



# Reconciliation Action Plan

PROGRESS REPORT  
2019 - 2021

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## Acknowledgement

General Practice Supervisors Australia (GPSA) acknowledges First Nations peoples as the traditional and current custodians of the lands upon which we work. We respect that this land always was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land. Sovereignty has never been ceded. We particularly acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples of the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners of the lands where our head office in Bendigo, Victoria is located.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, as well as all First Nations peoples who have fought, and continue to fight, for equality, self-determination, culture, Country and community.

The artwork used in this report has been illustrated by Jordan Lovegrove, from Dreamtime Creative.

## Message from the CEO

GPSA is proud of the contributions its members, board, and staff are making towards an Australia that is respectful and free from racism. Throughout general practice training, our approach focuses on building upon the many strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, remembering their achievements as one of the oldest continually surviving cultures in the world. This means facilitating practical solutions for inclusive and welcoming healthcare: led by First Nations peoples and allies. Our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 'Reflect' led to the development of a guide and associated teaching plans for GP supervisors and training practices, supporting the education of registrars and the creation of learning environments that are more welcoming and culturally inclusive. Within our own organisation, we have been seeking to secure cultural safety, developing the cross-cultural skills and knowledge of our staff, and establishing, sustaining, and strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop targeted solutions that are driven by actual needs of their communities. We recognise that our journey towards Reconciliation is only just beginning, but with an open heart, deep listening, and commensurate resourcing, we move forward and continue to build on our achievements to date. This report gives an overview of where we have come since 2019, and where we hope to head.

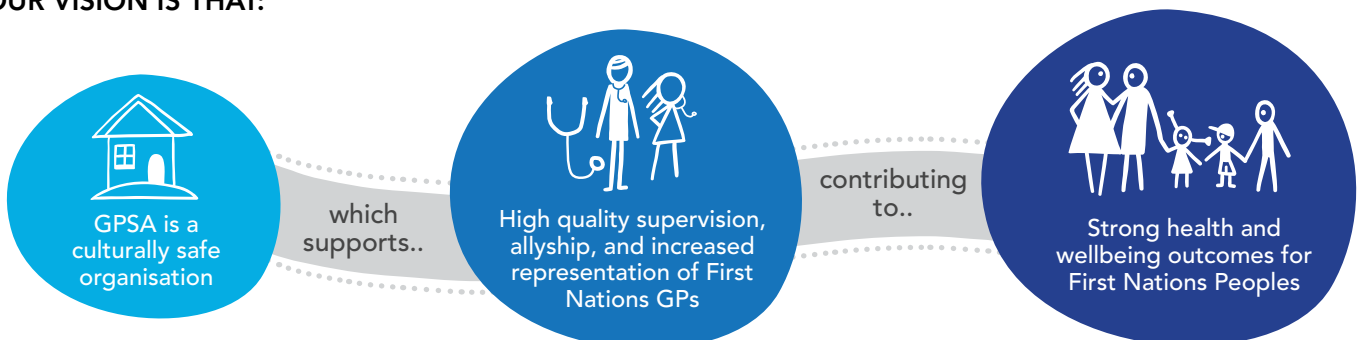


Carla Taylor  
CEO

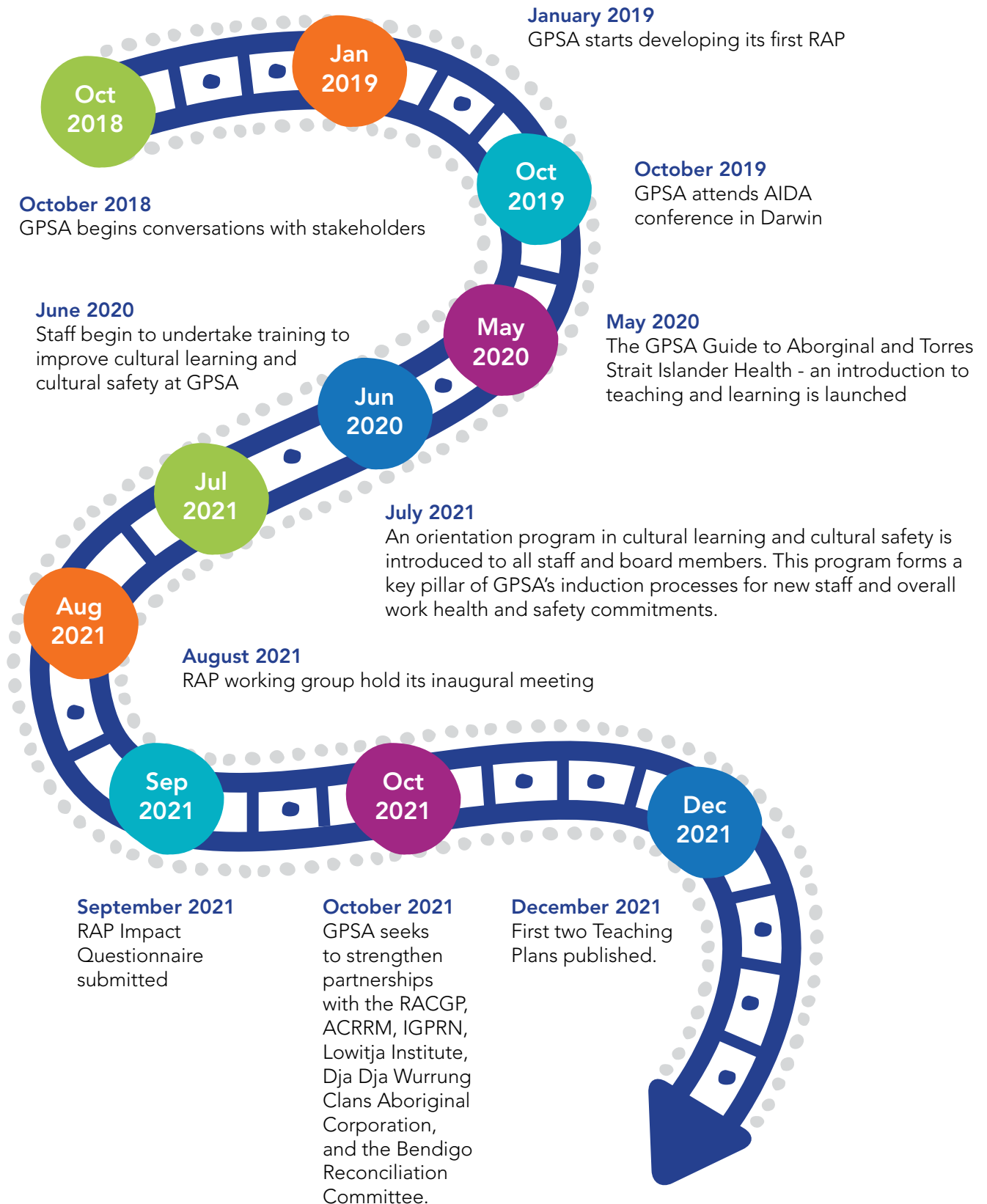
## Joining the path towards reconciliation

GPSA is committed to ensuring that all staff and members, including Board members, are enabled to safely enter the reconciliation space - to learn, grow, to make mistakes and build capacity. GPSA understands that everyone may enter the reconciliation journey at different stages, with differing levels of knowledge, backgrounds, and ways to foment change. The ultimate goal however, is for staff and Board members to become more culturally competent with an ability to help secure cultural safety here at GPSA.

### OUR VISION IS THAT:



## Key milestones



## Next steps 2022+

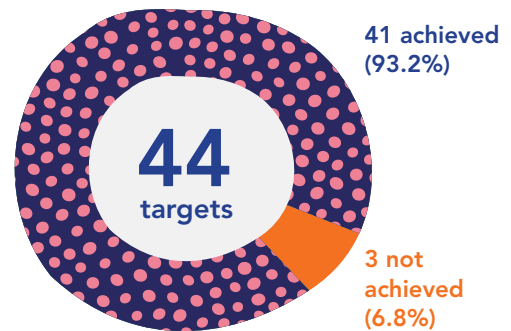
GPSA will develop and launch its next RAP - Innovate. Here we will continue developing our knowledge, practices, partnerships, and ways we respect and celebrate First Nations cultures and peoples. We aim to work closer with Community, especially the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans on whose land our head office is located. Our focus will also be on helping to create culturally safe general practice teaching and learning environments, and to do this, we will need to work closely with registrars and organisations such as the Indigenous General Practice Registrars Network (IGPRN).

### WHAT CULTURAL SAFETY LOOKS LIKE AT GPSA



## RAP progress at a glance | Reflect 2020-2021

This section provides a snapshot of GPSA's progress in completing our inaugural RAP *Reflect 2020-2021*. This includes achievements that were beyond our RAP targets, targets that we achieved during the course of our RAP, and targets we were unable to achieve due to challenges. We highlight a selection of successes and challenges, with further insights into what we have learned about enablers and inhibitors of making sustainable change in the Reconciliation space.



### RELATIONSHIPS

TARGETS ACHIEVED

19/19

#### WE:

Collaborated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander GP supervisors to publish a range of educational resources such as Guides and Teaching Plans to support the quality teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Conducted webinars for GPSA members to enhance the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health to GP registrars.

Established and strengthened partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations including the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, Lowitja Institute, Bendigo Reconciliation Committee, and the Indigenous General Practice Registrars Network (IGPRN).

Documented and agreed to uphold best practice principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

Developed an understanding and appreciation for the importance of Acknowledgement of Country at the start of our meetings and yarns we have together as an organisation.

Conducted a review of human resource policies and procedures to identify suitability of anti-discrimination provisions and future needs, including research on what is currently best practice within the broader sector.

#### WHAT WORKS:

- Partnerships that occur within a framework of self-determination and First Nations control.
- Rotating who acknowledges Country every meeting, not always the Chair or Host. This results in greater practical participation from all members.

#### WHAT DOESN'T WORK:

- Forming partnership under strict time constraints.
- Focusing solely on individually-based discrimination, while ignoring discrimination that exists at a structural level.

## RESPECT

8/8

### TARGETS ACHIEVED

#### WE:

Developed a Cultural Learning and Cultural Safety orientation program for all new staff that begin at GPSA. The program orientates staff to our RAP, our activities, and expected behaviours and attitudes with respect to securing cultural safety at GPSA. The program fits within the broader new staff induction program and supports commitments to work health and safety, alongside Reconciliation.

Developed a self-assessment questionnaire for staff and board members as part of our Cultural Learning and Cultural Safety orientation program to: i) identify strengths and learning needs, ii) map learning needs to appropriate trainings and activities, and iii) receive resource suggestions based on learning needs and areas of interest.

Celebrated NAIDOC week by having a yarn about our most inspiring First Nations leaders, TV shows, artists, and stories from First Nations culture. Not only did we get to know a bit more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture, we got to know a bit more about each other and our interests and passions as well.

Began a 'Word of the Week' program in Yolŋu Matha to better understand language and culture from an Aboriginal perspective.

Continue to learn about Djandak, the lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans on which GPSA's Head Office is located in the now named city of Bendigo.

#### WHAT WORKS:

- Staff undertaking activities have the skills and competencies to build and maintain culturally safe spaces.
- Creating regular 'touchpoints' to talk about, share, and celebrate First Nations cultures, not just waiting for NAIDOC or Reconciliation weeks.

#### WHAT DOESN'T WORK:

- Assuming that participants will automatically transfer what is learned during training programs straight back to the workplace.
- Undervaluing Indigenous knowledge and ways of being and doing.



## OPPORTUNITIES

TARGETS ACHIEVED

5/8

### WE:

Researched best practice methods of recruitment, retention and professional development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as potential or existing employees for GPSA.

Search for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. Consulting the Supply Nation database in making organisational purchases.

Did not develop an accessible recruitment resource for training practices to encourage and welcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Did not develop relationships with Aboriginal employment agencies to assess potential traineeship positions of employment within GPSA.

Did not develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.

### WHAT WORKS:

- Setting targets such as obtaining at least one quote from a First Nations business supplier during procurement.
- Embedding Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artwork broadly across the organisation, not just within one single document, such as a Reconciliation Action Plan.

### WHAT DOESN'T WORK:

- Setting generalised targets that are not cognisant of the nature of the organisation.
- Attempting to perform activities where GPSA has little to no expertise in the area.

## GOVERNANCE

TARGETS ACHIEVED

9/9

### WE:

Drafted a Terms of Reference for our RAP Working Group, invited members, and began having meetings.

Engaged staff and board members in the delivery of RAP commitments, with RAP updates being a standing board agenda item at every meeting.

### WHAT WORKS:

- Dedicating a staff member to the RAP, whilst also providing a secretariat role to the Working Group.
- Providing a monthly RAP dashboard report for Management and Board meetings.

### WHAT DOESN'T WORK:

- Attempting to appoint Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons to groups or activities when the relationship isn't yet strong enough.
- Not having a monitoring process to assess RAP performance and feedback into activities

## Our stories

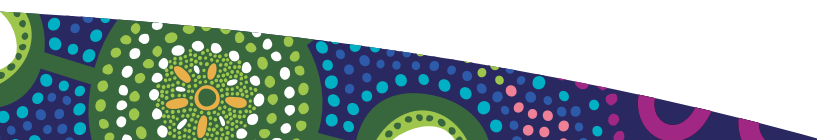
### WORD OF THE WEEK

Understanding the language of someone from another culture is one of the greatest ways to understand culture and connect with the ways that people think, dream, and communicate. With this in mind, GPSA instituted a Yolŋu Matha word of the week email to all staff to give some insights into the particular Aboriginal culture of Yolŋu people from north-east Arnhem land.

One of our staff has conversational language skills in this language, and they are also able to draw on their experience and previous research conducted into this language. The focus in the Word of the Week is usually to present something of the “meaning behind the meaning” of each word. Providing an understanding of underlying meanings which are often not represented and have only been discovered through extensive research and experience of using the language in

conversation. For example, knowing the literal meaning of the English phrase “break a leg”, does not convey the vernacular meaning of the phrase and how it is used in conversation. This type of underlying information is critical to understand how people from Yolŋu culture think, and in so doing creates a greater cross-cultural understanding of similarities and differences in thinking and world-view.

Whilst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures represent a wide diversity of clan nations and cultures, being able to understand and gain insight into one Aboriginal culture through these regular bite sized pictures helps to build true reconciliation through knowing something of the language and worldview of Yolŋu people.





#### EXAMPLE EMAIL 1:

**From:** communications@gpsa.org.au  
**Sent:** Friday, 8 October 2021 09:24  
**To:** All Staff  
**Subject:** Yolŋu Matha - Word of the Week

Nhamirri Walal (How are you all?)

Today's Yolŋu Matha word of the week is manikay meaning song (pronounced man-e-kay)

This is the word used to describe traditional songlines, as well as another other kind of song.

Songlines basically store all of the intellectual knowledge of Yolŋu in the same way as books are used. This included knowledge such as maps to travel across country, traditional laws, and creation stories. Using rhythm and melody encoding, this is a powerful way of storing knowledge. Think of the old Cottee's commercial jingle: "my dad picks the fruit...." I bet you remember the rest of the words of this song, even though you don't really want to. This shows the power of storing knowledge in song. Some studies have compared 100 year old recordings of manikay and found there was no essential difference in the song apart from when the singer took an extra breath. As an example of how long knowledge can be stored in this way, I recorded a song called "Mawurrumbul," about a large cat. This refers to the marsupial lion (Thylacoleo), which became extinct in Australia well over 30,000 years ago, meaning that this song predates the earliest forms of writing in Mesopotamia in 3200 BC.

Nhama yalala (see you later)

#### EXAMPLE EMAIL 2:

**From:** communications@gpsa.org.au  
**Sent:** Friday, 13 August 2021 09:36  
**To:** All Staff  
**Subject:** Yolŋu Matha - Word of the Week

Yo nhamirri nhe (Hi, how are you)

This morning I went to Lake Weeroona to take a photo of some staff members with a research team. Looking at the glassy still water I was reminded of a very special Yolŋu Matha concept:

Mägaya rom (Pronounced Mah-gi-ya rom)

This term has no direct translation. It has been described to me thus: When you see the ocean lying still and everything is quiet and still, that is like magaya rom.

Rom is the Yolŋu word for law or way or lore. When everything is in a state of balance according to the law, you have magaya rom. Another way of looking at it is like the Asian concept of Ying/Yang with these two elements being in balance.

The principles of Yolŋu law are intended to preserve this state of magaya rom. The proper term for official Yolŋu law is Madayin, which is a complete system of law.

Till next time

Djutjtjutj (Goodbye)

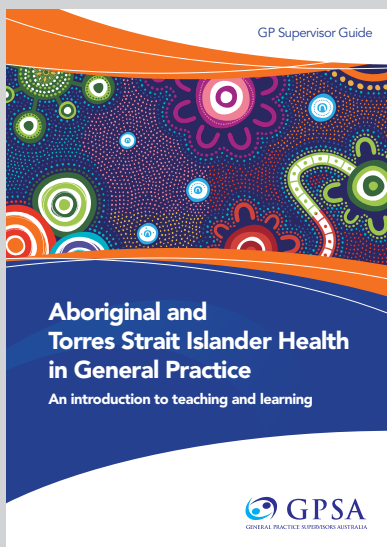
## TEACHING RESOURCES

In 2020, GPSA launched its Supervisor Guide to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health in General Practice: An introduction to teaching and learning, which has been downloaded more than 3,500 times to date (Sept 2022).

Following publication, it was observed that discrete, one-page teaching plans were also required to better support supervisors implement the various aspects of teaching with their registrar. This need was identified and filled by Torres Strait Islander GP Supervisor,


Dr Karen Nicholls. Dr Nicholls had already drafted a series of Teaching Plans, and conversations began with GPSA.

The discussions continued, the relationship developed, and the result was the beginning of a series of Dr Nicholls' teaching plans being published by GPSA. In 2021 two teaching plans were launched, with more to come throughout 2022. These teaching plans help address important aspects like Identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status with patients.




**GUIDE:**  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health in General Practice

[DOWNLOAD](#)



**TEACHING PLAN:**  
Introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and their Health

[DOWNLOAD](#)



**TEACHING PLAN:**  
Identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

[DOWNLOAD](#)

For further resources please visit our website:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health: <https://gpsupervisorsaustralia.org.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health/>
- Reconciliation: <https://gpsupervisorsaustralia.org.au/reconciliation-2/>

