

LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION for youth







Bayley Mifsud is a proud member of the Peek and Kirrae Whurrong people of the Maar nation from South West Victoria (Warrnambool). Her Aboriginal name is Merindah-Gunya meaning "Beautiful Spirit" in Peek Whurrong language, which was gifted to her through ceremony by her parents and Elders. Bayley has a passion for community development, diversity and self-determination as well as continuing the gift of storytelling through her artwork.

Bayley now lives on Wurundjeri Country in Naarm (Melbourne) and has lived a large portion of her life here. Her great granny, Mary Clarke, was a Bunurong woman. Bayley was taught Aboriginal art at a very young age, by her Elders at the Brambuk Cultural Centre in the Grampians in Victoria.



STORY BEHIND THE ARTWORK

This artwork gently captures the theme of youth homelessness. The central gathering place serves as a representation of the safety provided by Lighthouse Foundation for at-risk youth. Encircling "U" shapes symbolise the thoughtful community embracing young people seeking support, while those depicted at a distance represent youth currently facing homelessness.

The Birrarung (or Yarra River) gracefully flows in the background, subtly indicating a meaningful connection to the land. The soft, yet bright palette of colours used in the artwork evokes emotions of warmth, compassion, and joy, identifying the significance of unity and care in addressing the challenges confronted by homeless youth.

Lighthouse Foundation Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2025



STATEMENT FROM KAREN MUNDINE

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Lighthouse Foundation to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Lighthouse Foundation joins a network of more than 2,500 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 Lighthouse Foundation 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 Lighthouse Foundation, 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





STATEMENT FROM OUR **CHAIRMAN AND CEO**

As proud leaders of Lighthouse Foundation, we recognise the importance of reconciliation and the profound impact it can have on our organisation, the communities we serve, and the broader community. Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) represents our commitment to meaningful engagement, understanding, and action towards reconciliation with First Nations People.

At Lighthouse, we believe that every individual and community deserves to thrive, and reconciliation is fundamental to achieving this vision. Through our RAP, we aim to build respectful relationships, foster cultural understanding, and create opportunities for First Nations Peoples to contribute and participate fully in all aspects of our organisation.

We understand that reconciliation is an ongoing journey that requires dedication, collaboration, and accountability. By embedding reconciliation principles into our policies, practices, and culture, we not only honour the past and present experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples but also pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable future.

As an organisation committed to social impact, we recognise the significance of our Reflect RAP beyond moral imperative. Embracing reconciliation aligns with our values and enhances our ability to fulfill our mission effectively. By building trust and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, we gain valuable insights, strengthen our programs, and create a more sustainable impact.

Through our Reflect RAP, we affirm our commitment to reconciliation and invite all to join us on this journey towards a more just and inclusive society.

Len Warson Chair,

Lighthouse Foundation

Dr. Eamonn McCarthy CEO and RAP Champion, Lighthouse Foundation



STATEMENT FROM **OUR FOUNDER**

I am deeply moved by the profound teachings and wisdom shared by Australia's First Nations peoples. Their enduring connection to the land, culture, and community has enriched our nation in immeasurable ways, offering invaluable lessons for all of us.

I've had the immense privilege of learning from the unique perspectives and values of First Nations cultures. Their deep-rooted reverence for the environment, emphasis on community and kinship, and profound respect for the interconnectedness of all living beings have profoundly influenced the way we approach our work with vulnerable young people.

We recognise the significance of honouring and integrating these teachings into our Model of Care and our own personal lives. We understand that by nurturing a sense of belonging, connection, and cultural identity, we can empower young people to heal, grow, and flourish. Our dedication to kindness, courage, collaboration, and respect is deeply grounded in the principles of inclusivity and cultural humility that we have gleaned from First Nations peoples.

As we embark on our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), I am filled with pride and gratitude for the journey we are undertaking. Our RAP signifies not only a commitment to reconciliation but also a celebration of the diverse cultures that contribute to our nation's rich tapestry. It is a promise to walk hand in hand with First Nations people, learning from their wisdom, and collaborating towards a future built on mutual respect, understanding, and shared prosperity.

Jue Baston

Susan Barton AM Founder, Lighthouse Foundation



OUR organisation

Lighthouse Foundation was founded by Susan Barton AM in 1991 with the vision of ending youth homelessness. Lighthouse Foundation has developed over 33 years, a unique and highly successful Lighthouse Model of Care that has independently been proven to break the chronic cycle of homelessness for more than 8 out of 10 young people.

Since 1991, our programs have helped more than 1,230 young people to find safe homes, begin recovering from complex trauma and move towards sustainable independence by breaking the cycle of homelessness.

The Lighthouse Model of Care delivers enduring outcomes through our holistic, evidence-based approach to looking after young people. Our model integrates trauma-informed practice, attachment theory and contemporary psychoanalytic principles of emotional development to create a holistic therapeutic environment.

We deliver this model in three distinct care environments:



HOMES

Dedicated homes where young people live alongside Lighthouse carers, supported by the wider Lighthouse Care Team.



IN COMMUNITY

Partnering with the community to extend the delivery of our Model of Care to wherever young people live.



FOSTER CARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT

A unique model that unites foster carers and families (kinship and family reunification support) around a central Lighthouse Hub Home; providing tailored support, therapeutic care and a connection to community.

At Lighthouse Foundation, our purpose has evolved from providing transformative care for young people based only in Lighthouse homes, to providing our effective Lighthouse Model of Care and our positive community, to vulnerable children and young people, wherever they are, including before they become homeless.

We have worked closely with Child Protection and other residential care services to provide our Model of Care from birth, through childhood and into adolescence. We've also extended our support to foster and kinship families surrounding vulnerable children.

Our promise of 'On for Life' support extends to every young person who has been part of our programs at any time. This program offers active case management support for young people to continue living safely and meaningfully once they transition to independent living, delivering on our promise of lifelong belonging.

We employ over 130 staff of which one third are casual carers. Currently we do not employ anyone who has identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander according to our People and Culture team records. Lighthouse has been on a steady growth trajectory which could see the staff count grow in the next financial year. We are reviewing HR policy and recruitment procedures to become an employer of choice for First Nations people. We want to ensure our inclusivity at Lighthouse is reflected in our job advertisements and that First Nations people are not only encouraged to apply for jobs at Lighthouse but that they know they will be culturally safe and supported as a First Nations employee.

Our latest annual report figures indicate that 15% of young people in our care in the last financial year identified as First Nations peoples however this can fluctuate throughout the year. Lighthouse Foundation recognises the impact of intergenerational trauma caused by a long history of dispossession and the policies and practices that impacted and continue to impact stolen generations and their families' lives, culture, and traditions. We acknowledge that, as part of the youth homelessness sector, we have a great deal of work to do to begin to address past and current injustices for a better future for upcoming generations.

Lighthouse operates from the Youth Resource Hub and Head Office in Cremorne, Victoria, land of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people. Lighthouse programs also operate across Greater Melbourne in Bunurong Country.

OUR VISION

TO END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

OUR MISSION

To provide children and young people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, with the care and support they need to heal and thrive.

Through community collaboration and our evidence-based Lighthouse Model of Care, we create Therapeutic homes and deliver tailored support programs to transform the lives of young people.

We also educate and support foster carers and families in the same way, so they too can care for some of Australia's most vulnerable children.

OUR PURPOSE

We're here to enable young people to find their place. Together, we create pathways to ensure those with experience of homelessness or trauma don't become defined by it. We recognise the urgency of this work, and we are committed to growing faster to support many more children who are in great need.





OUR APPROACH



LIGHTHOUSE CARE ENVIRONMENT



FOSTER CARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT

FAMILY





Youth focused services

COMMUNITY

Child focused services

FOSTER CARE 0-21 yrs

SUPPORT 0-21 yrs Kinship care Family preservation Family reunification

SECURE BASE

0-17 yrs

THERAPEUTIC TRANSITIONAL

16-25 yrs Young Women's Freedom Young Parents & Babies

COMMUNITY CONNECT

16-25 yrs

LIFELONG BELONGING



Community, Therapeutic Case Management

Over 25 Alumni support

EVIDENCE BASE



LIGHTHOUSE INSTITUTE Research, Development, Training

Lighthouse Foundation Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2025

OUR VISION FOR reconculation

Lighthouse Foundation recognises that reconciliation is the only way forward for a just and equitable nation. We believe the strong relationships between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians will benefit all of Australia and we are committed to contributing to change by developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). A focus on reconciliation aligns with Lighthouse's core values of respect, courage, kindness, and collaboration. We wish to develop practices that offer cultural safety and connection to children and young people, and to create a workplace where First Nations people feel welcome, safe, and valued as members of our organisation.

As a community provider of therapeutic care services, Lighthouse Foundation understands that self-determination and systemic change is necessary for making a real difference in ensuring the wellbeing for First Nations children, young people, and families. We know that cultural connection and safety is the most important determinant of wellbeing for vulnerable First Nations children and young people, who are severely overrepresented in the out of home care (OOHC) system. We are therefore deeply committed to best practice when supporting First Nations children and young people to strengthen connections to family, culture, and country, and we believe that a RAP will strengthen our capacity to embed cultural safety within our practice.

The Lighthouse Foundation will be collaborative and active in implementing our RAP, grounded in a deep understanding and recognition of the historical and ongoing impacts of colonisation. We have partnered with an Indigenous Consultant and Mentor throughout each step of the process to ensure culturally safe practice. Led by our RAP Champion, CEO Dr Eamonn McCarthy, our RAP working group was established and has been in operation since early 2023. We utilise a "many minds" approach to implementation, with our RAP working group consisting of members from across the organisation, from direct care to non-direct care staff members. Our approach is an active one, with the group meeting regularly and focussed on continually improving practice and implementing change in line with our reconciliation vision. We take our reconciliation work seriously. Our Board, CEO and management team lead by example, and ensure that time and resources are

allocated to meeting our goals, providing regular cultural awareness training for all staff, and a commitment to integrate RAP goals into broader organisational planning mechanisms. Finally, we will utilise reflective practice, embedded at every level of the organisation, to offer space for critical reflection, processing of emotions, and deep thinking in relation to reconciliation.

In the last ten years, we have rolled out regular cultural competency training for direct care staff, embedded Acknowledgement of Country across all our meetings, and ensured cultural safety markers and artefacts are consistently displayed across our different spaces, along with providing our homes with First Nations books and toys. We follow protocol by engaging with Traditional Custodians whose land we hold our annual Lighthouse camp on for any traditional ceremonies such as Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremonies.

In 2023, with the advent of the RAP Working Group, we have developed and implemented further actions to increase knowledge and cultural competence across the organisation. We have engaged Jillian West, Indigenous Training, Consulting and Mentoring, a Bunurong Traditional Custodian to contribute to our RAP and provide in-house cultural awareness training to all staff. We have developed a procurement resource list for First Nations-owned and operated businesses and have so far purchased catering and stationery. We have increased internal opportunities for learning and reflection, including in-house screenings of relevant documentaries and films throughout Reconciliation Week. In August, we developed a Voice to Parliament position statement and have regularly shared resources with our staff and networks to encourage people to be informed when it comes to the Referendum.

The RAP Reflect is expected to further our work and over the next 12-18 months commits to:

- Scope and reflect on how the organisation can further contribute to reconciliation
- Improve and build relationships with First Nations people and relevant stakeholders
- Build understanding of who, how, why and when to seek guidance and consultation on our reconciliation journey.

Prepare proposals and recommendations to our Management Team for future reconciliation initiatives.

OUR RECONCILIATION

DEDICATION TO CULTURAL SAFETY

Lighthouse Foundation is steadfast in our commitment to building and upholding cultural safety and competence practices. We understand that these efforts directly impact the care we provide to First Nations children and young people. With unwavering resolve, we celebrate and actively participate in significant events such as NAIDOC Week activities and Reconciliation Week. These moments are not just observances but integral parts of our ethos and mission.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

As part of our therapeutic care and community engagement, we prioritise establishing and maintaining strong connections with local First Nations communities in every suburb we serve. We recognise the importance of cultural safety plans in supporting First Nations young people on their journey to reconnect with their culture. This process demands the utmost sensitivity as we navigate through past and present traumas together. Our existing partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) is a testament to our commitment, and we are dedicated to reviewing and formalising more connections during our RAP Reflect process.

CONTINUED LEARNING AND COLLABORATION

Lighthouse Foundation aspires to continually strengthen existing relationships while expanding in culturally appropriate ways. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to deeply engage with and learn about Australia's true history, including the atrocities and ongoing impacts on First Nations people. With courage and humility, we have engaged Bunurong Traditional Custodian, Jillian West, and reached out to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation for local guidance. We are committed to pursuing a partnership with them to further inform and enrich our RAP with their insights, ensuring our actions are rooted in respect, understanding, and meaningful collaboration.







ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	• Identify existing and future First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence to establish types of connections and identify future relationship opportunities.	Aug 2024	RAP Chair
	 Identify and define the types of relationships we will engage with First Nations communities through Lighthouse. 	Aug 2024	RAP Chair
	 Research best practice and principles that support meaningful partnerships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations, particularly to improve outcomes for young people in Lighthouse homes and/or care from First Nations communities. 	Oct 2024	Project Coordinator
2. Build our relationships and support for First Nations young people.	 Review the accuracy, consistency and cultural sensitivity of current methodology for data collection and recording of existing young people to ensure they receive the best care. 	Dec 2024	Director of Lighthouse Institute
	 Identify and clarify the percentage of First Nations young people in Lighthouse homes and programs to so we can ensure a culturally safe and sensitive environment. 	Jul 2024	Director of Lighthouse Institute
	 Develop a proposal with the aim of ensuring our therapeutic practises and care for First Nations young people come from a place of reflection, understanding and authenticity. 	Jan 2025	RAP Chair
3. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation	 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all Lighthouse staff (including casuals and volunteers). 	May 2024	RAP Chair
Week (NRW).	 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	27 May - 3 Jun 2024	RAP Chair
	 Encourage and support staff and the Management Team to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	27 May - 3 Jun 2024	CEO
	 RAP Working Group members to host at least one NRW event in collaboration with First Nations stakeholders. 	27 May - 3 Jun 2024	RAP Chair
	 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. 	Jan 2024	CEO
4. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Develop and implement communications and events plan for the Lighthouse Community at the Youth Resource Hub (Head Office), Hubs and Homes with the aim of the plan becoming Lighthouse cultural practice.	Sep 2024	Senior Marketing Manager
	• Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Sep 2024	CEO
	 Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	Sep 2024	CEO

5. Promote positive race relations at Lighthouse Foundation through anti-discrimination strategies and culturally inclusive practices.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. Seek a cultural perspective from a Bunorong Traditional Custodian, Jillian West, Indigenous Training, Consulting and Mentoring.	Jun 2024	People and Culture Partner
	• Identify an accurate representation of First Nations employees, casuals and volunteers to ensure we provide a culturally safe environment.	Jun 2024	People and Culture Partner
	 Conduct a comprehensive audit and review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	Mar 2024	People and Culture Partner
	Review and implement inclusive practices ensuring that Acknowledgements, Welcome to Country, and all language and collateral is culturally acceptable and has meaning for Lighthouse in partnership with local First Nations stakeholders. Seek a cultural perspective from a Bunorong Traditional Custodian, Jillian West, Indigenous Training, Consulting and Mentoring.	Jun 2024	CEO
 Consider young people's voice and feedback in our practise in relation to First Nations culture and learnings. 	Develop a proposal to consider a variety of methods of feedback and contribution available for young people in Lighthouse care, and for all young people leaving our care to reflect on our cultural values and practises, particularly in relation to reconciliation and relationships.	Feb 2025	People and Culture Partner
	 Develop a procedure and practise to ensure ongoing feedback is received from young people and reviewed by Lighthouse to guide future directions as appropriate. 	Feb 2025	Director of Care Services





ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
7. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a proposal for increasing understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. Seek a cultural lens from a Bunorong Traditional Custodian, Jillian West, Indigenous Training, Consulting and Mentoring.	Sept 2024	RAP Chair
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation inclusive of all staff and young people with support from a Bunorong Traditional Custodian, Jillian West, Indigenous Training, Consulting and Mentoring.	Sep 2024	Manager of Professional Learning
	Develop an organisation wide plan for cultural learning and continual learning to ensure a continuum of understanding and reflection.	Nov 2024	Manager of Professional Learning
8. Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners and/or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational areas to bring our learnings into our Acknowledgements and operations.	Aug 2024	CEO
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Oct 2024	CEO
	Source and provide culture awareness training to all staff and provide guiding principles and consistent practises in all meetings for Acknowledgement of Country.	Jun 2024	Manager of Professional Learning
	Review and implement inclusive practises ensuring that Acknowledgements, Welcome to Country, and all language and collateral is culturally acceptable and has meaning for Lighthouse in partnership with local First Nations stakeholders. With permission of local Elders, mainly from Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.	Nov 2024	CEO
	Provide cultural information within hubs and homes with advice from Jillian West Indigenous Training, Consulting and Mentoring a Bunurong Traditional Custodian, and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.	Nov 2024	Director Care Services
9. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	Jun 2024	RAP Chair
	Continue our ongoing support to NAIDOC Week with all staff and young people by promoting external events in our local area.	Jun 2024	RAP Chair
	The Lighthouse community including all staff and young people to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event supported by a morning or afternoon tea with First Nations inspired recipes and/or catering.	Jul 2024	RAP Chair



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development.	 Develop a proposal for First Nations employment, support and retention within our organisation in an inclusive environment and that represents inclusivity with our young people as well. 	Feb 2025	People and Culture Partner
	 Build understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	Feb 2025	People and Culture Partner
11. Enhance the care experience for First Nations young people.	 Review existing processes and Individual Development Plans to hold space and provide the opportunity, with sensitivity, for young people to connect with First Nations culture and community at a time when they are ready. 	Dec 2024	Director of Care Services
	• Provide tools and resources to all carers to ensure a culturally appropriate therapeutic care approach for all First Nations young people with advice from Jillian West Indigenous Training, Consulting and Mentoring a Bunurong Traditional Custodian.	Dec 2024	Director of Care Services
12. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	 Develop a proposal for procurement from First Nations owned businesses utilising the Kinaway supplier network. 	Feb 2025	Quality and Administration Manager
	 Investigate Supply Nation membership to ensure a priority for First Nations suppliers and providers before seeking alternatives. 	Dec 2024	Quality and Administration Manager
	 Gauge local First Nations suppliers that may not have a website and/or social media and support their business. 	Aug 2024	Quality and Administration Manager



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
13. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	 Maintain a RWG to govern and support RAP implementation. 	Jan 2024	RAP Chair
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Jan 2024	RAP Chair
	• Establish First Nations representation on the RWG.	Apr 2024	CEO
14. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation and present to the Management Team.	Feb 2024	Quality and Administration Manager
	• Engage the Management Team in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Jan 2024	CEO
	Appoint the CEO to champion our RAP internally.	Jan 2024	CEO
	 Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	Jan 2024	RAP Chair
15. 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. 	Jun 2024	RAP Chair
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 Aug annually	RAP Chair
	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 Sep annually	RAP Chair
16. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Mar 2025	RAP Chair





















