



*Aboriginal Madonna*  
*Artist: Karel Kupka*



# Reconciliation Action Plan for the Year 2011-2012

## Our Vision for Reconciliation

Centacare Townsville's vision for Reconciliation is that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people have better access to culturally appropriate services, live in safe, sustainable and resilient families and communities and attain an increase in economic status with better access to employment.

## Our Business

Since 1979, Centacare has extended the social services ministry of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Townsville to improve the wellbeing of the many communities in which we work. We provide a range of programs to assist and strengthen individuals, families and communities with support, education and counselling. Our 160 staff operate out of eight permanent sites across North Queensland and the Gulf Country with outreach to a further eight towns in the region. We embrace cultural diversity and are committed to providing services with compassion, respect and integrity.

## Our RAP

The development of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has involved the participation and consultation with colleagues across Centacare's sites together with an Indigenous member of our Advisory Board. The RAP working party included Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other staff who guided us with the three focus areas. It was important to refer to the agency's Strategic Plan 2010-2013 to meet the goals for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons, their cultures, families and communities. The development of our RAP is based on the organisation's service delivery for clients and working with others, in line with the recognised guidelines of the Reconciliation Australia RAP Program. Our RAP will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and families shall be recognised as the First Peoples of Australia, shall have access to services and support programs and shall have employment opportunities as staff. The timeframe for the Centacare RAP is two years (2012-2013) this allows for development, reflection and improvement as an ongoing process to reflect the Gospel values of dignity, respect and justice for all.

**Relationships**

Building and maintaining relationships between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Centacare together with community stakeholders are essential for enabling service delivery that is sensitive and effective. We shall continue to consult with our Aboriginal staff, Torres Strait Islander staff and advisors to ensure that we all understand how to build relationships based on trust between individuals and communities.

**Focus area:**

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Create and provide quality resources; i.e. DVDs, books, articles etc.</li><li>2. Develop a directory of services within the region and of their staff, paying particular attention to the Aboriginal staff and Torres Strait Islander staff available in other services and their roles.</li><li>3. Access our combined professional experience and offer mentor roles to community and other organisations/agencies .</li><li>4. The working group to consult with Aboriginal staff and Torres Strait Islander staff and the wider community to monitor the progress of this RAP, keeping track of what has been achieved and to provide an opportunity to share any key learnings that have derived from the RAP actions</li></ol>	Management Library Resource Officer Program staff	November 2011 on going	Liaise with Aboriginal staff and Torres Strait Islander staff about the types of resources that they would like to see in the library. Staff creating resources for client services and utilised by all staff. Resource directory in place and being referred to by staff. Identified key staff to collate information and support others. Staff engaging in liaison-type sessions being recorded.  Working group members and external stakeholders will meet two times per year A record of RAP achievements and learnings are recorded and communicated

**Relationships**

Building and maintaining relationships between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Centacare together with community stakeholders are essential for enabling service delivery that is sensitive and effective. We shall continue to consult with our Aboriginal staff, Torres Strait Islander staff and advisors to ensure that we all understand how to build relationships based on trust between individuals and communities.

**Focus area:**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Measurable Target</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify persons as accepted traditional land owners and their corporation and invite them to appropriate events and accept invitations from them when offered.</li><li>2. Seek and identify current events via networks. Share information within the organisation and encourage all staff to attend events.</li><li>3. Management will promote Indigenous events for staff to attend. Regular attendance will be crucial to maintain relationships and develop trust.</li></ol>	Management All staff	November 2011 on going	Local traditional stakeholders invited to organisation events and attendance recorded.  Events recorded (calendar etc.) and staff names recorded of their participation and contribution at events.  Agenda items and action recorded in team meeting minutes and in organisation monthly Newsletter and other printed articles.

<b>Respect</b>	<b>The organisation's values and core business activities are based on respect and learning from others. It is essential for us to build relationships that respect the uniqueness of all individuals and demonstrate our commitment to respond appropriately to provide access to services and employment; consistent with the rights and respect for culture of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their festivals and celebrations.</b>		
<b>Focus area:</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Measurable Target</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a culturally welcoming space at all sites. Ongoing practice of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement to Country prior to agency meetings and training events, including names of local traditional owner groups.</li> <li>2. Staff to participate at community events to celebrate significant observance days; NAIDOC, Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week. Flags and artwork displayed at all office sites. These dates included on Centacare's calendar of annual events.</li> </ol>	<p>Management All staff</p>	<p>November 2011 on going</p>	<p>Display Reconciliation Action Plan in reception area of all sites. Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at all sites. Display Aboriginal artwork with written description of theme and artists name. Welcome to Country statement recorded in meeting minutes (QMS) and other agency events. All staff demonstrate understanding and use of cultural protocols where local traditional owner groups are being referred to by name. Events are listed on calendar of annual events, are promoted at internal meetings and details of participation by programs to be noted in the Minutes. Management staff shall provide flexibility for staff to attend. Feedback from community organisers.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural Awareness training of agency staff and provide induction packages for new staff (include factsheet on protocols and copy of organisation's RAP).</li> <li>2. Aboriginal staff and Torres Strait Islander staff to be available to introduce clients to programs</li> </ol>	<p>Management staff Human Resource staff All staff</p>	<p>November 2011 on going</p>	<p>All staff to attend Cultural Awareness training annually and attendee signatures recorded. Cultural themes presented at PD sessions for staff throughout the year. RAP given to all staff and included as part of the induction process of employment for new staff. Feedback survey recorded to measure knowledge gained and level of understanding for cultural protocols by staff. Results of the survey to be reported on in the annual RAP report. Recognised staff to record their attendance at all introduction sessions with Aboriginal clients and Torres Strait Islander clients. Aboriginal staff and Torres Strait Islander staff are recognised as a liaison person to advise, guide and provide mentor role.</p>

<b>Opportunities</b>	<p>Centacare offices are located across regional and remote areas. Each site is unique therefore we seek to engage the local Aboriginal community and Torres Strait Islander community and work more collaboratively to improve our cultural response for these communities. We strive to employ more Indigenous employees and shall enhance our human resources strategies for recruitment. We are committed to provide a flexible environment for employees to attend their family responsibilities and participate at ceremony and sorry business.</p>		
<b>Focus area:</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Measurable Target</b>
<p>1. Increase the number of Aboriginal employees and Torres Strait Islander employees across all sites.</p>	<p>Management Human Resources</p>	<p>November 2011 on going</p>	<p>Increased number of employees in a range of positions and role.</p> <p>Recruitment process will encourage interest from local Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities by directly notifying them of recruitment opportunities.</p> <p>Three Indigenous student field placements being offered and supported annually.</p> <p>Training opportunities being offered and courses completed by all staff.</p>
<p>1. Support and give preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, products, services and artists.</p> <p>2. Develop mutually supportive partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.</p>	<p>Management</p>	<p>November 2011 on going</p>	<p>Cultural services being promoted and engaged to meet organisation needs and visible at all sites.</p> <p>MOU's or Contracts in place with other organisations.</p> <p>Indigenous representation on recruitment panels for identified employment positions.</p>

## Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
1. RAP developed in consultation with staff and Advisory Board, approved by Advisory Board and publicly displayed.	Director and RAP Reference Group	31 December 2011	RAP approved, on Centacare website and on Reconciliation Australia's website
2. RAP implementation monitored regularly.	Centacare staff and Advisory Board	Sept 2012 and then annually	Report to staff and Advisory Board by RAP Reference Group
3. RAP reported on annually	Director and RAP Reference Group	Sept 2012 and then annually	Report to staff and Advisory Board by RAP Reference Group
4. RAP evaluated annually and a report submitted to Reconciliation Australia annually.	Director and RAP Reference Group	1 December annually	Updated RAP approved, on Centacare website and on Reconciliation Australia's website