

# Reconciliation Action Plan Highlights

Apr 2020 - Mar 2021

## Our second Innovate RAP builds on learnings from our first RAP.

2020 reminded us of the importance of reconciliation and listening to, learning from and nurturing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to work and connect differently with communities. In line with public health measures, staff had to work remotely for much of the year. We had to quickly adapt our support services, which saw record demand. And we had to replace face-to-face community connection with digital engagement.

As well as keeping people safe, these changes heightened our understanding of the importance of place and culture. With this understanding came growth and an ever-increasing respect for rituals such as the Acknowledgement of Country and the commemoration of culturally significant dates. We learned from guest speakers. We deepened relationships and built new ones to support communities. We found ways

to translate our commitment into action through our procurement, business engagement and campaign support processes.

But the nature of 2020 also meant we couldn't progress everything planned for the first year of our new RAP. People's priorities both inside and outside of Beyond Blue were often very different as we lived through uncertainty, disruption and challenges to our physical and mental health. For Beyond Blue this meant prioritising the safety and wellbeing of our people, supporting the community, and ensuring our sustainability in times of unprecedented service need.

So we recognise there are still many opportunities for progress, growth, learning and improvement. We are proudly committed to these and to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to support self-determination and social and emotional wellbeing.

## Launch of a new RAP

- Launched Beyond Blue's second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan in April 2020, which runs until April 2022.
- Commissioned Tamara May Murray, an Indigenous artist who has lived experience of post-natal depression and bipolar disorder, to create the artwork, *A Life Full of Colour* for the cover and

throughout the RAP. This is now proudly on display in the Beyond Blue office.

- Worked with Tamara to share visions for reconciliation and inform the creation of *A Life Full of Colour* (pictured below). You can learn more about Tamara and the artwork [here](#).



*A Life Full of Colour*, Tamara May Murray (2019)

## Relationships

- Developed relationships with new organisations and strengthened existing partnerships with organisations including the Healing Foundation, WellMob, Lowitja Institute and Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia.
- Delivered the findings from the 2019 cultural safety evaluation research project of our Online Peer Forums and Blue Voices platform. Completed by Cox Inall Ridgeway, a specialist Indigenous social change agency, the project aimed to evaluate and identify potential improvements for the safe engagement and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in these online spaces. The findings are currently being implemented alongside a broader project to improve the functionality of the Online Forums.
- Used our social media channels to promote reconciliation and an end to racism, with messages throughout the year, including days of significance. Beyond Blue's Chair also released a special message for National Reconciliation Week, shared across our channels.

## Respect

- Increased staff knowledge on the purpose and significance of cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. This was supported by embedding an Acknowledgement of Country into meeting agenda templates.
- Celebrated and acknowledged important dates of cultural significance, including: the anniversary of the National Apology, Close the Gap Day, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week (in July and November), and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.
- Developed virtual ways of coming together as a staff group to acknowledge, celebrate and learn from guest speakers, including Uncle Bill Nicholson Jnr, Scott Gorringe, Leilani Darwin and Jessica Staines.
- Hosted a virtual screening of In My Blood It Runs, with a 20-minute Q+A session, for staff during National Reconciliation Week.
- Worked with Traditional Owners to recognise local culture and name meeting spaces in our new office design.
- Participated in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer survey to understand attitudes and behaviours of our employees towards reconciliation.

## Opportunities

- Continued to add our voice to advocacy efforts, including our support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, greater funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, and action towards suicide prevention targets.
- Developed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Strategy to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity and improve economic outcomes for businesses.
- Shared our Invisible Discriminator campaign, highlighting the effects of subtle forms of racism on social and emotional wellbeing, in response to public discourse around Black Lives Matter.
- Increased our expenditure with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, including through our Supply Nation membership, to in excess of \$1.1 million.
- Maintained our active membership of the Close the Gap Campaign Steering Committee, along with an annual donation and support for campaign initiatives.

## What's next?

- Implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Strategy, including measuring growth in spending to ensure the strategy is effective.
- Strengthen and embed our People and Culture policies, strategies and processes to reduce participation barriers and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and internship opportunities.
- Onboard a dedicated People and Culture resource to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and the delivery of a cultural learning strategy.

***"I believe that our Innovate RAP demonstrates the clear intent of Beyond Blue to create and support a truly fair and reconciled Australia. Achievement of these actions and strategies will no doubt produce strong, sustainable and culturally appropriate practice and relationships for the mutual benefit of Beyond Blue and the broader Indigenous Community."***

Russell Taylor AM, Co-Chair RAP Working Group and Beyond Blue Board Director