

Reconciliation Action Plan

Reflect



SCHS

Sunraysia Community
Health Services



**RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN**

REFLECT

April 2020 - April 2021

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Sunraysia Community Health Services will address racism and the effect it has on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and wellbeing. Racism significantly effects an individual's health in two ways; exposure to racism contributes to depression, substance misuse, and poor physical health, which raises barriers, challenges and reluctance which creates doubt and decreased confidence in the use of and attendance at mainstream services.

SCHS is dedicated to being a Respectful Community Organisation - where everyone is treated with respect and racism is not tolerated. We will continually strive to ensure racism does not occur within our organisation, as an important step to achieve this, is our RAP. In developing our RAP, we will listen, learn and work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address this issue.

As a health service, we are committed to strengthening our work to ensuring equitable health and wellbeing occurs for all diversity and number of different cultures present in Australia. In addition, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel welcome and safe in our organisation.

The RAP provides opportunity to explore and embed existing and new initiatives, which contribute to improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We will continue to walk beside Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities - listen to their needs, work together and collaborate on meaningful outcomes.

We welcome internal and external stakeholders to assist in achieving our RAP goals.

Simone Heald
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)



Social model of health

At Sunraysia Community Health Services (SCHS), we provide health services within a social model of health. This means we understand that social, cultural, political, environmental, and physical factors all contribute to health and well-being.

Our vision

Health and social equity for our communities

Our mission

To explore and deliver innovative solutions to health and social needs

Our values

The following five broad values underpin our organisation:

- Compassion - We treat people with empathy, respect and dignity and we care about our clients, our people and our community.
- Justice - We promote equity, peace and a genuine respect for people in our community.
- Excellence - We will be prepared for change and strive for continuous learning and quality improvement.
- Accountability - We commit to responsible and open decision-making, taking responsibility for our decisions and actions, being reflective and open to feedback.
- Collaboration - We will work as a team and actively communicate and build constructive relationships to achieve positive outcomes.



Elder's Message

As a descendant of my Apical Ancestors, I say “Delgi” (Welcome).

It is with great pleasure to have involvement in the Elders message for Sunraysia Community Health Service Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), and to support their RAP to encourage this plan around inclusion, and to embrace the following practice.

To support Cultural Awareness across the organisation and to actively participate and celebrate in important significant days throughout the year like National Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week. I will support working collaboratively with the First Peoples and the wider community to bring and instill the fabric of pride and self-ownership of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, families, communities and staff throughout Sunraysia Community Health Service future directions under this plan.

Finally, I recognize and pay my respects to all Elders that no longer walk this earth today, cherish those Elders that are with me today and acknowledge those other Traditional Owner groups and their Elders past, present and to all my Elders of the future.



Aunty Janine Wilson - Latjie Latjie Elder on Country



Who are we?

SCHS is a community based not-for-profit health organisation that operates out of five different locations across Sunraysia to engage individuals in the design and delivery of their health care to optimize health outcomes for communities. SCHS provides a broad range of programs and services, which are constantly evolving and developing in response to community needs. The programs and services include Public Dental Health Services, Social Health Programs including Refugee Health assessments and programs, Family Violence Prevention services and support, Youth Commitment, Counselling and Sexual and Reproductive Health Services; Preventative Health programs including Dietetics, Physiotherapy, Podiatry, Mother and Babies/Family support, Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy and specialist multi-disciplinary support for pain rehabilitation, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and early intervention services; Mental Health services and Drug and Alcohol withdrawal support; Acute Health and Aged care services including Aged and Disability Day support, Home Nursing and Palliative Care.

Where do we operate?

SCHS is Mildura based but provides services across the West Loddon Mallee region, primarily in the Mildura Rural City Council LGA with some limited services provided within the Swan Hill Rural City Council LGA, Buloke and Gannawarra Shires and into the Sunraysia district area of NSW, which falls into the Wentworth Shire Council LGA.

We support and foster understanding and diversity

Recognising First Nations Peoples that call Sunraysia home, to ensure that we are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Nations Peoples.

SCHS has approximately 200 staff and have six employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The Sunraysia and broader service areas have a very diverse population from many different cultural backgrounds and consideration is given to this in all aspects of service design and delivery. SCHS gives recognition and support to the health and wellbeing of First Nations peoples. By providing individualised support to consumers in accordance with each person's needs, supporting employment and training opportunities, provision of ceremonial leave, celebration of NAIDOC Week with events run by SCHS and by supporting events run by other community organisations. Cultural awareness and on Country training is available to all employees and SCHS supports student placements and traineeships for First Nations peoples to encourage employment and career development.

SCHS works to make people feel welcome with artworks by local artists, development of a cultural hub and garden and subscriptions to publications such as the Koori Mail. SCHS works in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and service providers to build capacity and positive outcomes for consumers, employees, local business and the community.



Our Partnerships and Current Activities

Our Community Partnerships currently include:

- Aboriginal Health Promotion and Chronic Care (AHPACC) partnership between Mallee District Aboriginal Health Services (MDAS), Coomealla Health
- Aboriginal Corporation (CHAC) and Mildura Base Hospital (MBH)
- Working with MBH Aboriginal Healing Centre, Victorian Legal Aid, Department of Justice and Community Safety and the Department of Health and Human Services in the development of our RAP
- Aboriginal health workers in programs including mental health, drug and alcohol and palliative care.

The development of this plan was in progress before the establishment of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, as the plan as not been commenced yet.

SCHS supports reconciliation through:

- The development of a cultural hub
- Celebration and support for NAIDOC week, both internal and external activities
- Annual NAIDOC event run by SCHS
- Provision of NAIDOC shirts as part of the SCHS uniform
- Support Ceremonial leave for First Nations employees to attend Sorry Business
- Implementation of training for all staff around Cultural Awareness including some on Country time
- Supply of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander desk flags in Meeting, Conference and Board rooms throughout the SCHS buildings
- Provision and use of Acknowledgment of Country for emails and at the beginning of meetings and events.

Pundu (Cod) Dreaming

Artwork by Uncle Ivan Johnson, Uncle Peter Peterson and the Youth Mentoring Group: Jarred, Quantrey, Kallum and Nikita.



This mural shows the importance of the river to First Nations' people of the Darling and Murray Rivers. The river is our bloodline, where our ancestors lived for many generations within their tribal boundaries; where our Elders sat around fires and told stories of creation, of the cod and how they travel upstream and downstream. Plants and animals thrive on water and without it, there is no life.

