

# HEPATITIS QUEENSLAND

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan July 2020 – July 2021







## About our cover art

### Nigooli Designs

Nicky Newley-Guivarra (Nigooli) was born in 1967 and is a Wuthathi woman and gifted painter. Her family heritage on her Grandmothers side is from Shelburn Bay, Cape York Peninsula and from her Grandfathers side from Murray Island in the Torres Strait Islands. Nicky currently resides in Brisbane with her family.

Nicky possesses a natural strength in her desire to paint and the themes within her work reflect culture, spirituality and life experiences. Nigooli Art is a unique and dynamic fusion of traditional and contemporary themes, often encompassing the spirit of saltwater and deep ocean themes, and reflections upon culture and life as taught to her by her grandfather. Nigooli works with primary contemporary acrylic or ink on canvas or lino prints.

### **Moods – Medium acrylic and ink on canvas**

This painting represents the path to healing. The journey through mental health pathways. The figures represent the instabilities of mood changes, as we go on our journey to better manage our moods. Understanding them and eventually being able to better manage and treat them.

The sun always represents strength and resilience, while the images in the sky represent tears. Tears for the unknown and the stigma which surrounds mental health. The small centre circles represent a year of dedicated pathways which eventually takes us to our state of well-being mentally, physically and spiritually.

### **Artwork context**

Hepatitis Queensland's RAP artwork titled *Moods* was created by Nicky Newley-Guivarra; a proud Wuthathi woman, artist, cultural leader and teacher. Nicky's paintings thematically express her heritage, culture and personal health journey as an affirmation of her identity.

Nicky has worked as an employee of HQ over the years through various projects. In recognising Nicky's deep connection and

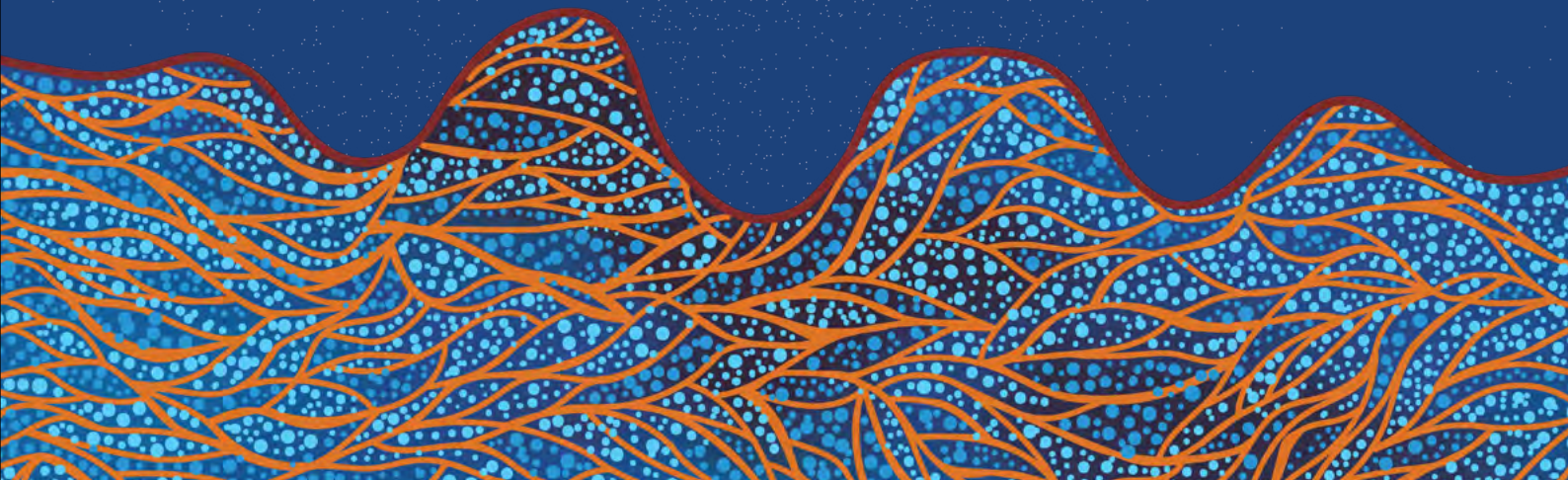
working relationship, she now plays an important role as a part of the HQ RAP working group.

Nicky chose an artwork for HQ which celebrates and recognises the beginning of HQ's Reconciliation journey while also reflecting broadly on what that journey means for HQ and people living with viral hepatitis. The artwork was inspired by the personal journey of understanding mental health and the path to healing. In recognising mental health and different pathways to healing, HQ wanted to highlight its relevance and importance in the healing process for someone living with viral hepatitis. At the heart of this journey, HQ's fundamental commitment is to improve the experience for all those who come into our orbit, as well as for the individuals who ultimately benefit from our role as Queensland's peak body for people living with or at risk of viral hepatitis.

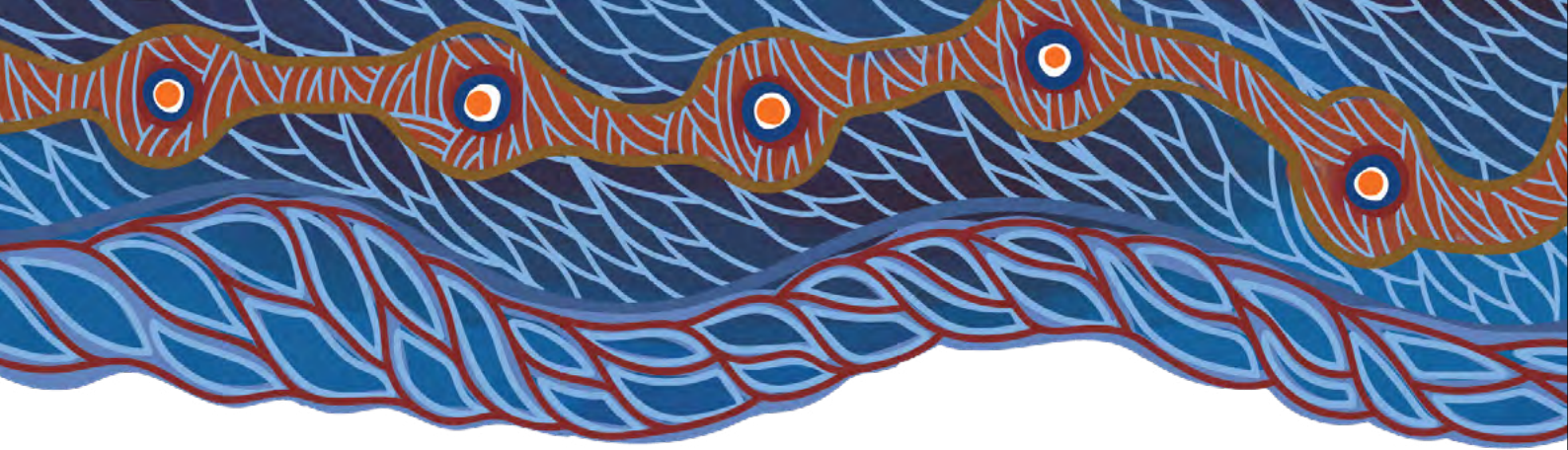
Like any organisation we are eternally evolving and learning. At our core, HQ knows that health care services that are respectful of, and receptive to, the cultural differences in health beliefs and practices of diverse patients will result in improved health outcomes.

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## OUR BUSINESS

**Hepatitis Queensland is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation dedicated to improving health and social outcomes for Queenslanders affected by or at risk of viral hepatitis and liver disease. Hepatitis Queensland was established in 1995 as the Hepatitis C Council of Queensland providing support groups for communities and families affected by hepatitis C and soon evolved into an active organisation providing vital services to the community and offering a voice for awareness and change.**

In 2010 our name changed to Hepatitis Queensland, signalling our evolution to an incorporated entity providing funded services to the community and stakeholders. It also acknowledged and embraced the importance and inclusion of all forms of viral hepatitis. Without forgetting where we came from, as a small group of affected community members, we constantly innovate and adapt to the changing health environment and today have broadened services to encompass viral hepatitis and liver health.

Here at HQ, we are committed to delivering better liver health for ALL Queenslanders. We do this through delivering projects that drive change and advocating by creating powerful, engaging content and resources. We work to empower and educate the workforce to understand the challenges of living with viral hepatitis while thinking outside the box to break stigma and barriers associated with hepatitis.

HQ has developed ground-breaking outreach programs to engage with our diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We partner with Governments, the public and private sector to change public policy and behaviours related to hepatitis and to foster a greater public awareness of the urgent issues for people living with viral hepatitis in Queensland.

HQ has a state-wide brief and works to reach all Queenslanders. Our office is based in Bowen Hills, Brisbane and currently employs 8 staff members, with an equivalent of 6 FTE. We do not currently have Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees working within the organisation. However, HQ has previously employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in focused positions to deliver education targeted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland including the Torres Strait Islands.



## OUR RAP

Hepatitis Queensland learn, live and work upon the land and waterways of the Yuggera region and acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands across Queensland. HQ staff acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. We understand that the work we undertake in Queensland is grounded within the love, courage, creativity and resilience of previous Indigenous activists, advocates, and community leaders. We value the cultures, histories and traditions that are important components of the identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and acknowledge that these essential elements contribute to the social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our vision for reconciliation is to close the unacceptable and ongoing health disparity that still exists between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. As an organisation, HQ holds values such as inclusiveness and responsibility that are at the core of our business and the communities we service. As such, we are implementing this

RAP to ensure we can foster greater relationships with, demonstrate respect and identify opportunities for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We anticipate that through developing and implementing this RAP, we will be able to better understand the health and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and from this, implement steps to enable us to enhance health service delivery to ensure that all Australians – including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – are able to receive equitable access to testing, prevention and treatment options for viral hepatitis.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a higher prevalence of hepatitis B than non-Indigenous people at 4%. Hepatitis C has an estimated prevalence of 1% for non-Indigenous people yet rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 4 times higher.<sup>1,2</sup> Hepatitis Queensland is committed to reducing the substantial health inequalities that exist for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with viral hepatitis and liver disease.

For HQ, we are embarking on an important reconciliation journey in the development of our first RAP. We see the RAP framework as an opportunity to leverage our experience and expertise to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve better health outcomes and follow best practice as our organisation moves into the future.

The RAP is being led and developed by our RAP working group with representatives from all areas of our operations, including our CEO, two project officers and a member of the community who identifies as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person and has previous history working with the organisation. As part of our RAP working group, we have identified an initial group of “RAP Champions” who are already committed to reconciliation. As our RAP is implemented, we will have these staff mentor others that have a strong interest throughout the organisation to further contribute and drive our RAP implementation.

### Reference:

1. ASHM. Viral Hepatitis Mapping Project –National Report 2017.

2. The Kirby Institute. HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia, Annual Surveillance Report 2018.



# OUR PARTNERSHIPS & CURRENT ACTIVITIES

## Our first RAP will seek to:

1. Collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the design and delivery of our programs.
2. Establish and develop respectful, trusting, and mutually beneficial relationships with Traditional Owner Groups and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland, and other critical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders within the health sector.
3. Increase HQ staff knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and contemporary issues.

Hepatitis Queensland is excited to be formalising our commitment to the advancement of and reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disproportionately affected by viral hepatitis and liver disease. Hepatitis Queensland recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a priority population in our work and seeks to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the design and delivery of projects relevant to them.

Hepatitis Queensland has a current partnership with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, a collective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services to deliver a hepatitis B health promotion program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Hepatitis Queensland will fund activities for World Hepatitis Day which focus on delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Internally, Hepatitis Queensland recognise an Acknowledgement of Country before all meetings with external stakeholders, education sessions and in email signatures. We seek to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in the design and delivery of all projects, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific and otherwise. Our materials are reviewed for cultural appropriateness before in-person delivery. We seek to procure services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. Staff have participated in community events including hosting stalls at NAIDOC events.

Hepatitis Queensland have run a number of successful projects with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in the past, including the Deadly Grandmothers, Art and Story and Community Hepatitis B Projects.

# PAST PROJECTS & SUMMARY

## The Hep B Education Project

Hepatitis Queensland created the Hep B Family Tree to assist in starting conversations about hepatitis B with families and communities. In many cultures trees are a symbol of life, energy, and the support given by strong roots. The Hep B branches are an extension of this symbol and each branch provides a simple awareness message that shines a light on hepatitis B and helps start conversations.

The Far North Queensland and Torres Strait Hepatitis B Community Education Projects engaged with people at risk of, or living with hepatitis B. Workshop locations included Yarrabah, Bamaga and the Torres Strait Islands. These workshops raised awareness and knowledge of hepatitis B and encouraged access to testing, appropriate management and treatment for hepatitis B in their communities.

Utilising art as a medium for education, community members were encouraged to paint their own story of what hepatitis B means to them, their family and their community. Final artworks were formed to create a mural representing the Hep B Family Tree and served to raise awareness within the broader community.

## Deadly Grandmothers project

The Deadly Grandmothers Project was a social and wellbeing education initiative in collaboration between Hepatitis Queensland and the Beaudesert Scenic Rim Elders.

The series of workshop enabled the Grandmothers in the community to better support young people in their care, who may have been experiencing personal challenges as a result of drug dependencies, alcohol misuse, mental health issues and/or risk of acquiring hepatitis C.



## Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen 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.	July 2020	Project officer
	• Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	January 2021	Project officer
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	27 May – 3 June, 2021	Admin Manager
	• RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June, 2021	Project officer & CEO
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June, 2021	CEO
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	May 2020	CEO
	• Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	July 2020	Project officer
	• Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	July 2020	Project officer
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	• Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	January 2021	CEO
	• Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2020	CEO



## Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. 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 2021	CEO
	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	July 2020	CEO
	• Develop an understanding of the experiences and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and how those experiences and cultures inform their interactions with our organisation.	March 2021	Project officer
6. 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.	October 2020	Project officer
	• Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	July 2020	CEO
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	November 2020	Project officer
	• Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	November 2020	Project officer
	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	November 2020	Project officer & CEO

## Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	• Develop a business case for the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within our organisation.	March 2021	CEO
	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	July 2020	CEO
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	March 2021	CEO
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	March 2021	CEO
10. Consider other ways to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our organisation.	• Support the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a priority population in policy documents, consultations and services.	March 2021	CEO
	• Explore the creation of an identified position for the HQ Board	May 2021	CEO

## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Maintain the RWG to govern RAP implementation.	May 2021	CEO
	• Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	July 2020	Project officer
	• Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	May 2021	Project officer
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July 2020	Project officer
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	May 2021	CEO
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September 2020	Project officer
13. 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.	30 September, 2020	Project officer
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register to begin developing our next RAP.	May 2021	CEO



**Our vision for reconciliation is to close  
the unacceptable and ongoing health  
disparity that still exists between  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples  
and non-Indigenous Australians.**



## CONTACT DETAILS

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