



St John of God Health Care

# **RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN** **2013 – 2015**

Version 23-11-2012



## **OUR VISION**

St John of God Health Care (SJGHC) is an organisation that aims to bring comfort to people through healing services that are caring, compassionate and affirming. Our ultimate goal is to give people a reason for hope and a greater sense of self confidence and dignity.

SJGHC recognises the impact that colonisation and unjust policies by past governments have had on the lives of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in Australia

Consistent with the challenge issued in the February 2008 Apology to Indigenous People by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, SJGHC seeks to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in contributing to *Close the Gap* in three key areas:

- within a decade to halve the gap in employment outcomes and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- within a decade to halve the gap in infant mortality rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- within a generation, to close the 17 year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians

## **OUR MINISTRY**

A ministry of the Catholic Church, SJGHC is a leading provider of health care services and employs 10,000 people in hospitals, home nursing, pathology and Social Outreach and Advocacy services throughout Australia, New Zealand and the wider Asia-Pacific region.

The Sisters of St John of God, the founders of SJGHC, have a long history of serving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in the remote Kimberley and Goldfields regions of Western Australia. In 1907 they founded health care services for the Aboriginal community in Beagle Bay in the Kimberley region, subsequently expanded to other Kimberley communities, and have served in the region ever since.

SJGHC is a not for profit organisation and commits significant resources to its Social Outreach and Advocacy Services. Since 2002 this has included the Strong Family Strong Culture service. Consistent with SJGHC's focus on early intervention, Strong Family Strong Culture is a service that promotes improvements in the health of Aboriginal women and their babies. Operating across northern regional Western Australia SJGHC employs Aboriginal support workers who live in the community in which they serve.

In 2011 SJGHC signed an Australian Employment Covenant, undertaking to commit to provide jobs to Indigenous job seekers.

## OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Prompted and supported by its leadership, SJGHC commenced the process for developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in June 2011. From a cross section of ministries in Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales a twelve person work party was formed, comprising SJGHC staff, including three of Aboriginal descent.

The RAP was developed in monthly meetings over a twelve month period, with each work party member seeking advice and feedback from an Aboriginal reference person.

**While this is a plan for the whole SJGHC organisation, some actions may not be relevant to some Divisions. Group Services is to be considered a Division.**

## OUR MISSION

To continue the healing mission of Jesus Christ through the provision of services that promote life to the full by enhancing the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual dimensions of being human. The Mission will be implemented by:

- Establishing models of health care and other services which reflect the healing ministry of Jesus Christ and give hope to all people with whom we relate;
- Developing a person centred culture;
- Relating to each other and to planet Earth in ways that are mutually transforming;
- Being good stewards of our resources, both human and physical;
- Promoting social justice and the common good; and
- Giving witness of a believing, serving ministry of the Catholic Church.

## OUR VALUES

The core Values that guide us are:

Hospitality, Compassion, Respect, Justice and Excellence

SJGHC has both the capacity and desire to work collaboratively and respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in improving their health and wellbeing. In keeping with our core values, especially Respect, Compassion and Justice, we desire to partner Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the provision of support and services. True reconciliation includes breaking the poverty cycle and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take their rightful place as equal members in Australian society.

## 1. RELATIONSHIPS

Strong relationships lead to better understanding and communication, and the reverse is also true. Building relationships with Aboriginal Australians will enable SJGHC to discern the most appropriate ways we can partner Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to effectively *close the gap* in life expectancy, specifically in the area of health care services.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measureable Target
1.1 Seek to build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that are respectful and mutually beneficial. Invite traditional owners, elders and leaders into our community and encourage caregivers to attend reconciliation events.	Divisional CEO or delegate Group Director or delegate	August 2013	Awareness as to who the local Aboriginal group is and key elders. Number of functions attended and meetings held with key community leaders.
1.2 Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (commencing May 27) by providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander caregivers and other caregivers to build relationships.	Divisional RAP Contact Person	June 2013	Events held during National Reconciliation Week. Attendance at other events in the community.
1.3 Identify what partnerships and activities already exist, including local parish and Diocesan ones.	Divisional Director of Mission	June 2013	Local Catholic Diocese consulted to form a picture of existing relationships. Subscribe to relevant mail lists.
1.4 Identify at least two key Aboriginal service providers and organisations and foster relationships with them.	Divisional RAP Contact Person	June 2013  Dec 2013	Contact made with key people.  Joint meetings held with key decision makers.
1.5 Foster relationships with local schools and/or Tertiary Institutions with a view to helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students become aware of careers in the health sector.	Divisional CEO or delegate (eg LOD manager/coordinator)  Group Director or delegate	June 2014	A plan of engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is in place. Engage with local school career coordinators. Attend career expos at local schools

1.6 Establish a National Reference Group to support the implementation of the RAP	Group Director of Mission	March 2013	National RAP Reference Group established and meets at least twice per year.
1.7 Appoint a Project officer to support Divisions in their implementation of the RAP and achievement of its targets.	Group Director of Mission	June 2013	Project officer appointed.
1.8 Continue to build relationships with relevant Government agencies ( eg WA Country Health Service)	Divisional CEO or delegate Group Director or delegate	June 2013	Discussions held with relevant agencies
1.9 Continue to build linkages with non Govt service providers (eg Aboriginal Medical Service)	Group Director SOA, Divisional CEO	June 2014	MOUs and/or joint projects developed where possible

## 2. RESPECT

Respect is one of our five core values, and calls us to treasure the unique dignity of every person. Success in contributing to Close the Gap strategies in health requires us to understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture. We seek to invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in our health care facilities and other services.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measureable Target
2.1 Provide three levels of cross cultural awareness education oriented towards -all caregivers -co workers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander caregivers -managers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander caregivers	Group Director Workforce, Group Director Mission.  Divisional CEO or delegate Group Director or delegate	Dec 2013  June 2015.	Appropriate on-line programs developed.  80% of caregivers undertake basic level cross cultural awareness education.  100% of managers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander caregivers undertake basic level cross cultural awareness education (pre-commencement)
2.2 Acknowledge the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture	Divisional CEO or delegate Group Director or delegate	June 2014	Opportunities provided to Caregivers to participate in local NAIDOC Week events.
2.3 Seek advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on how to best work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.	Divisional CEO or delegate  Group Director or delegate	June 2014	Consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Ensure relevant cultural protocols are reflected in policies and procedures.
2.4 Develop protocols re inclusion of <i>Welcome to Country</i> and <i>Acknowledgement of Traditional owners</i> .	Divisional CEO or delegate  Group Director or delegate	June 2013	Where appropriate, major functions and conferences commence with a Welcome to Country and/or an acknowledgement of traditional owners.
2.5 Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in accord with the SJGHC core value of respect.	Divisional CEO or delegate  Group Director or delegate	June 2014	Consult with the local Aboriginal community re when to fly the Aboriginal flag, and fly it on appropriate occasions.

<p>2.6 Display local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, preferably purchased directly from Aboriginal art cooperatives, along with educative information on the artists, their work and community.</p>	<p>Divisional Community Relations leader</p>	<p>June 2015</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, including information about the artist, acquired and displayed in Divisions</p>
<p>2.7 Ensure relevant policies provide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural responsibilities</p>	<p>Group Director Workforce, Group Director Mission.</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>A Group Cultural Diversity policy is in place that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural responsibilities</p>

### 3. OPPORTUNITIES

The Gospel call to Justice is recognized by SJGHC by enshrining it as one of our five core values. Justice, understood as balanced and fair relationships, underpins the Australian commitment to *closing the gap*. The employment of more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in SJGHC will bring a richness of understanding, knowledge and diversity to our SJGHC culture.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measureable Target
3.1 Partner Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Government organisations in designing health services that meet community need.	Group Director SOA Divisional CEO	June 2014	Discussions held with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations
3.2 Provide work experience and/or leadership training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Divisional CEO	Dec 2013	Work experience and/or leadership training offered.
3.3 Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander caregivers have access to adequate support in their first year of employment at SJGHC.	Divisional CEO	June 2014	Support measures developed and implemented.
3.4 Provide corporate sponsorship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events, awards and enterprises.	Divisional Community Relations leader	June 2014	Sponsor a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group that promotes a healthy lifestyle
3.5 Provide scholarships/training/internships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or school leavers considering a career in health.	Group Director Mission/ Group Director Workforce	June 2015	Per annum, the Group to provide \$100,000 from the Social Justice Future Fund to support Indigenous training in medicine, nursing and allied health
3.6 Supplier diversity. Investigate the mutually beneficial opportunities that supplier diversity will provide to SJGHC	Group Director Corporate Services	June 2013	Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council contacted and decision made as to whether to join.
3.7 Identify and fill positions in accord with SJGHC's undertakings to the AEC (Australian Employment Covenant)	Group Director Workforce	June 2015	90 positions identified and 45 filled



#### 4. TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measureable Target
4.1 RAP National Reference Group assists in the RAP implementation and monitors progress.	Chair of National Reference group	June 2014	RAP National Reference Group Terms of Reference include monitoring of progress
4.2 Share RAP success stories within SJGHC	Group Project Officer	June 2014	RAP success stories are included in the SJGHC annual report and appear on the SJGHC website
4.3 Divisions report progress of the RAP implementation	Divisional RAP Contact Person	Each June	Divisions send an annual report to the RAP Project officer for inclusion in a consolidated report.
4.4 Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the annual Impact Measurement Report	Group Project Officer	Each June	RAP progress is reported each year to Reconciliation Australia
4.5 The RAP is refreshed annually	Group Project Officer	Each June	Refreshed RAP is available on SJGHC website