial of Aboriginal culture was part of Australia's earlier policies.
- ☉ Be aware of community differences and 'don't get dragged' into community 'politics'.
- ☉ Treat each person individually and don't apply stereotypes. Using 'they' or 'them' can come across as very offensive!

RESPECTING CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

- ☉ There are many terms used by Government to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or First Nations Peoples. Most communities in NSW prefer the term Aboriginal rather than Indigenous. Seek clarification from your local community on correct terminology to use. Refer to our Cultural Protocols document for information and guidance.
- ☉ When visiting community, be mindful of current events such as 'Sorry' business.
- ☉ Establish a strong rapport through continued contact to identify local community cultural protocols.
- ☉ Become familiar with culturally significant events and dates such as 'Sorry Day'.

- ☉ Participate in community events and seek permission to promote your services at events such as NAIDOC and Reconciliation weeks. Refer to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Significant Dates.
- ☉ When hosting functions or gatherings, be sure to invite an Elder or community representative to perform an 'Acknowledgment' or 'Welcome' to Country and be sure to also extend an invitation to key representatives within the local community.
- ☉ Be considerate by offering a gift or payment to community members who perform an 'Acknowledgment' or 'Welcome' as this is a service which is being provided.





BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- 🕒 Seek out and start a conversation with your local First Nations community members by introducing yourself and saying 'hello'.
- 🕒 Make yourself available to attend community events held within First Nations communities. Refer to the Society's Community Engagement Plan.
- 🕒 Introduce yourself first and not your programs. Establish a rapport before you start promoting your services.
- 🕒 Listen to the needs of the community, let the people inform you!

- 🕒 Build your confidence and understanding by asking questions... 'you won't know if you don't ask'.
- 🕒 Relationships are 2 way – look closely at how you both can support each other; it can't be all one way.
- 🕒 Don't assume to know what's best! Let the people advise and guide you on what their needs are.
- 🕒 Build trust by maintaining contact.
- 🕒 Consider engaging local First Nations businesses and contractors.



SERVICE DELIVERY

- 🕒 Consult community to identify any barriers that may exist for First Nations Peoples engaging with your services and address where possible.
- 🕒 Be clear on what you can and cannot do. Saying 'Yes' can be more damaging than saying 'No'. It's best to identify what you're able to provide before committing.
- 🕒 Follow through with your actions, and in a timely manner.



- 🕒 Build capacity within your area by employing more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Refer to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Recruitment and Retention Strategy to support.
- 🕒 Identify and promote vacancies through community contacts encouraging First Nations People to apply.
- 🕒 Don't let funding cycles dictate timeframes. Communities will not be governed by funding... community needs are what's important.
- 🕒 Don't take funding opportunities away from Aboriginal based services. Best practice is to partner with the First Nations organisations or community Elders and/or representatives.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

- 🕒 Be aware of the Social Justice issues reported in the media such as Black Lives Matter and the Uluru Statement from the Heart and their impacts within the local community.
- 🕒 Don't assume that all First Nations Peoples have a 'knowledge' of these issues and understand the full story.
- 🕒 Only discuss these issues if raised by the community.

- 🕒 Learn how the Society is responding or if they have responded to these matters through the Social Justice Advocacy team or local engagement.
- 🕒 Partner with concerned organisations to lobby on behalf of the community.
- 🕒 Overall, be sensitive to all issues that are directly related to First Nations Peoples and communities.

