Artwork Narrative:

This artwork depicts the importance of connection to family, culture and community.

The central coloured figures depict the diverse communities coming together to nurture and protect our children.

The central circle also doubles as a flower, which represents growth.

The outer smaller circles represent exchange of knowledge and energy.

The hands and feet depict Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people walking together in reconciliation and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

The layers ripple out and point in every direction, depicting the positive impact working together to create a better future for our children and community.

Artist: Dixon Patten
Tribes: Gunnai, Yorta Yorta, Gunditjmara, Yuin
Acknowledgements

QEC acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Traditional Owners of the lands on which we walk, live and raise our children.
We pay our respects to Traditional Owners past, present and future.
We acknowledge the importance of children being raised with connections to culture, community and family.
The Queen Elizabeth Centre (QEC) is proud to present our first Reconciliation Action Plan – a formal commitment to reconciliation that recognises the strength, diversity and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their families. In looking to the future, we acknowledge the past and seek to better understand and respect the histories, cultures and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

QEC recognises that improved outcomes in health and well-being can only be achieved if effective and respectful partnerships are established with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations. QEC believes that it is the right of every child to be immersed in their culture - including family, community, cultural practices and identity - and to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters with which they have connection under traditional laws and customs.

We look forward to sharing our reconciliation journey with you over the coming year.

Sandy Bell – QEC President
Sue White – QEC Chief Executive Officer
Our Organisation

For over 100 years, QEC has worked tirelessly to ensure infants and young children have the best possible start in life. A public hospital and community service organisation, we are Victoria’s pre-eminent provider of early parenting services.

Every year QEC provides support to over 3,000 families and delivers 125,000 hours of care across Victoria - from our Noble Park residential site and at community sites in Morwell, Bairnsdale, Dandenong, Carrum Downs, Preston and Wodonga.

Research into the impact of a child’s first 1000 days on adult health and wellbeing outcomes demonstrates a critical imperative to provide high quality, professional support to parents of infants and young children. Programs at QEC are evidence informed and individually tailored to meet the unique needs of each family. Our services enable families to nurture and protect their children in order to enhance family health and development. QEC currently employs over 140 staff including Nurses, Midwives, Psychologists, Social Workers and Early Childhood Educators - who work hard each and every day to ensure that children are afforded the best start in life. We currently do not have any employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
QEC Vision
For children to get the best start in life

QEC Mission
Inspiring confident, capable communities that enable children to thrive

QEC Values
Respect  We respect the feelings and beliefs of others
Teamwork We listen to, acknowledge and accept others in our team
Integrity We approach others with fairness, honesty and openness
Excellence We strive for excellence and quality in everything we do
Resilience We are positive in our approach to all challenges

QEC values the perspectives of families who use our services; we regularly seek feedback to ensure that all voices are heard.
A snapshot from our client surveys indicates that:

- 100% of families were satisfied with the service and with their involvement in decision making
- 99% of families felt that their feelings, cultural belief and family values were respected
- 98% of families found the program made a difference
- 97% of families felt that staff treated them with respect and would recommend the service to others
- 96% of families felt that information provided was helpful to reach their goals
- 95% of families felt more confident in parenting at the completion of the program.
Our RAP

QEC is committed to reconciliation. We support and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia – we recognise the unique, custodial, cultural and spiritual relationship to the land and sea.

QEC is dedicated to strengthening the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous communities; we aim to build respect for and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across all aspects of our work. The following principles are integral to our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families:

- Connection to culture, community and family is essential to developing resilience in children and families
- Strong cultural connection ensures a promising future for children and young people
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families have an inherent right to self-determination.

QEC’s Reconciliation Action Plan is a formal statement of commitment to reconciliation that aims to support the development of respectful relationships and meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Reflect RAP is the most suited to QEC as it provides opportunities to develop a solid RAP governance model and build the momentum for future commitments. It includes practical actions that will drive QEC’s contribution to reconciliation both internally and in the communities in which we operate.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are 10 times more likely to grow up in care (SNAICC, 2019) – and are over-represented in child protection and out-of-home care systems. The reasons for this are complex and are connected to the legacy of colonisation, including: past policies of removal and cultural assimilation; intergenerational trauma and effects of forced removals; and cultural differences between child protection agencies’ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ understandings of child-rearing practices. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family life is steeped in strengths, culture and connections – factors that lead to positive outcomes for children. QEC works alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to build on these strengths to ensure very child has the best start in life.
Our Partnerships and Current Activities

An enduring relationship with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) has developed since our Dandenong team co-located at the VACCA Southern office over 5 years ago. In recent years, this approach has continued to mature and develop, with QEC further progressing our commitment to supporting improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families via partnerships (such as joint projects and shared care arrangements) with ACCOs in other areas of Victoria - Morwell (Ramahyuck), Preston (VACCA) and Carrum Downs (VACCA).

In 2018, QEC developed a Cultural Competency Policy that outlines our commitment to reconciliation. This includes a strong endorsement from the QEC Board. QEC currently participates in activities that aim to display a strong commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families - this includes displaying artwork and flags and staff and Board cultural competence training. We take part in NAIDOC events and also provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific books, toys etc for playgroups and QEC playroom. In 2017, QEC was proud to appoint a Yorta Yorta woman to our Board of Directors.
Relationships
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<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Establish and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.</td>
<td>Continue to identify and collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations across Victoria. Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</td>
<td>Dec 2020, Jan 2020, Jan 2020</td>
<td>DSO, DSO, CEO</td>
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<td>2. Demonstrate a commitment to reconciliation through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</td>
<td>Support National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by circulating Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to staff (via CEO comms) and via social media. Ensure QEC Leadership Team are provided the opportunity to participate in external NRW event/s. Ensure RAP Working Group members participate in an external NRW event. Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</td>
<td>May 2020, May 2020, May 2020, May 2020</td>
<td>CEO, CEO, CEO, CEO</td>
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<td>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</td>
<td>Communicate QEC’s commitment to reconciliation to all staff (via CEO comms) and more broadly (via social media). Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. Identify RA and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.</td>
<td>Jan 2020, Jan 2020, Jan 2020</td>
<td>CEO, DSO, DSO</td>
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<td>5. Increase understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights.</td>
<td>Conduct a review of cultural learning sessions within QEC.</td>
<td>Jun 2020</td>
<td>CODM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop a strategy for increasing staff understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights.</td>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
<td>DCS</td>
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<td>Review QEC Cultural Competency Policy to reflect best practice approaches.</td>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
<td>DSO</td>
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<td>6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</td>
<td>Increase staff’s understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols – including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country.</td>
<td>Jan 2020</td>
<td>CEO</td>
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<td>CEO monthly communication provides staff with an overview of the importance and use of Acknowledgement of Country at QEC.</td>
<td>Jan 2020</td>
<td>CEO</td>
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<td>Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation’s operational area.</td>
<td>Oct 2020</td>
<td>DSO</td>
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| | Ensure QEC sites have culturally appropriate resources:  
  - Purchase Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artwork and display in our hospital  
  - Purchase and display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in our facilities | Apr 2020 | CEO |
| 7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week. | Raise awareness amongst our staff and stakeholders (via CEO comms and social media) about:  
  - The meaning of NAIDOC Week  
  - External events in our local area. | Jul 2020 | CEO |
<p>| | RAP Working Group will participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. | Jul 2020 | CEO |
| 8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, cultures and traditions. | Introduce staff and stakeholders to National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day – via CEO email and social media. | Aug 2020 | CEO |
| 9. Build support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to grow up in safe, culturally connected families and communities. | Make the Family Matters Statement of Commitment - Australia’s national campaign to eliminate the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care. | Jan 2020 | CEO |
| 10. Ensure QEC is accessible and responsive to the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. | Identify emerging needs in partnership with community members and ACCOs (VACCA). | Jun 2020 | DSO |
| | Track and report on the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families utilising QEC services. | Jun 2020 | Quality Manager |
| | Analyse (and act on) feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. | Jun 2020 | Quality Manager |
| | Research best-practice and principles that support cultural safety in the workplace. | Mar 2020 | CODM |</p>
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<td>11. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment.</td>
<td>Actively explore models of recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, volunteers and staff within QEC, in partnership with Universities and ACCOs (such as VACCA).</td>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
<td>DCS</td>
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<td>Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.</td>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
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<td>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</td>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
<td>DCS</td>
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<td>12. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</td>
<td>Consider options for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses – investigate Supply Nation membership.</td>
<td>Jun 2020</td>
<td>DFIT</td>
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<td>Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.</td>
<td>Jun 2020</td>
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Governance
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| 13. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive and oversee the RAP. | Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation:  
- Develop Terms of Reference for the RWG  
- Ensure representation from across QEC and relevant stakeholders  
- Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments  
- Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.                                                                 | Jan 2020          | CEO            |
| 14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally. | Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.  
Define resource needs for RAP implementation.  
Define systems to measure and report on RAP commitments – report to Leadership Team and Board.                                                                 | Sep 30 2020 / 2021 | CEO            |
| 15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.    | Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing QEC next RAP.                                                                                                                             | Oct 2020          | CEO            |
| 16. QEC Board take a leadership role in reconciliation across QEC      | Board review QEC’s Acknowledgement of Country.                                                                                                                                                            | Jan 2020          | Board          |
|                                                                       | Board make a public commitment to reconciliation.                                                                                                                                                           | Jan 2020          | Board          |
|                                                                       | Engage Leadership Team in RAP implementation.                                                                                                                                                                 | Jun 2020          | CEO            |
Appendix

Abbreviations:

- Area Managers: Gippsland, SMR, Wodonga, Preston
- CEO: Chief Executive Officer
- CODM: Clinical and Organizational Development Manager
- DCS: Director Corporate Services
- DFIT: Director Finance and ICT
- DSO: Director Services and Operations
- NUM: Nurse Unit Manager
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