

# Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

March 2025 - March 2026

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN
REFLECT

Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers | SA Inc
advocate · support · connect · inform



## Acknowledgement of Country

**Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers - SA Inc. acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians of South Australia on which our office sits.**

**We recognise the ongoing attachments, relationships, and contributions of First Nations peoples to Country.**

**We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging, and to the cultural authority of First Nations peoples from other areas of Australia.**



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# Our RAP Artwork





**This artwork piece is called 'Love' and was created by Mali Isabel, an emerging Arabana/Kokatha artist, specifically for Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers South Australia as part of their reconciliation journey.**

"The centre areas symbolise love and kindness, something carers and workers are full of. The small areas of different colours that fill the canvas represent all the emotions that come with the role of working in this field: empathy, understanding, respect, along with sadness and struggles with mental and physical health. The darker coloured areas symbolise the ups and downs and the positives and negatives. Throughout the artwork can be seen symbols representing stars, meeting places, and connectivity." **- Mali Isabel**

**Mali Isabel is an Arabana and Kokatha artist, living and practising on Kaurna land (Adelaide), Australia.** In 2020, Mali graduated from a Bachelor of Arts (Primary Education) at Flinders University, before pursuing her career as a practising artist. Mali creates contemporary dot paintings using all colours of the rainbow to spread her message of positivity and equality. By combining her passions for education and painting, Mali hopes to achieve a greater understanding of culture and equity through her rainbow artworks. Through her combination of traditional dot painting, her hallmark use of colour, and contemporary style, Mali creates bright and magical artworks that aim to spread joy and positivity, encourage meaningful conversations, and share personal stories and worldly experiences.



As a proud Arabana and Kokatha woman, Mali loves to draw inspiration from the land that surrounds her, capturing the environments and translating them into magical landscapes. Stories are deeply entwined in her paintings, many of which highlight feelings, themes, and experiences that transcend all cultures, races, and religions. The underlying goal of this is to embed the understanding that we are all human and deserve to be treated with equal respect and kindness. Mali was highly commended in the 2021 Our Mob Trevor Nickolls Art Prize and was the Adelaide Fringe Festival's poster artist for 2022 – the first Aboriginal poster artist for the Adelaide Fringe in its 62-year history.

***-Mali Isabel, Artist***

# Foreword from the CEO



As the Chief Executive Officer of Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA, I am both humbled and proud to present our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. This document is more than just a roadmap—it's a commitment to fostering genuine and meaningful relationships with First Nations communities and it takes deliberate steps toward reconciliation.

Our role as the peak body for foster and kinship carers in South Australia puts us in a unique position. We are acutely aware of the overrepresentation of First Nations children in out-of-home care, and we recognise the historical and ongoing impact this has on First Nations families. This Reflect RAP is a crucial part of our organisational journey to better understand these challenges and work together to create systems and environments that honour the cultural identities, histories, and strengths of First Nations peoples.

We have listened to the voices of family-based carers, community leaders and Aboriginal Community Controlled partners, and we are committed to deepening these partnerships. Our RAP solidifies our dedication to learning, to reflecting on our own practices, and to driving meaningful change in the way we advocate with and support First Nations carers and children.



Reconciliation is about action. It's about taking responsibility for the future we wish to create, facilitating truth telling and developing partnerships with the foundation of trust and respect. Through this RAP, we, as the peak body, are committed to creating spaces for open dialogue, strengthening cultural connections, and advocating for equality and justice for all First Nations community members. We take responsibility for our role in reconciliation with the deepest sincerity, and commit to integrating our RAP into the blueprint of our business.

I invite you to join us on this journey—to engage with us, challenge us, and help us shape a future where every child, carer, and family can thrive.

**FIONA ENDACOTT**
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

# Statement from the CEO of Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP. Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA joins a network of more than 3,000 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 Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA 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 Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA, 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 Business



**Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers – SA Inc. (CF&KC-SA) is the peak advocacy body for all formal foster and kinship carers in South Australia (herein referred to as family-based carers, or carers). We represent the voice of carers, promote their rights and entitlements, provide them with individual and systemic advocacy, and aim to improve the lives of our foster and kinship families.**

Our work began over 20 years ago as a volunteer group run by foster and kinship carers. We have been a registered not-for-profit, membership-based organisation since 2016, and now have more than 1200 members comprising foster and kinship carers and associated partners.

Operating on Kaurna land out of one office in Dulwich, Adelaide, South Australia, our core business begins with our advocates providing individual advocacy to carers navigating matters related to their foster/kinship caring role. Our advocates:

- Offer empathic and confidential advocacy and support free from conflict of interest and independent of the service providers carers are part of (i.e., support agencies, and the Department for Child Protection).
- Listen carefully to the carer's point of view to best understand their needs.
- Inform carers of their rights and entitlements according to legislation, policy, the South Australian Statement of Commitment to foster and kinship carers, and other related frameworks.
- Make sure carers are aware of their care team's responsibilities and requirements.
- Ensure the carer's voice is heard and considered properly by all parties involved.
- Speak on behalf of a carer when they are not comfortable speaking for themselves.
- Provide information and options for carers when dealing with court orders and proceedings, and decisions that could affect their contact and care arrangements.
- Help carers to empower themselves and understand their options, impact of decisions, and where they can access information.

As the peak body, we also provide systemic advocacy by addressing issues that negatively impact a significant proportion of South Australia's carer community. The peak body team:

- Participate in committees and reference groups.
- Make formal submissions and responses to parliamentary and departmental public consultation requests.
- Take part in formal sessions about updating and developing relevant policies and procedures across the child protection sector, state and federally.
- Maintain longstanding relationships with government and non-government executives and leaders, as well as commissioners, ministers, parliamentarians, and journalists.
- Publish media releases and share trends and campaigns with our membership.
- Facilitate carer-focused research via surveys, university academics and research interns, reference groups with carers, and administering the Carer Council.
- Build the reputation of family-based carers.

**Our vision is that all priority partners and governments:**

- Hear the carer voice.
- Uphold carers' rights and entitlements.
- Pursue better conditions to retain and recruit carers.
- Resource carers to help them help children in care to thrive and reach their full potential.

At the time of writing, CF&KC-SA's employed staff includes 8 part time employees: 1 CEO, 1 Senior Advocate, 1 Administration and Events Coordinator, 3 carer advocates, 1 Project Lead, and 1 Project Officer (a total FTE of 5.6 fulltime workers). We have 1 volunteer carers and 8 volunteer skills-based board members who together bring professional experience in law, business, marketing, finance, academia, event management, board governing, strategic planning, and child protection. We also administer a Minister appointed Carer Council, with its carer members including First Nations Carers proportionate to the First Nations carer community.

Currently we have no staff identifying as First Nations, but we are committed to the recruitment and retention of First Nations peoples and will work within this RAP to reinforce this commitment.

# Our Reflect RAP

**As a peak body, it is imperative that we demonstrate our commitment to advancing reconciliation with First Nations peoples in Australia by way of a RAP. A Reflect RAP is the first step toward a strategic and accountable approach that will help pave the way to meaningful engagements with First Nations peoples from all walks of life.**

We are aware of First Nations peoples' ongoing and long-term impacts of systemic abuse and disadvantage over the generations. As a peak body in the child protection sector, this phenomenon is especially significant to us. We know that First Nations children are over-represented in state and territory care arrangements and continue to experience barriers against connection to culture, kin, and community. We hope that our RAP challenges these issues by promoting reconciliation, understanding, social justice, and equality.

## Our RAP Development

Our RAP champion (the CEO of CF&KC-SA), and our RAP working group (1 project officer and 2 board members), will make every effort to ensure this RAP's actions and deliverables are sustained and executed. They will continue to engage and work closely with First Nations carers, carers providing foster/kinship care to First Nations children, representatives from Aboriginal controlled organisations, Wakwakurna Kanyini, the Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People, the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People, and First Nations suppliers and businesses.
We are grateful for each party's knowledge and cooperation as we begin this journey, and extend that gratitude to Ochre Dawn Consultancy, who have proactively guided and supported us to bring this RAP to fruition.

## Our Reconciliation Journey

CF&KC-SA's workplace has embarked on a meaningful reconciliation journey that is committed to continuous learning and collaboration. Our employees actively participate in training and workshops to enhance their cultural awareness and understanding of First Nations histories, cultures, protocols, and safety. This commitment is foundational to our efforts to authentically represent and amplify the voices of our First Nations members and communities.

To ensure that our initiatives are guided by the lived experiences and insights of First Nations peoples, we regularly engage and consult with First Nations family-based carers and carers providing care for First Nations children. These partnerships, in addition to First Nations priority partners, are crucial in shaping our approach and ensuring our actions are culturally informed and respectful.

The introduction of our Reflect RAP marks a significant milestone: it is our first formalised framework dedicated to reconciliation, providing a clear, strategic, and accountable pathway forward. This plan not only solidifies our commitment but also outlines actionable steps toward delivering important progress in reconciliation.

Our dedication to culturally safe practices and enhancing the quality of life and opportunities for First Nations peoples can be found in our direct engagement with First Nations foster and kinship families who need advocacy and support. By listening to their experiences and ideas, we aim to create impactful changes within the child protection sector and broader community. The insights gathered from these experiences are meticulously compiled into case studies, submissions for relevant inquiries, issues papers, research reports, and communications with parliamentarians and executives. This process ensures that the voices of First Nations peoples are heard and that their contributions guide our activities and objectives.

Through these efforts, we aspire to honour our commitment to this journey and make a positive difference in the lives of First Nations peoples and children from all walks of life.

## External Activities

Over the years, we have successfully formed long-term community partnerships with First Nations peoples, facilitating a range of ongoing interactive workshops and activities such as:

- **Tamara Young's Wonky Lines Counselling Service**, providing culturally sensitive yarning circles.
- **Jack Buckskin's Acknowledgement of Country**, delivering a workshop in the Kaurna language, fostering respect and cultural understanding to First Nations carer families.
- **Uncle Mickey O'Brien's Welcome to Country**, enhancing our events with authentic cultural ceremonies.
- **Rosemary Wanganeen's First Nations Training Sessions**, educating our Board and staff on First Nations peoples' issues and perspectives.
- **Participating in Sonder's Closing the Gap Events**, actively supporting efforts to reduce disparities faced by First Nations peoples.

Furthermore, to ensure we provide the best advocacy, support information, and advice to First Nations foster and kinship families, we regularly liaise with:

- **KWY Aboriginal Corporation**
- **Martinthi Aboriginal Kinship Care**
- **Aboriginal Family Support Services**
- **Kinship Care Teams**
- **The Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People**

Additionally, as an associate member of the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children (SNAICC), we continue to be informed about systemic issues affecting First Nations children and young people. These community partnerships are instrumental in our reconciliation efforts, and are also complemented by our internal activities.

## Internal Activities

Our internal activities contribute to advancing reconciliation with First Nations peoples. Through individual advocacy, our advocates work closely with First Nations foster and kinship families to address challenges within the child protection system. Our systemic advocacy is then driven by the insights gained from these experiences.

By utilising the knowledge and experiences of our advocates, we meaningfully contributed to South Australia's Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People's 2022-23 Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle, and South Australia's Independent Inquiry into Foster and Kinship Care in 2022. Our submissions highlighted critical issues affecting First Nations foster and kinship families and was further informed by consulting with these families directly.

This level and process of systemic advocacy is vital, as it ensures our carer advocates and broader team are well-versed in the current issues faced by First Nations peoples, allowing us to respond effectively and advocate for change.

Lastly, in collaboration with the South Australian Government and the Bradford Institute, we specifically invited First Nations carers to undertake a subsidised Certificate IV in Community Services and saw a First Nations cohort of 12 graduate and collect their parchment at Government House. We are proud of this program and are committed to see more First Nations graduates in the future.

# Relationships



| | 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. | March 2025 | *Project Officer* | |
| | | Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. | March 2025 | *Project Officer* | |
| 2 | **Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).** | Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. | April 2025 | *CEO* | |
| | | RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. | 27 May - 3 June 2025 | *Project Officer* | |
| | | Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. | 27 May - 3 June 2025 | *Senior Advocate* | |
| 3 | **Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.** | Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff by way of E-signature acknowledgements, membership emails, and making this RAP publicly available. | April 2025 | *CEO* | |
| | | Continue to identify more external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. | April 2025 | *Project Officer* | |
| | | Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. | April 2025 | *Project Officer* | |
| 4 | **Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.** | Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. | May 2025 | *Project Officer* | |
| | | Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. | May 2025 | *Project Officer* | |

| | 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 a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. | June 2025 | *Project Officer* | |
| | | Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation, such as signing up to organisations who deliver First Nations education and knowledge sessions. | June 2025 | *Senior Advocate* | |
| 6 | **Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.** | Continue to develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. | July 2025 | *Project Officer* | |
| | | Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. | July 2025 | Senior Advocate | |
| 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 2025 | *CEO* | |
| | | Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. | June 2025 | *CEO* | |
| | | RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. | First week in July 2025 | *Admin & Events Coordinator* | |

# Opportunities



| | Action | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | **Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.** | Review our business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation and research best practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, retention, and professional development strategies. | July 2025 | *CEO & Board* |
| | | Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. | August 2025 | *Senior Advocate* |
| 9 | **Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.** | Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. | September 2025 | *Project Officer* |
| | | Investigate Supply Nation membership or create a list of local First Nations suppliers. | October 2025 | *Project Officer* |

| Action | | Deliverable | Timeline | Responsibility | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | **Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.** | Maintain our RWG to govern RAP implementation. | November 2025 | *Project Officer* | |
| | | Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG. See the guide. | November 2025 | *CEO* | |
| | | Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. | December 2025 | *CEO* | |
| 11 | **Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.** | Define resource needs for RAP implementation. | January 2026 | *Project Officer* | |
| | | Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. | December 2025 | *Project Officer* | |
| | | Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally. | December 2025 | *CEO* | |
| | | Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. | June (annually) | *Project Officer* | |
| 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 (annually) | *Admin & Events Coordinator* | |
| | | Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey. | 1 August (annually) | *Admin & Events Coordinator* | |
| | | Complete and submit the RAP Impact Survey. | 30 September (annually) | *Project Officer* | |
| 13 | **Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.** | Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. | February 2026 | *Project Officer* | |

**“Reconciliation, to me, means transforming shame into pride and silence into voice.”**

**-First Nations Carer**



## Contact:

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