

2016–17

ReachOut Australia 'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan



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Our business

ReachOut is Australia's leading online mental health organisation for young people, providing practical support to help them get through everything from everyday issues to tough times. Since 1998, ReachOut has worked alongside young people to deliver online tools that address youth mental health and reduce youth suicide. Available anytime and pretty much anywhere, [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com) is accessed by 110,000 Australians each month. That's more than 1.31 million people each year. Currently 3–5 per cent of our service users identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, which is measured in our annual user survey.

In addition to fact sheets, practical tips, personal stories and peer-support forums hosted on [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com), we have developed tools and programs to extend our reach to young people. These include:

- ▶ **NextStep:** a tool hosted on [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com) that makes it easier to navigate the range of available mental health services by recommending customised support options – online and offline – based on a person's symptoms and how significantly the symptoms are affecting them.
- ▶ **Toolbox:** a service integrated into ReachOut that provides recommendations for apps that have been endorsed by professionals and young people to improve young people's wellbeing. The Toolbox includes three apps that have been developed by ReachOut: Recharge, WorryTime and Breathe.
- ▶ **ReachOut Professionals** service: offers online support to professionals and schools providing recommendations and advice for youth support workers, health workers and education professionals on a range of online interventions, tools and resources that can be used to support young people experiencing mental health difficulties and to build young people's wellbeing and resilience.

We have just launched [ReachOut Orb](https://reachout.com): an innovative and engaging game designed for use in Year 9 and 10 classrooms that has been mapped to the Australian HPE curriculum and General Capabilities, as well as to the NSW PDHPE Curriculums. ReachOut Orb aims to improve students' understanding of key factors and skills that contribute to improved mental fitness and wellbeing.

In the first half of 2016 we will launch a service extension that will help parents to support their young people aged 12–18 with everyday issues through to tough times.

Some of the groups of young people that we specifically target due to the high mental health issues and suicide rates they experience are young people living in rural and regional areas, young people who identify as LGBTIQI, and young men.

ReachOut Australia employs 38 people across marketing, organisation support, research, fundraising and service delivery. We regularly partner with other organisations to make sure every young person who visits [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com) finds the help they are looking for.

Our Youth Involvement Program includes a network of young volunteers across the country including 135 Youth Ambassadors and 19 peer-support moderators. Young people have been at the centre of everything [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com) does since the first group of young people volunteered with us back in 1998. We call our ongoing volunteers Youth Ambassadors (YA), and it is their work advocating for [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com), consulting on projects, facilitating online discussions and spreading the [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com) word in their community that keeps [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com) so relevant and accessible to young Australians.

The YA program is incredibly flexible, allowing for volunteers to pick up opportunities when they have time, and to step back when they are busy. The range of avenues to get involved also means that young people can gain skills and experience in many different areas, including marketing, online content creating, peer support, research and policy development, government relations and general day to day running of a large not-for-profit organisation.

We don't know if we have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, however as part of this plan, we will seek to understand how many of our staff and volunteers identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons.

The ReachOut Australia office is located on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation.

Our RAP

We recognise the importance of addressing the impacts of colonisation. The national apology was a significant step in the reconciliation process that should be recognised, celebrated and built upon. We need to take action through developing a structured plan that provides a genuine commitment to making our organisation a culturally aware and inclusive workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As an organisation, ReachOut Australia holds values – including responsibility and inclusiveness – that are at the core of everything we do. As such, we are undertaking this RAP to ensure that we are able to foster greater relationships with, demonstrate respect and provide opportunities for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are an integral part of our country. We anticipate that, through developing and implementing this RAP, we will be able to better understand the mental health and wellbeing needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and from this, implement steps to enable us to expand our service to ensure that all young Australians – including young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians – are able to find the support they need to be happy and well. Being a youth mental health service, ReachOut is committed to reducing the substantial mental health inequalities that exist between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and other Australians. Suicide rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males are more than twice the rate for other Australian males, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females are almost twice the rate for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian females. Suicide is particularly high in adolescence to the early adult years. 31 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults (aged 15 years and over) had high/very high levels of psychological distress which is more than twice the rate for non-Indigenous Australians.

The RAP is being led and developed by a RAP working group, which includes representatives from all areas of our operations, including our Deputy CEO, Marketing Manager, ReachOut Program Manager, Product Manager, Research Manager, Online Community Coordinator, Community Manager, Fundraising Coordinator and EA to CEO/Office Manager. We currently have a youth ambassador who identifies as an Aboriginal person and he will be participating in our RAP working group as a full member.

As ReachOut Australia begins its reconciliation journey, in our first RAP we will seek to:

1. Increase cultural competency of ReachOut staff by increasing our knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and contemporary issues.
2. Develop a more nuanced understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' conceptualisation of social and emotional well-being.
3. Use our increased knowledge and understanding in our organisation and services so they are more culturally appropriate and therefore potentially engaging and helpful to more young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our partnerships/current activities

ReachOut has already carried out the following activities:

- ▶ co-facilitated workshops with an Aboriginal facilitator to make our new parents service culturally appropriate
 - ▶ In order to make sure that our new [parents' website](#) will be inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, we involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents throughout the research process. This included focus groups, co-design workshops, community forum focus groups and communications testing. Once the parents' site is launched, we will do some more testing to gauge whether or not we have achieved this aim.
- ▶ presented to staff on the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols
- ▶ invited Yvonne Weldon to provide a Welcome to Country when we moved to our new office in Pyrmont
- ▶ invited teams to contribute to the development our initial RAP
- ▶ undertook a baseline cultural competency survey
 - ▶ Findings from the baseline cultural competency survey fed into the cultural awareness training that all staff participated in at our staff conference day in April. This was a full day and feedback from staff was incredibly positive with staff saying how much they had learned. The current activities have created much enthusiasm among staff who are very engaged towards making ReachOut a more culturally aware and inclusive workplace.
- ▶ implemented Acknowledgment of Country at all major meetings.

Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish a RAP Working Group	▶ Form our RAP working group, including representatives from across the teams, including decision makers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	May 2016	Deputy CEO
	▶ Hold regular monthly meetings of the RAP working group.	Monthly from May 2016	Research Manager
	▶ The RAP working group to be refreshed and all ReachOut staff will be encouraged to participate in the working group for a time.	May 2017	Deputy CEO
Build internal and external relationships	▶ Create a shared document for ReachOut staff to list all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey.	Jul 2016	Community Manager
	▶ Connect with RAP organisations, such as Telstra, to seek their guidance to enhance our reconciliation journey.	Dec 2017	Research Manager
	▶ Collaborate on joint reconciliation initiatives with other mental health and wellbeing organisations within the RAP program.	Aug 2016, 2017	Community Manager
Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	▶ Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all of our staff and Youth Ambassadors.	May 2016	ReachOut Manager
	▶ Identify opportunities to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support their NRW 2016 activities.	May 2016	Research Manager
	▶ Identify opportunities for our Youth Involvement Program to support NRW 2016.	May 2016	ReachOut Manager
	▶ Encourage staff to participate in events during NRW.	May 2016, 2017	ReachOut Manager Office Manager
	▶ Identify opportunities to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support their NRW 2017 activities.	May 2017	Research Manager
	▶ Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2016	Research Manager
Raise internal awareness of our RAP and reconciliation	▶ Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness of our RAP commitments and engage staff in reconciliation initiatives.	Jun 2016	Deputy CEO
	▶ Provide staff with a monthly update on RAP activities and progress by including a regular RAP agenda item in our staff meetings and in monthly team meetings.	Jun 2016	Research Manager
	▶ Inform ReachOut forum users, volunteers and supporters of ReachOut's RAP journey through our organisational communications.	Jan, May 2017	Marketing Manager
	▶ Investigate how we can utilise our forums to raise awareness of our RAP and advanced reconciliation.	Nov 2016, May 2017	Community Coordinator
	▶ Develop a list of significant dates to recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	May, Sep 2016	Research Manager

Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development	▶ Review the results from the baseline cultural competency survey to identify the cultural awareness training needs within our organisation.	Aug 2016	Research Manager
	▶ Organise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training for our staff.	Aug 2016	HR Manager
Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week	▶ Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week including information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.	Jul 2016	Office Manager
	▶ Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local area.	Jul 2016	Office Manager
	▶ RAP Working Group to participate in a local NAIDOC Week event.	Jun 2016	RAP working group
	▶ Investigate opportunities to partner with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support their NAIDOC Week activities.	Jun 2016	Research Manager
	▶ Identify opportunities for our Youth Involvement Program to support NAIDOC Week.	Jun 2016	Youth Involvement Coordinator
Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	▶ Explore who the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters of the areas we work in across Australia.	Aug 2016	Community Manager
	▶ Arrange a 'Lunch and Learn' session to inform staff of the Traditional Owners of the land and water surrounding our local area and within our organisation's sphere of influence.	Aug 2016	Community Manager
	▶ Include an Acknowledgement of Country at all major meetings, including board meetings, staff meetings and external events.	Jun 2016	Deputy CEO
	▶ Incorporate inclusive language guidelines into the organisational style guide, to ensure appropriate language is used with referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and customs.	Jun 2016	Marketing Manager

Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities at ReachOut.	▶ Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	Jun 2016	HR Manager Office Manager
	▶ Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to identify barriers that may exist for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in working and volunteering with us.	Aug 2016	HR Manager Office Manager
	▶ Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways such as traineeships or internships.	Aug 2016	HR Manager Office Manager Youth Involvement Coordinator
Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity	▶ Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	Aug 2016	Office Manager
	▶ Investigate opportunities to become a member of Supply Nation.	Aug 2016	Office Manager
	▶ Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	Aug 2016	Office Manager
Explore opportunities to improve programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	▶ Increase our research to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service needs, with a focus on listening to young voices from the community and learning from our previous work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Aug 2016	Research Manager
	▶ Evaluate recruitment process for Youth Ambassadors and identify opportunities to recruit new Ambassadors from within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and services.	Aug 2016	Youth Involvement Coordinator
	▶ Evaluate past programs tailored to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to assess what worked well, what the gaps were and what we can do better next time.	Sep 2016	Youth Involvement Coordinator Community Coordinator
	▶ Based on learnings from previous programs and outcomes of research, Products and Service will commit using the information and organisational target priorities to inform the design, build, implementation and monitoring of our products and services.	May 2017	Community Manager Product Manager
	▶ Investigate having ReachOut content reviewed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth ambassador.	Aug 2016	ReachOut Content Coordinator Youth Involvement Coordinator
	▶ Incorporate images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to our stock image library, to reflect the diversity of our audience.	Aug 2016	Marketing Coordinator Content Coordinator

Tracking and progress

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Build support for the RAP	▶ Review our activities and learnings from the RAP during our annual planning process and strategic review.	Aug 2016	RAP working group
	▶ Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation.	Jul 2016	Deputy CEO
	▶ Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.	Jul 2016	Research Manager
	▶ Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia.	Sep 2017	Research Manager
Review and Refresh RAP	▶ Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	Jan 2017	Deputy CEO
	▶ Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal review and endorsement.	Jan 2017	Deputy CEO