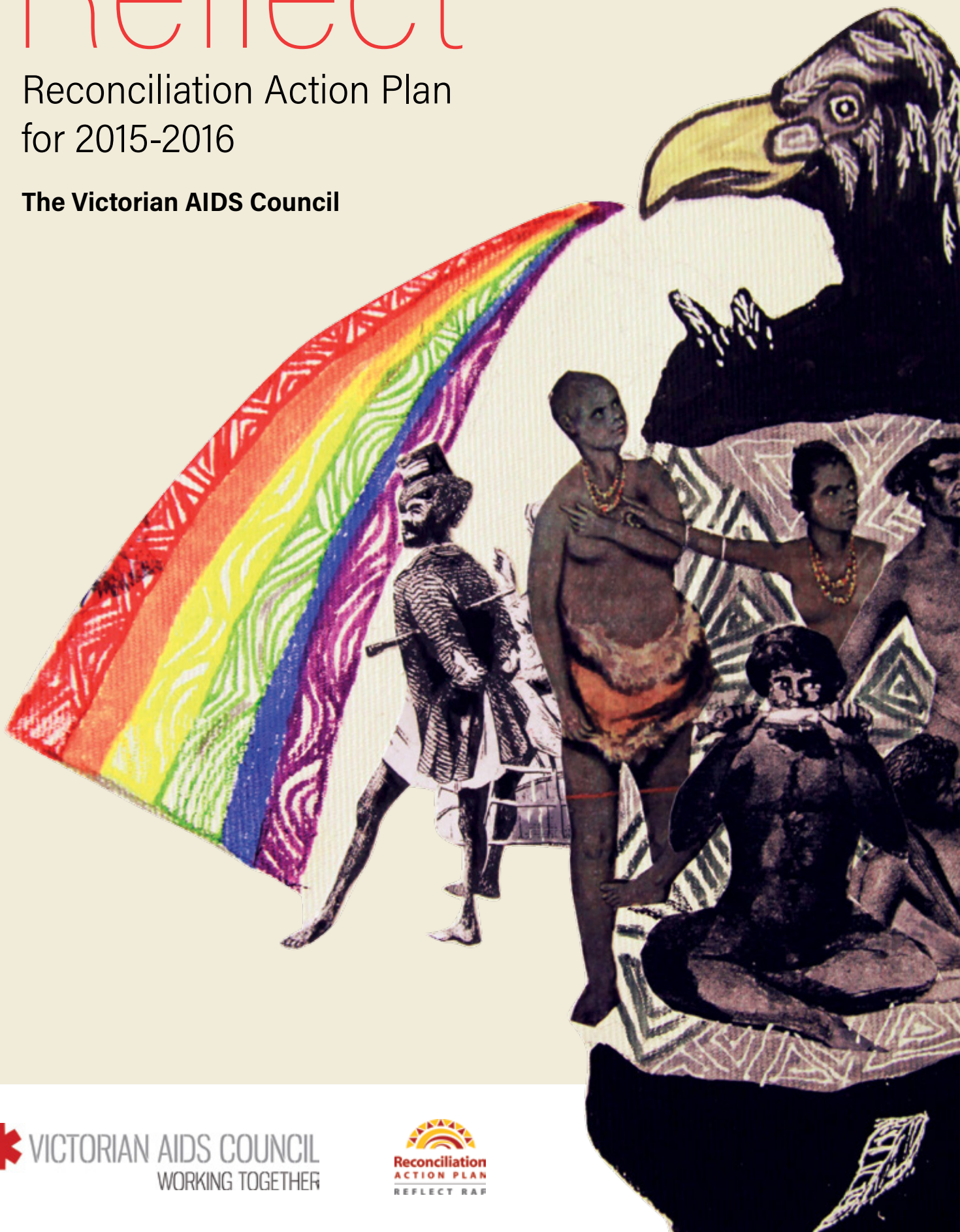


# Reflect

Reconciliation Action Plan  
for 2015-2016

The Victorian AIDS Council



## Message from the CEO

I am delighted to present VAC's Reconciliation Action Plan. VAC's vision for reconciliation is one where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can connect with our services in a culturally secure and respectful manner. One where VAC strengthens our solid foundation of partnership, fraternity and opportunity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. One where VAC stands side by side with Aboriginal community controlled organisations, understanding the important role we both play in developing and delivering services by our communities for our communities.

This is VAC's first Reconciliation Action Plan. We look forward to achieving its outcomes and expanding our role in supporting reconciliation across Australia. VAC is an organisation that was founded by members of the gay and lesbian rights movement through their strength, activism and determination to help those most affected by the HIV epidemic. From the beginnings of the epidemic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been part of our community and as such have participated at all levels of VAC and its sister organisations. They have helped establish our services and as part of our community have fought for our advancements.

With current developments in HIV treatment and prevention, we can now see a future when HIV transmissions are close to zero. VAC respects the traditions and cultures of our nation's first peoples and understands we have a great deal to learn as we work together to achieve our vision of an Australia without HIV and a world where all sexually and gender diverse people live with dignity, with equal rights, and participate fully in our society.

## About the Reflect RAP

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is about organisations from every sector turning good intentions into real actions and rising to the challenge of reconciling Australia. A RAP is a business plan that uses a holistic approach to create meaningful relationships, enhanced respect and promote sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

The RAP program includes four types of RAPs, each offering a different level of engagement and support. In developing a Reflect RAP, our organisation commits to completing the following actions over the next 12 months to ensure we are well positioned to implement effective and mutually beneficial initiatives as part of future Reconciliation Action Plans. Our future RAPs will identify relationships, respect and opportunities actions specific to our business and our sphere of influence.

This Reflect RAP will allow our organisation to focus on building relationships both internally and externally, and raise awareness with our stakeholders to ensure there is shared understanding and ownership of our RAP within our organisation. Development of our future RAPs will involve consultation with staff across our organisation including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or stakeholders to achieve our vision for reconciliation.



### Cover Artwork

*Bunjil's Rainbow by Peter Waples-Crowe (Ngarigu)*

*Bunjil is a creator being of the Koori people who appears in the form of an Eagle. In this work Bunjil is embracing his Rainbow children (who are reworked white colonial portraits of Aboriginal people given a new life in Contemporary Art). Bunjil, like the Victorian AIDS Council, is showing care in the face of health and wellbeing threats. The branches of new growth celebrate ways forwards and new beginnings.*

*Peter Waples-Crowe*

# Our business

## Principles

VAC has a long, rich and diverse history, working with and for communities and people living with or affected by HIV. Our main offices are based in Melbourne and we support community members across Victoria we also have a small office based in Adelaide, South Australia. This is reflected in the principles that govern and underpin the way we work. VAC employ around 72 staff member one of which is Aboriginal identified who works on an Aboriginal peer education and support program.

### Meaningful participation of our communities

We want all people who are a part of the communities we work in to feel that they are part of what we do. We encourage and cultivate the meaningful participation of these communities.

### Social justice

We are an organisation founded in the communities we work for, on the principles of social justice. We support people to thrive, express themselves, and to develop skills and capacity.

### Honesty and fairness

We treat our clients, members, volunteers, staff and the organisations with whom we work with honesty, fairness and respect.

Working to the highest standards. Our work is evidence-based, drawing on current knowledge, with a thorough understanding of the epidemiological and social context of HIV in Australia, and the needs of our communities.

### Working collaboratively

We deliver accessible and responsive programs in collaboration with others in our communities.

**Our purpose:** To reduce HIV transmissions in Victoria by promoting the health of gay men and of people living with HIV.

To work in partnership to improve health outcomes for the sexually and gender diverse community.

**Our vision:** A future without HIV. A world where all sexually and gender diverse people live with dignity, with equal rights, and participate fully in our society.

**Our mission:** VAC leads the fight against HIV/AIDS in Victoria by providing care and support for people living with HIV, health promotion, and advocacy.

We advocate, with partner organisations, to improve health outcomes for sexually and gender diverse communities.

## At VAC we:

Deliver HIV prevention, education and health promotion to gay men.

Provide services, support and advocacy for all people living with HIV.

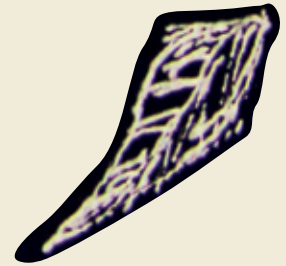
Respond to emerging needs and developments in HIV prevention and care.

Support and promote the health and wellbeing of sexually and gender diverse communities.

Promote access to our services for these communities.

## Our Goals

- Decrease rates and impact of HIV.
- Be recognised as a visible and trusted leader for our communities.
- Lead through innovative and high-quality programs and services.
- Be a strong, unified organisation.
- Be a well-governed, financially secure, and sustainably-resourced organisation.



## Our Strategic objectives

- Work to decrease rates and impact of HIV. By embracing innovative evidence-based HIV prevention approaches and technologies to respond effectively to changes in the epidemic and; by strengthening our policy capacity to capitalise on developments in prevention and care.
- Provide trusted leadership
- By working inclusively with sexually and gender diverse communities, particularly on the improvement of health outcomes, providing capacity development, and using our policy capacity to argue for reforms to laws and policies which undermine good health.
- Lead through excellent and innovative programs and services
- By addressing a broad range of health issues that affect wellbeing in sexually and gender diverse communities and making the most of our expertise in services and programs delivered by volunteers and staff.
- Be a unified and strengthened organisation
- VAC will strive to solve the problems associated with having two separate organisations through a process of consultation over the life of this plan.
- Ensure financial sustainability
- By sharing our expertise and resources to support the capacities of other community organisations and; by keeping abreast of proposed changes in health reform and collaborating with partners to take advantage of new funding opportunities.

### Ensure professional expertise

By maximising the skills and abilities of a committed and competent workforce and of our volunteers, to deliver services and programs based on need, research and sound evidence.

## Our RAP

### Vision for reconciliation

To recognise the Traditional Owners of this land, to learn from and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in prevention of harm and contribute to a holistic approach to healing, health and wellbeing.

The reflect RAP will allow VAC to focus on building relationships both internally and externally, and raise awareness with our stakeholders to ensure there is a shared understanding and ownership of our RAP within the organisation.

Through the Reconciliation Action Plan program, the VAC RAP committee will develop a business plan that will document how VAC plan to contribute to reconciliation in Australia. The RAP will outline practical actions that VAC will take to build strong relationships and enhanced respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. The RAP will also sets out VAC's plan to drive greater equality by pursuing sustainable opportunities.

The working group is made up of :

Harry Mc Anulty - Team Leader of Health Promotion

John Hall - Partnerships Program Leader

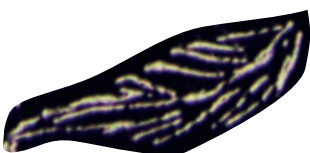
Lizzie Craig - Positive Living Centre support worker

Heather Morgan - Team Leader positive living centre

John Manwaring - Senior Policy Analyst

Kai Clancy - Aboriginal peer education and support worker

The RAP working group and organisational management team champion the RAP within our organisation.



## Our partnerships and activities

### VACCHO Partnership

We have partnered with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) to run a collaborative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HIV Peer Support and Education Project. The objective for this project is to work in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and key community partners to create a culturally appropriate and inclusive project that reduces harm, promotes healthy lifestyles and reduces the rates of HIV transmission among Aboriginal Peoples.

This project aims to provide practical cultural support and education for groups within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that are at risk of HIV transmission. The Project aims to improve the prevent the transmission of HIV within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men who have sex with men through a holistic peer-based approach to:

- HIV prevention education, prevention, health promotion and community development activities targeting Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men who have sex with Men
- Peer support and advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living with HIV

This project is governed by a steering committee make up of VAC health promotion and HIV support staff, VACCHO sexy health staff, Queensland AIDS Council TwoSpirits Program, Outback representatives LGBT social group for Aboriginal peoples and their families and Anwernekenhe representatives who are the National HIV Alliance.

### HIV prevention and Harm Reduction

#### a collaborative approach

The VAC also a member of a multi agency collaborative approach to working with aboriginal people who inject drugs and may be at increased risk of HIV transmission. This approach arose in response to the recent increase in HIV notifications among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who inject drugs (PWID) in Melbourne Suburb. A multi-disciplinary team of stakeholders have come together to collectively develop and implement a comprehensive set of actions to address blood borne virus (BBV) risk among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community of PWID in the area.

### Cultural Safety Training

A training agreement between VACCHO and VAC has seen VAC staff trained in Cultural safety. Cultural safety is about providing quality health care that fits within the familiar cultural values and norms of the person accessing the service that may differ from your own and/or the dominant culture. In return VAC have delivered LGBTIQ Sensitivity & Cultural Competency Training: Providing participants with guidance on use of appropriate language, identifying the unique vulnerabilities of our community and developing staff capacity when engaging in conversations with LGBTIQ individuals.

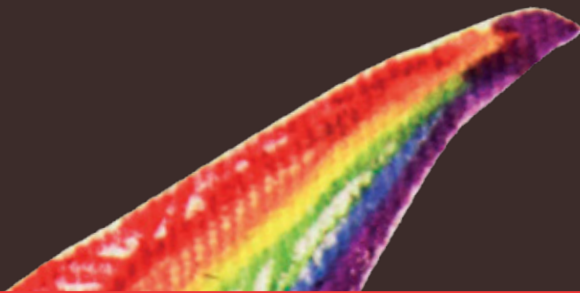


Over the next 12 months, our organisation commits to:



	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
Relationships	<b>Establish a RAP Working Group</b>	<i>Health Promotion Team Leader</i>	April 2015
	<b>Develop external relationships</b>	<i>Health Promotion Team Leader and Working Group</i>	July 2015
	<b>Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)</b>	<i>Working Group and Organisational management team</i>	27 May – 3 June 2016
	<b>Raise internal awareness of the RAP</b>	<i>Communication Coordinator and Organisational Management Team</i>	Oct 2015
<i>Services Director and Partnerships Coordinator</i>		Sept 2015	
<i>Senior Management Team and Organisational Management Team</i>		March 2016 June 2016	
Respect	<b>Investigate cultural development</b>	<i>People and Culture Director</i>	May 2016
		<i>Services Director</i>	July 2015
	<b>Celebrate NAIDOC Week</b>	<i>Working Group Members</i>	July 2015 July 2016
	<b>Raise internal understanding of protocols</b>	<i>Health Promotion Team Leader</i>	July-Oct 2015
Opportunities	<b>Consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment</b>	<i>Director of People and Culture</i>	June 2016 July 2015
		<i>Finance Manager</i>	Jan 2016
	<b>Other opportunities</b>	<i>RAP Working Group</i>	March 2016
Tracking progress	<b>Build support for the RAP</b>	<i>Senior Management Team</i>	Sept annually





## Deliverables

1. A VAC RAP Working Group is formed and operational to support the development of our RAP, comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.
2. A list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and stakeholders within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to assist us in our understanding of the potential activities in our future RAPs is developed.
3. Our Working Group attended a community event or organised an internal event to recognise and celebrate NRW (27th May – 3rd June annually).
4. In 2016 we will organise an internal awareness day for staff and volunteers celebrating NRW.
5. A plan is developed and executed to raise awareness across the organisation about the RAP commitment, for staff and volunteers- this will include an online staff communiqué update on the RAP.
6. A consultation with the organisational management team about the RAP
7. A presentation at our March 2016 organisational forum will highlight our RAP commitments ensuring all areas of our organisation have an understanding of how their area can contribute to our RAP.
8. RAP Committee to discuss the development of the 2016 VAC RAP
9. A business case for cultural awareness, capability and development based on our core business is developed, with findings presented to relevant HR/Learning and Development area for their input. – This will include annual cultural safety training for new staff and volunteers (through the VACCHO agreement)
10. We have captured baseline data on our employee's current level of understanding around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions through a survey monkey.
11. Our Working Group chair participated in a community NAIDOC Week event, held at Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS). VAC will acknowledge the importance of NAIDOC through our social media platforms. We will also have VAHS and OutBlack members feature on our weekly *well well well* radio program on Joy FM for a special NAIDOC feature week
12. The plan that is developed to raise awareness which includes opportunities to raise understanding of the meaning and significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to our employees.
13. Development of VAC policy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country
14. Explore opportunities for organisational email signature acknowledgement
15. Explore opportunities for plaques of acknowledgment at each VAC site
16. A business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation is scoped.
17. We have captured baseline data on current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to inform future developments.
18. A business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity and how our organisation can develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity program is scoped.
19. VAC will compile a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that we may use for future procurement
20. A paper is presented to the RAP Working Group outlining other opportunities, such as around education, that have been identified throughout our consultation with internal and external stakeholders. This paper will assist in defining actions for subsequent RAPs for our organisation.
21. We have defined available resourcing for our RAP.
22. Our data collection is able to measure our progress and successes.
23. We have submitted our annual report on our achievements to Reconciliation Australia.



