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## Artwork story and Artist Profile



The ECTARC Reconciliation Action Plan features an original artwork by local artists, Lorraine Brown and Narelle Thomas of the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation in the Illawarra region.

Lorraine is a Yuin/Gunai Kurnai woman born in Bega and is one of 7 children. Lorraine views her ability to paint as a gift. She uses bold colours that reflect her coastal upbringing. "We're East Coast Saltwater People", Lorraine says. "My colours symbolise my life. I had a great childhood, great parents and family and extended family."

Narelle Thomas is one of Lorraine's sisters and they paint together. Lorraine does the fine work and Narelle fills in the details. Lorraine and Narelle work like

professional dancers, one leads and the other follows and no-one steps on any toes. It is clear they have been working together for many, many years. The painting is titled *Telling a Story*, the artwork shows the importance of learning through doing, showing, listening or simply being told. The artwork also tells us of local culture, local Dreaming stories, coastal images, alphabets, handprints of early childhood learning and of different forms of learning. Cultural history and the beginning of 1,2,3 learning.

### About Coomaditchie

The Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation is an Aboriginal organisation dedicated to raising the esteem, pride and dignity of young Aboriginal people in their Aboriginal culture and heritage.

The Coomaditchie Artists' Co-operative is a vital part of the organisation, comprised of a group of Aboriginal people who love to paint and create artworks. We are East Coast Saltwater People and our work reflects the colours and images of our environment - the South Coast of New South Wales.

In addition to the Artists' Co-operative they provide employment and training for local community members.



Lorraine Brown - Premier Artist, and  
Narelle Thomas - Artist

Coomaditchie Artists Co-Operative



## Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes ECTARC Early Childhood Education Services & Training to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

ECTARC Early Childhood Education Services & Training joins a network of more than 1,100 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 over 2.3 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 ECTARC Early Childhood Education Services & Training 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 ECTARC Early Childhood Education Services & Training, 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

## Message from ECTARC Chief Executive Officer and Board Chair

It is with great pride that we present ECTARC'S Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). ECTARC is a community owned non profit organisation that provides early education and care and vocational training for the education and care sector.

Our inaugural RAP is a significant milestone for the organisation as we celebrate 35 years of operation. We are proud to embrace and celebrate Australia's First Nations culture as we commit to prioritise positive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our vision at ECTARC is *'Enriching Futures Together'* and we firmly believe that having a RAP supports this vision. We are committed in our responsibility to increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning. We are committed to providing innovative and engaging early childhood education and training programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve their best educational outcomes through participation in early childhood education and training.

Our specialist early childhood knowledge supports the implementation of educational programs and practice for young children and vocational students, that promotes, highlights and teaches respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

We are excited that this first RAP provides us with opportunities and clear direction in our work to increase the knowledge and skills of our employees. This will support us to drive forward reconciliation and enrich futures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities. We aim to have a positive influence across the communities we work in, including Aboriginal

communities, and we will continue to advocate for a more inclusive society and workforce.

We are proud of the contributions ECTARC has made to reconciliation, but we know there is still much more to do. ECTARC'S Reflect RAP, January 2022 to January 2023, details our commitment to developing long term, beneficial and reciprocal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the communities in which we work.

Thank you to the many people across ECTARC who have contributed to this important document, the members of our RAP working group including Tina McGhie who has guided us with cultural mentoring and support on this journey. The journey we have undertaken to develop this RAP, has strengthened our understanding of and commitment to practices of reconciliation ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, heritage, culture and traditions are valued and visible across the organisation now and into the future.



**Jan Langtry**  
CEO



**Kirsty Shee**  
Board Chair

## Our Vision for Reconciliation

ECTARC Early Childhood Education Services & Training acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Australia. We recognise and value the strengths, skills and contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples bring to the education of young children and students at ECTARC Early Childhood Education and Training Services, and the wider community.

At ECTARC our vision for reconciliation is to deepen our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and rights promoting an organisational culture of respect, equality, equity, and cultural safety. We envisage an Australia where all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participate equally in early education and training to achieve best educational outcomes. Through our work with young children, families, students, and the community we hope to contribute to an Australian society that proudly recognises, celebrates and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.





## Our Business

ECTARC is a community owned not for profit organisation incorporated in October 1985. We provide early childhood education and care and vocational training for the education and care sector. Originally known as Illawarra Area Child Care the organisation rebranded in March 2020 bringing together the organisation's early education and training services under one name.

Our NSW head office and early education and care services are located on Dharawal and Yuin lands and we deliver vocational training to students studying and working on many different regional, remote and metropolitan Aboriginal lands across Australia. Our Queensland office is located on Yugambeh land in Logan QLD.

ECTARC has a vision of enriching the futures of the children, families, students, and communities we work in. Our specialist early childhood knowledge and extensive experience in the sector enables us to focus on providing optimum early education and care for children, families', students and our staff. ECTARC is a child safe organisation that is committed to providing environments where the safety, wellbeing and participation of all children is paramount.



Our organisation is governed by a voluntary board of management comprised of parent representatives from ECTARC services and the local community. ECTARC delivers the following services:

- 11 centre-based early education and care services
- A registered training organisation that provides vocational qualifications, professional development, and consultancy for the early childhood education and care sector throughout Australia.

Each year we provide early education and care to over 780 children and their families and currently have 96 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled across our 11 early education and care services in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven. ECTARC has a strong commitment to delivering programs that increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait educators in the early childhood education workforce. Our Training Service is currently delivering training and support to 68 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 44 early childhood services throughout NSW, QLD and the ACT.

We are a well-regarded large regional employer in the Illawarra, Shellharbour and Shoalhaven local government areas committed to providing support, ongoing training, and professional learning opportunities for our staff. ECTARC employs approximately 200 employees, including 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across the organisation to support the delivery of early childhood education services and training.

## Our RAP

Through our first RAP we aim to encourage and enable our staff gain a better understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to make this visible in our workplaces and in the way we deliver services to children, families and students. We strive to create new relationships and nurture existing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our workplaces and broader community.

In 2020 we established a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group to formalise our journey and ongoing commitment towards advancing reconciliation in our communities. Our Reconciliation Working Group comprises of representatives from across the organisation including Board members, senior management, staff representatives and external organisations (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) who will work together to develop and support the implementation of our first Reconciliation Action Plan. Our RAP will be championed by senior management with our Early Childhood Manager Operations, Melissa Wicks responsible for driving internal engagement and awareness of this Reconciliation Action Plan within ECTARC.

Over a period of several years ECTARC has been working towards strengthening our knowledge and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, heritage, cultures and traditions, across the organisation. In 2017 we acknowledged the need for Cultural Journey Training across all our teams including the ECTARC board of Management. We have partnered with Curijo a local Aboriginal organisation to provide this training to our teams on an ongoing basis. In 2020 the Reconciliation Working Group developed a reconciliation commitment statement affirming our commitment to reconciliation to others and signifying the start of our first RAP.

### Current Members of the RAP Working Group

- Jan Langtry ECTARC Chief Executive Officer
- Melissa Wicks Early Childhood Manager Operations
- Kathryn Barker Early Childhood Manager Services
- Leanne Griffiths ECTARC Board Chair
- Jacqueline Girvan ECTARC Board Member
- Tina McGhie Curijo
- Emily Collings ECTARC Alunga
- Deborah Unwin ECTARC Clipper Road
- Shannon McIvor ECTARC Smith Street
- Sandra Roser ECTARC Smith Street
- Deborah Wardle ECTARC Sanctuary Point
- Donna Bartley ECTARC Training Services NSW
- Caterina Sacco ECTARC Training Services NSW
- Jenna Young ECTARC Wallaroo
- Jasmin Wilson ECTARC Warilla
- Kim Rooding ECTARC Training services QLD







## Our Partnerships

ECTARC is committed to working respectfully, collaboratively and in partnership, to build genuine and reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including children, families, students, and employees. Currently, ECTARC works with a number of Aboriginal organisations and Elders within our local communities. We continue to grow our engagement and attendance at community events. Our employees and services participate in both National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day activities across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions each year.

We encourage our Early Childhood Education and Training Services to promote activities which broaden the childrens' and students' knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures embedding our commitment to reconciliation. At ECTARC we strive to create inclusive environments that are culturally safe for our children, families, students, employees and the community.



## Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish, strengthen and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	January 2022	Early Childhood Manager – Operations
	• Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	January 2022	Early Childhood Manager – Services
	• Encourage and support staff to participate in community events such as NAIDOC, Sorry Day and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's day.	July 2022	CEO
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff and board members.	April 2022	Early Childhood Manager – Operations
	• RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May 2022	Early Childhood Manager – Operations
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2022	Early Childhood Manager – Operations
	• Host at least one internal event to encourage awareness and celebrate NRW for staff.	May 2022	CEO
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	January 2022	CEO
	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to our clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children</li> <li>• families</li> <li>• students.</li> </ul>	January 2022	Early Childhood Manager – Services Manager, Training Services Manager
	• Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	January 2022	CEO
	• Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	January 2022	Early Childhood Manager – Services
	• Review on boarding and orientation procedures to include our commitment to reconciliation for new employees.	May 2022	Early Childhood Manager – Operations
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	• Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	April 2022	Early Childhood Manager – Operations
	• Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	May 2022	Early Childhood Manager – Operations
5. Promote reconciliation with ECTARC Training Services students.	• Promote the unit <i>CHCDIV002 Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety</i> with ECTARC Training Services students.	December 2022	Training Services Manager – Funded





## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	• Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	January 2022	CEO
	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	April 2022	Chair RAP Working group
	• Review, develop and implement a cultural learning program that reflects the diverse cultural learning needs across the organisation, to support continued learning (Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced).	July 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Operations & RAP working group
	• Implement educational programs and practice that promote, highlight and teach respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.	December 2022	Early Childhood Co-ordinators & EC Directors
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	Jan 2022	Chair RAP working group
	• Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	April 2022	Chair RAP working group
	• Increase the understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols for children and student across ECTARC.	April 2022	Chair RAP working group
	• Review and seek feedback on ECTARC's current Acknowledgement to Country across the country/regions we work.	February 2022	Chair RAP working group
	• Develop and implement guidelines for staff on Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country protocols across our organisation.	March 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Operations
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• Continue to raise awareness and share information amongst our staff and board about the meaning of NAIDOC Week and increase the profile of NAIDOC Week across the organisation.	July 2022	RAP working group
	• Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Services
	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2022	RAP working group
	• Host at least one internal event to encourage awareness and celebrate NAIDOC Week across ECTARC	July 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Services
9. Support internal and external projects that target early developmental outcomes.	• Continue our engagement in programs and external partnerships, that support closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.	December 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Services



## Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	• Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	March 2022	CEO
	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	April 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Operations
	• Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	August 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Operations
11. Support Aboriginal and Torres Islander students.	• Investigate opportunities to deliver funded traineeship programs for Aboriginal and Torres Islander students through ECTARC training services. (Partnering with an Aboriginal Organisation).	April 2022	Training Services Manager - Funded
12. Support Aboriginal and Torres Islander students.	• Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	February 2022	CEO
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	February 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Operations
	• Continue to support and investigate new opportunities to purchase from local Elders, sole trader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses such as arts and crafts, hobbyist's and consultancy businesses.	December 2022	CEO
13. Promote Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education to staff and external stakeholders.	• Promote Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program to all ECTARC early education and care services. All ECTARC services to be actively working towards developing or maintaining their own RAPs via the Narragunnawali platform.	July 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Services
	• Encourage all staff to engage with the professional learning resources (including webinar) available via Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education online platform.	December 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Services
	• Encourage all ECTARC staff and early education and care services to sign up to the Narragunnawali News mailing list.	May 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Services
	• Provide links to Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in education platform, on our websites and in written communications to our staff.	May 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Operations
	• Help promote and encourage ECTARC early learning services who have shown exceptional commitment to reconciliation to apply for the 2022 Narragunnawali Award.	April 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Services
	• Nominate ECTARC services who have shown exceptional commitment to reconciliation for a 2022 Narragunnawali Award.	April 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Services





## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
14. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	January 2022	CEO and Early Childhood Managers
	• Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	January 2022	Chair RAP Working Group
	• Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	January 2022	Chair RAP Working Group
15. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	February 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Operations
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	March 2022	Chair RAP Working Group
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March 2022	Chair RAP working group
16. 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.	July 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Operations
17. Embed governance structure for RAP commitments.	• Report back to CEO and board of directors on RAP progress at monthly board meetings.	July 2022	Early Childhood Manager and CEO
18. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	July 2022	Early Childhood Manager - Operations



#### Contact details

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