

THE FRED HOLLOWS FOUNDATION

Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan
December 2025 – December 2028



STORY BEHIND INDIGENOUS DESIGN

by Rheanna Lotter/Ngandabaa for Coastrek

Rheanna Lotter is a Yuin woman currently living and working in Wollongong. She started painting when she was a girl alongside her mother and sisters. She loves Indigenous art and its ability to connect with her culture and its stories.

“I have The Fred Hollows Foundation in the middle and then the 4 values on the outside connected. Then boomerangs for resilience and strength, then connection lines that travel out as you continue to help those in need and continue to build confidence in people you train - to then take the painting “off” the canvas and they continue to support more people. Then those circles on the outside are a symbol of all the work you do across Australia as you are visiting lots of communities. Then I have more people scattered around of those that you help train and develop to support their community.”

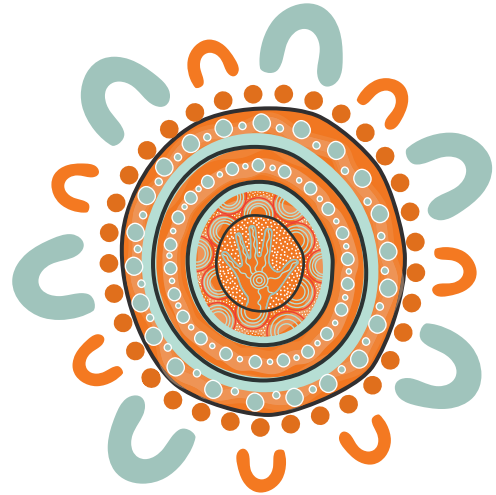


Aboriginal and torres strait islander peoples are warned photographs in this document may contain images of deceased persons which may cause distress.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

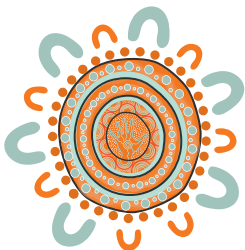
The Fred Hollows Foundation acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work and live, and recognises their continuing stewardship of land, water and community. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to Elders both past and present and their children who inherit the systems which we all work to make more inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our offices are located on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation (Sydney), the Turrbul and Jagera peoples in Meanjin (Brisbane), Larrakia peoples of Garramilla (Darwin), and Wurundjeri and Bunurong/Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation in Naarm (Melbourne).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Foundation also acknowledges the important contributions of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, Board, partners and other key supporters.

This Reconciliation Action Plan affirms the Foundation's resolute commitment to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and acknowledges that non-Indigenous staff at The Foundation need to carry the torch for Reconciliation across the entire organisation, and with our non-Indigenous partner organisations.



OUR BUSINESS

The Foundation's work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is part of our DNA.

The Fred Hollows Foundation is an independent, non-profit and secular international development organisation working towards eliminating avoidable blindness around the world and improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

The Foundation was established in 1992 to continue the work of Professor Fred Hollows. Fred was an Ophthalmologist and social justice activist who was outraged by the high rates of eye disease and health challenges in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. He championed the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the same health outcomes and life opportunities as other Australians.

We are driven by Fred's vision to eliminate avoidable blindness and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have access to quality health services. We believe that collaborating with integrity, and supporting local communities to implement local solutions, is the best way realise positive change.

OUR PEOPLE

As of October 1, 2025, the Fred Hollows Foundation employs a total of 418 people across 25 countries. Of these, 192 are Australia based. 14 of the Australian staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander which represents 7.2% of total Australian staff.

THE FRED HOLLOWES FOUNDATION 2024-2028 STRATEGY

The Foundation's Vision, Purpose and Values are outlined in The Fred Hollows Foundation 2024-2028 Strategy.

Fred's original vision is still our vision – a world in which no person is needlessly blind or vision impaired. Our purpose is to deliver bold eye health solutions that transform lives. Our values which are the drivers of our vision and purpose, are:

Integrity; Collaboration; Action; Resourcefulness; Empowerment – I CARE

OUR VISION: A world in which no person

OUR PURPOSE: Deliver bold eye health

GOALS

Strengthen integrated people-centred eye care to protect and restore sight to those most in need

OBJECTIVES

- Training, equipping and mobilising eye care teams to scale up treatment
- Secure political commitment to plan, fund and deliver eye care
- Build resilient and coordinated eye care services and facilities
- Improve quality outcomes for eye care
- Increase access to and use of eye care, particularly in marginalised communities
- Adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change

ENABLERS



Inspire our supporters and unlock resources from around the world

PEOPLE AND PARTNERS



Create sustainable change around the world for people at greatest risk of being left behind

VALUES



INTEGRITY



COLLABORATION



is needlessly blind or vision impaired

solutions that transform lives

Advance transformative solutions that address key eye health challenges

- Improve workforce coverage and quality
- Enrich eye health data availability, quality and use
- Eliminate Trachoma
- Optimise the supply chain and reduce environmental and other costs of eye care consumables and equipment
- Harness digital and enabling technologies to address priority eye health challenges

Elevate eye health as a social, economic and development issue that unlocks political will and resourcing

- Build and promote the investment case for eye health action
- Unlock funding and resourcing
- Foster multi-sectoral systemic action for eye health
- Promote accountability and good governance of eye health
- Overcoming barriers for women and girls in accessing eye health



Invest in and empower our people



Work with and for our partners



Optimise our delivery through effective and efficient operations



Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia so they can always exercise their right to sight, good health and self-determination



Work with partners to deliver locally-led, quality, cost-effective solutions



ACTION



RESOURCEFUL



EMPOWERMENT



Larrakia Elder Carol Burkhard and younger brother Don – who has taken on the role of caring for Carol and another brother – also has cataract in both eyes.

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

The Fred Hollows Foundation’s vision for reconciliation is grounded in our deep commitment to, and respect for, the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly their inalienable rights to good health, sight and self-determination.

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) prioritises three key areas to inform our approach to reconciliation and maximise the positive impact The Foundation can make within its sphere of influence.

Specifically, it:

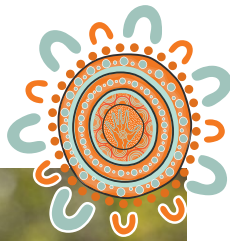
- Aligns with the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples to business practice and advocacy.

- Strengthens structures for impactful and accountable allyship.
- Builds the cultural capability, safety and responsiveness of our organisation.

In addition, we are:

- Co-convenors of Allies for Uluru coalition which aims to raise awareness and support on the Uluru Statement from the Heart and broader social justice and allyship issues.
- Convenors of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) Indigenous Peoples Special Interest Group.
- A long-standing member and sponsor of the (NGO) National Steering Committee for the Close the Gap campaign, which aims to close the gap in health and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.
- A silver sponsor of Vision 2020 Australia and represented on the Board and Policy Committees, including the Vision and Eye Care for Aboriginal



Cliff Plummer, Senior Aboriginal Health Practitioner with the Anyinginyi Health in Tennant Creek.



The most important thing is relationships between people and structures that serve those

– Professor Fred Hollows

and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Committee, which coordinates national advocacy efforts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health and vision care. We work closely with locally run Aboriginal Community Controlled Health organisations. These are the Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation, Nganampa Aboriginal Health Centre, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health, and the Victoria Aboriginal Health Service.

- A partner with the First Nations Eye Health Alliance representing self-determination and community control in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Sector.
- A member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs Community of Practice, which is a forum for ACFID members to work together and advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as aligned with our vision and purpose.

- A signatory committed to the Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory Partnership Principles and working in line with the ACFID Practice Note for ‘Effective Development Practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities’.
- Committed to the National Anti-Racism Strategy, launched by the Australian Government in 2012, which aims to address racism through public education and awareness.
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“the Declaration”) is an international human rights framework that recognises and protects the unique and collective rights of Indigenous peoples across the world. In the Australian context, this instrument relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ rights, specifically in terms of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and self-determination.
- We will continue to demonstrate and embed best practice in engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and uphold the unique rights of Indigenous peoples as specific areas of organisational strategic focus, in alignment with the Declaration and our Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion Policy.
- Our Indigenous Australia Strategy 2025 – 2028 and this RAP are guided by the principles of the Declaration, and we are committed to taking a rights-based approach to health, to ensure equity in the accessibility and responsiveness of eye health services.



Eye Health Coordinator Kerry Woods from Broome, on the steps of the Lions Outback Vision Van.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

At The Fred Hollows Foundation, reconciliation is not just something we commit to on paper. It's woven into the heart of how we work, who we partner with and how we hold ourselves accountable.

As we launch our second Stretch RAP, we do so in a moment that's complex and emotional for us as individuals, an organisation and a nation. The result of the Voice to Parliament referendum left many of us reflecting deeply. While the proposal didn't succeed, our commitment to truth-telling, justice and walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has not and will not waver. We remain firmly committed to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including Voice, Treaty and Truth, and we recognise this as a call to action for all of us.

This RAP marks another step in that long walk. It builds on what we've learned and names what we must do better. We're centring self-determination, ensuring cultural safety and taking seriously our role as an ally organisation.

It also affirms our focus on working in respectful partnership not just with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities but with the organisations, services and changemakers they lead. Reconciliation cannot happen without real relationships. We know that. We understand it takes time, care, authenticity and action.

This plan reflects our strategy's core values especially our belief in equity, collaboration and courage. It also reflects the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across The Foundation whose insights and strength continue to shape our path.

To everyone who contributed to this RAP thank you. I look forward to continuing this important work together.

Ross Piper
CEO, The Fred Hollows Foundation



Muru-Warinyi Ankkul Ranger Jeffrey Foster all smiles after successful cataract surgery restored his vision.



Australia's first Indigenous Ophthalmologist Dr Kris Rallah-Baker with T'kido (TK) Titasey who is a fourth year medical student inspired to pursue ophthalmology.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO OF RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate The Fred Hollows Foundation on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its second Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), its fifth overall.

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, the RAP program helps organisations realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and area of expertise.

With a legacy of fighting for the rights and health equality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Fred Hollows and his subsequent namesake foundation is no stranger to the reconciliation landscape. Driven by this legacy, The Foundation continues to build its capacity to affect positive change in the reconciliation space.

This Stretch RAP is built upon the considerable experience garnered in previous RAPs.

The Foundation established the Indigenous Australia Program, which partners with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, to improve access to culturally appropriate eye care services to remote and under-served Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This demonstrates The Foundation's commitment to self-determined healthcare and its prioritisation of the voices of First Nations people.

By prioritising a community controlled approach, The Foundation has built a solid roadmap upon which to expand and embed its commitments in this RAP. The formation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consulting Panel aims to keep elevating First Nations voices in The Foundation's RAP implementation. It has also developed a project focusing on health equity in the Torres Strait Islands region, involving engagement with local stakeholders and self-determination initiatives to identify areas needing support. These strategies demonstrate The Foundation's understanding that First Nations people and communities must be in the driver's seat when it comes to healthcare access and improving health outcomes.

With this dedicated focus to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-determined approaches, I have no doubt that The Foundation will continue to drive considerable reconciliation outcomes across its sphere of influence. On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Fred Hollows Foundation on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia





"Thank you for giving life back to people. It would be almost impossible survive in remote communities without eyesight.... to go out to country and hunt and gather. And for young ones to get an education, sight is critical." Aunty Billawarra Lee



INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA PROGRAM COUNTRY STRATEGY 2025-2028

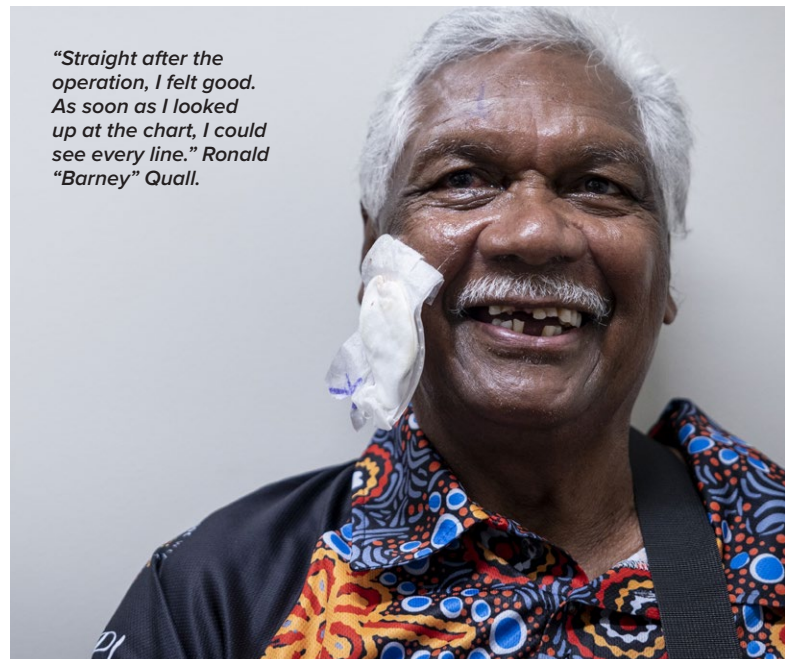
Vision:

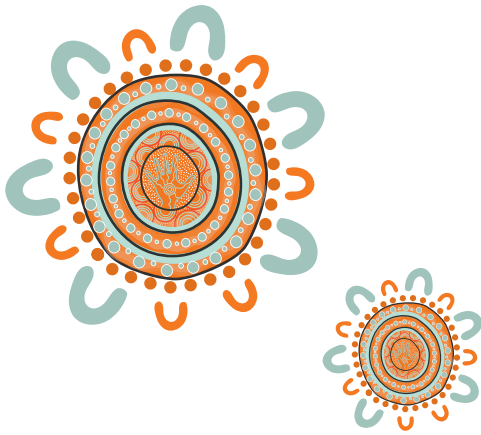
The vision of the Indigenous Australia Country Strategy 2025-2028 is that no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person lives with avoidable blindness. All have access to high-quality, affordable, culturally safe eye care.

The Strategy's core commitments are:

- Community-led, locally controlled service design and delivery
- Escalating the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ACCHOs
- Upholding rights and accelerating social justice reform

"Straight after the operation, I felt good. As soon as I looked up at the chart, I could see every line." Ronald "Barney" Quall.





I've always been driven by a need to understand, and to try and recognise the implications of what I'm doing. You can only do that through practical experience

– Professor Fred Hollows

The 2025–2028 strategy is built on four interconnected initiatives:

Strategic Initiative	Description
Self-Determination	Shifting power to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in eye health.
Healthy Communities	Embedding eye health in holistic, community-led approaches addressing social determinants.
System Strengthening	Supporting sustainable, culturally safe, community-controlled models of care.
Workforce Development	Building a skilled, culturally competent, and well-distributed Indigenous eye health workforce.

To strengthen the engagement approaches and ensure sustained commitment, the Indigenous Australia Program (IAP) is committed to genuine and meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, communities, and community health organisations. To this end, the Advocacy and Engagement team undertook the development of the advocacy strategy and engagement guidelines, in collaboration with key internal stakeholders.

These guidelines aim to reinforce the IAP principles and set clear standards and best practice approaches for genuine engagement by IAP staff while simultaneously ensuring it is received as mutually beneficial by our partners and stakeholders. The 2024 – 2029 Advocacy strategy sets out clear targets and measures based off the rapid review that is currently being implemented.

Today, in 2025, the IAP Policy & Advocacy team are working hard on the implementation phase of the Advocacy strategy and ensuring the outcomes are being delivered and achieved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The team have aligned themselves as an ally in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health sector and are leading the way in closing the gap

initiatives and driving the positive change that is required across the Government sector.

The three advocacy outcomes that are being delivered are:

- The Indigenous Australia Program (IAP) works through partners to improve access to culturally appropriate eye care services to remote and underserved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. IAP's goal is to ensure no person lives with avoidable blindness and that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have access to high quality and affordable eye health care.
- IAP is committed to self-determination and locally led community control with our advocacy work focused on escalating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice and the voice of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.
- IAP are committed to ensuring social justice reform is accelerated and to guaranteeing that the rights, needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are respected and upheld.

Case studies of IAP's commitment to self-determination are listed in the appendices to this RAP.

Professor Fred Hollows, left, and Gary Foley, Secretary of the National Aboriginal and Islander Health Service, attend a press conference in Sydney.



RAP GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

RAP Executive Sponsor

Our RAP is led by the CEO of The Fred Hollows Foundation, who serves as the RAP Executive Sponsor. The organisational leadership receives quarterly updates on the RAP and reports annually to The Fred Hollows Foundation Global Board on its progress.

RAP Implementation Working Group

The RAP Implementation Working Group is facilitated by the Senior RAP Implementation Advisor, who reports to the Executive Sponsor. The Senior RAP Implementation Advisor is accountable for ensuring that RAP action deliverables are completed within predetermined timeframes and systemically implemented.

Working Group Members:

(Listed alphabetically by given name)

- **Amanda Davis** – Director, Scaling Impact, Public Affairs
- **Andrew Hartwich** – Director, Quality and Learning, International Programs
- **Anna Hooke** – Country Engagement Manager, Public Affairs
- **Bronte Phillipps** – Global Partnerships Manager, Public Affairs

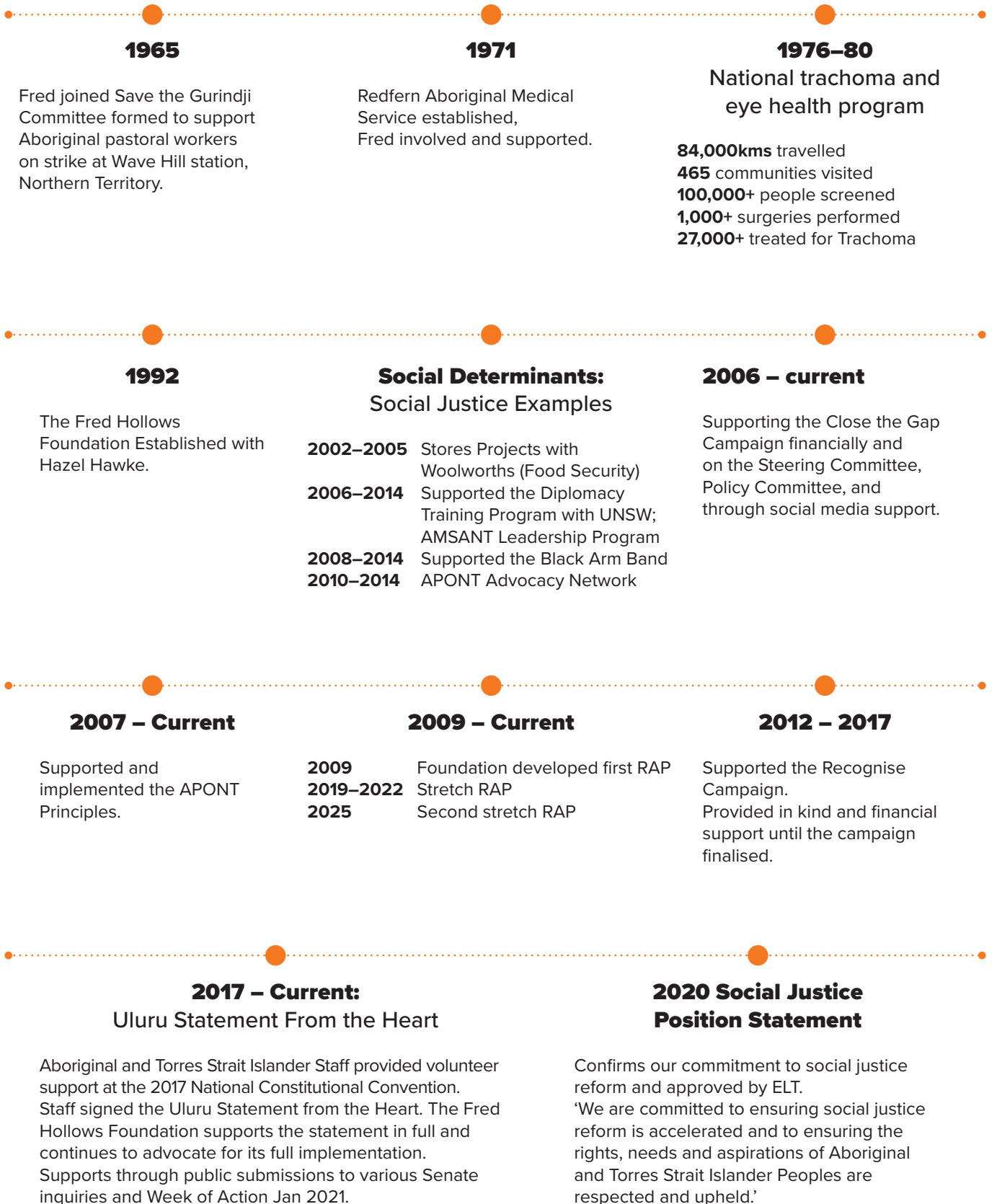
- **Cara Doolan** – Head of Public Affairs Strategy and Implementation, Public Affairs
- **Carolina Gomez** - Donations & Database Coordinator, Single Giving, Public Affairs
- **Gerard Finnigan** – Senior RAP Implementation Advisor (Working Group Convenor)
- **India Bailey** – Policy & Advocacy Advisor, Global Programs
- **Matthew Perkins** – Social Media Specialist, Public Affairs
- **Ross Piper** – Chief Executive Officer (Executive Sponsor)
- **Sean Brogan** – Communications Advisor, Public Affairs
- **Telaine Cowdrey** – Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner, Office of the CEO
- **Zoe Hallwright** – Program Cycle Management Coordinator, Global Programs

Our RAP

The Foundation has developed and implemented four RAPs since 2009. Our commitment to reconciliation is part of our story, as far back as Fred Hollows' experience with the Gurindji people in 1968, and his immediate decision to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in their determination for land, social, economic and health justice. An infographic timeline of our progress to reconciliation is outlined below.



THE FRED HOLLOWES FOUNDATION RECONCILIATION TIMELINE





OUR APPROACH TO RECONCILIATION - ACTIONS

Relationships

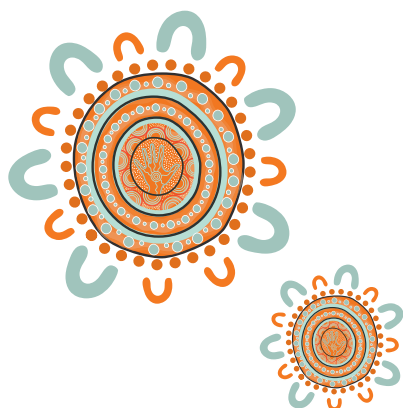
Moving from transactional to relational engagement is central to the Foundation’s way working.

The Foundation believes that partnerships are fundamental to the positive changes we seek to achieve both in Australia and abroad. We aim to continue building relationships based on mutual trust and respect across the broad spectrum of communities, decision makers, influencers, and constituencies with which we are involved.

At the core of The Foundation’s way of working is a belief that we are stronger together. We aim to carry out all our work with a spirit of collaboration, respect, and learning from each other.

As an organisation, one of our key objectives is to achieve meaningful and sustainable change by working with communities and stakeholders, not against or external to them. We firmly believe that establishing respectful and long-lasting relationships is crucial to the success of our RAP and our work in Australia and in communities abroad. Not only does this approach mean we are able to extend the impact of our work globally, but it also signifies a commitment to making purposeful steps towards Reconciliation in Australia.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Develop the Fred Hollows Foundation United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Assessment Tool.	a. Communication with IAP partners seeking their support and understanding of the premise of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Assessment Tool (UAT) and The Foundation’s approach in this regard, including risk transfer and implementation.	January 2026	Lead: People and Organisational Development (POD) Indigenous Australia Program (IAP) Support: RAP Implementation Working Group (RIWG)
	b. The Foundation to consider further implementation of the UAT across its Policies and other Programming areas.	January 2026	Lead: POD & IAP Support: RIWG
2. Undertake Indigenous Australia Program project on Torres Strait Islander Health Equity.	a. Facilitate engagement with local stakeholders to scope health equity, self-determination initiatives and identify areas of support.	January 2026	Lead: IAP Support: RIWG
	b. Progress talks with the Northern Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Alliance and other key stakeholders to scope eye health service delivery and need to progress partnership initiatives.	December 2025	Lead: IAP Support: RIWG
	c. Develop joint IAP implementation plan for Far North Queensland, including the Torres Strait, from both a social justice and eye health programming perspective.	December 2025	Lead: IAP Support: RIWG



I feel tremendously proud and privileged to have had this fantastic opportunity as a very young non-Indigenous white Australian female travelling in such special country and working with so many of our beautiful Aboriginal countrymen and women.

–Gabi Hollows

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	a. Develop and implement the IAP National Engagement Plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, informed by the Indigenous Australia Strategy guiding principles.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: IAP Support: RIWG
	b. Support culturally safe, appropriate and accessible eye health services at the primary care level through partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) and actively encourage others to support ACCHOs to lead the design and delivery of eye care services for their communities.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: IAP Support: RIWG
	c. Maintain investment in our Indigenous Australia Program and Social Justice roles to reduce inequitable disparities in eye health/health between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: IAP Support: RIWG
	d. Share Indigenous Australia Strategy guiding principles with other organisations working in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health sector and broader health sector by actively promoting on our website, at external speaking opportunities and through engagement with other stakeholders across funding, corporate, program, and aid and development partners.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: POD & Donor Team Support: RIWG
	e. Maintain and strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and justice leaders to align our advocacy and support implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: IAP Support: RIWG
	f. Share Quarterly IAP Insight report with selected partners and stakeholders.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: IAP Support: RIWG



COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

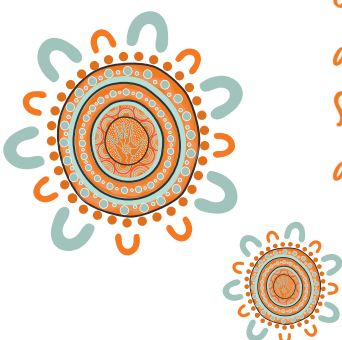
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week.	a. Encourage and support Foundation staff, including senior leaders, to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Lead: Director – Brand & Communications Support: Public Affairs Team (PA Team), RIWG
	b. Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all staff.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Lead: Director – Brand & Communications Support: PA Team & RIWG
	c. Organise a Foundation-wide National Reconciliation Week event.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Lead: Director – Brand & Communications Support: PA Team & RIWG
5. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	a. Implement strategies to engage all Australian staff to drive reconciliation outcomes. Embed discussions around RAP goals, objectives and activities in other staff engagement mechanisms (e.g. bi-annual team meetings) and seek active input from staff.	December 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028	Lead: Director – Brand & Communications Support: PA Team & RIWG
	b. Communicate and report on our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Lead: Director -Brand & Communications Support: PA Team & RIWG
	c. Implement strategies to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Lead: Director -Brand & Communications Support: PA Team & RIWG
	d. Share Indigenous Australia Strategy guiding principles with other organisations working in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health sector and broader health sector by actively promoting on our website, at external speaking opportunities and through engagement with other stakeholders across funding, corporate, program, and aid and development partners.	May 2026, 2027, 2028	Lead: Director -Brand & Communications Support: PA Team & RIWG

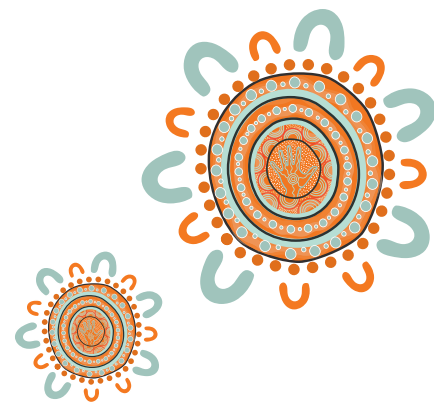


Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Promote anti-discrimination strategies.	a. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to continuously improve our policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination, including: Safeguarding People Policy and Code of Conduct; Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Guidelines; Speak-up Policy; Health, Safety, Security and Wellbeing Policy; Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion Policy; and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment & Retention Plan.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD), Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: POD Team & RIWG
	b. Provide ongoing education opportunities for senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD), Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: POD Team & RIWG
	c. Encourage senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives or stances against racism.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director - Brand & Communications Support: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD), Senior RAP Implementation Advisor
	d. Develop public media statements condemning misinformation and racism relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.		

To my mind, having a care and concern for others is the highest of human qualities. It distinguishes us from the other animals and deserves to be paid more attention and to be more exercised. Some of the things I've done have been designed to kick-start an awareness of what privileged people we Australians are

– Professor Fred Hollows





Respect

The Foundation has a fundamental belief in respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, languages, connections and rights.

We recognise the diversity and uniqueness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and are committed to ensuring our programs, in Australia and around the world, are built on strong, mutually respectful relationships with local communities and partners. We support increased investment in and access to culturally appropriate eye care services.

We strive to respect, acknowledge, actively listen and respond to the needs and protocols of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, from our partners, colleagues and the communities we work with, to achieve our vision. We seek to continue to learn from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners, colleagues, communities and stakeholders on how to strengthen our relationships and increase the impact and sustainability of our work.

Having mutually respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia is a key platform in The Foundation’s aims to achieve our strategic organisational objectives and implement our RAP. This relationship must permeate all our workplaces, our governance and management style and staffing decisions, our internal and external relationships and communications, and the plans we make as an organisation. We do this by facilitating cross-cultural awareness, understanding and competence, and building this into business-as-usual activities as applicable to all Australia-based employees.

Additional learning and immersion activities are targeted towards appropriate employees to further strengthen cultural understanding and build a culturally safe environment for all our staff, including our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members (as assessed by them).

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	a. Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD), Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: POD Team & RIWG
	b. Implement and communicate The Foundation’s updated cultural learning strategy for our staff, and review in line with organisation policy.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD), Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: POD Team, RIWG



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	c. Implement training and awareness raising activities regarding UNDRIP that are aligned to the cultural learning strategy. To be delivered by Diplomacy Training Program.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD), Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: POD Team, RIWG
	d. All Australia-based staff undertake formal and structured cultural learning, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 95% of existing Australian-based staff complete standard online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural training over the course of the RAP (2025-2028). • 100% of leadership and RIWG members undertake a cultural immersion activity over the course of the RAP (2025-2028). • All new RIWG staff complete Indigenous Allied Health Australia cultural responsiveness training (e-learning and virtual session) in first 6-12 months. • 100% of staff who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples undertake a face-to-face cultural learning program over the course of the RAP (2024 – 2027). • At least 70% of Australian-based staff undertake a face-to-face cultural learning program over the course of the RAP (2025 – 2028). 	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD), Senior RAP Implementation Advisor, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Support: POD Team & RIWG
	Share educational resources and opportunities for learning with corporate partnerships staff, including opportunities to meet our network and work with consultants.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Global Partnerships Manager Support: Corporate Partnerships Relationships Manager

Note: Timeline annual review unless noted otherwise



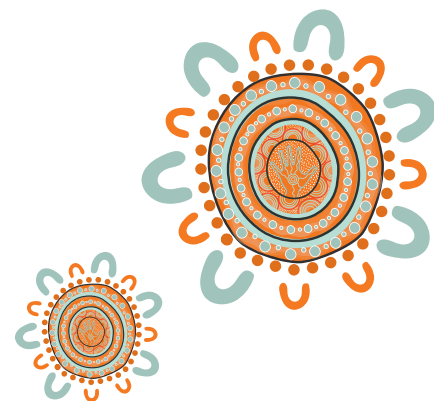
COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	a. Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director – Brand & Communications Support: Public Affairs (PA) Team
	b. Implement and communicate a cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director – Brand & Communications Support: PA Team
	c. Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian (through the appropriate channels and usually Local Land Councils) to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at all significant events each year, including the Annual General Meeting and significant celebrations.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director – Brand & Communications Support: PA Team
	d. Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings (including domestic Executive, Committee and Board meetings plus 'All Staff' briefings by CEO) and public events.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director – Brand & Communications Support: PA Team
	e. Display Acknowledgment of Country plaques and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in our office/s or on our buildings throughout Australia.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director – Brand & Communications Support: PA Team
9. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week and other dates of significance.	a. Members of the RIWG participate in at least one NAIDOC Week event each year.	First full week in July 2026 - 2028	Lead: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor, Director – Brand & Communications, Director & Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD) Support: PA Team, POD Team, RIWG



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>9. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week and other dates of significance.</p>	<p>b. Proactively encourage all Australian-based staff members to participate in NAIDOC Week events, through developing and implementing an internal communications plan for NAIDOC Week with the intention of increasing team member involvement year after year across the Australian operation.</p>	<p>First full week in July 2026, 2027, 2028</p>	<p>Lead: Manager - Internal Communications</p> <p>Support: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor, Brand & Communications, Director & Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD)</p>
	<p>c. Encourage all staff to recognise and raise awareness of dates of significance including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 January – Survival (Australia) Day • 13 February – Anniversary of National Apology Day • 16 March – Close the Gap Day • 26 May – National Sorry Day • 27 May – Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum • 27 May-3 June – National Reconciliation Week • 29 May – Torres Strait Islander Flag Day • 3 June – Mabo Day • 1 July– Coming of the Light Festival • First full week of July – NAIDOC Week • 4 August – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day • 9 August – International Day of the World’s Indigenous People • 23 August – Anniversary of the Wave Hill Walk-Off • First Wednesday of September – Indigenous Literacy Day • 13 September – Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People • 20 December – Anniversary of the Barunga Statement 	<p>Annually 2026, 2027,2028</p>	<p>Leads: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor, Director – Brand & Communications, & Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD)</p> <p>Support: PA Team, POD Team & RIWG</p>

Note: Timeline annual review unless noted otherwise



Opportunities

The Fred Hollows Foundation believes that our vision for a world in which no person is needlessly blind or vision impaired will only be achieved through the combined efforts of many individuals and organisations as well as the provision of opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Together with our partners, we have learned the value of strong leadership and will continue our commitment to engage with and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through targeted employment, retention and representation across all parts of The Foundation. We will also continue to promote and foster strong mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers, stakeholders and partners.

Focus area:

As part of The Foundation’s Strategic Plan 2024-2028, we are dedicated to creating a committed global workforce and we believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff form an essential part of our current and future workforce. Alongside our priority of enhancing our workforce, we are also committed to sustainable procurement practices that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	a. Review, update and implement an effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy in consultation with current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to ensure removal of barriers for workforce participation.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD) Support: POD Team
	b. Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD) Support: POD Team
	c. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be supported to take on management and senior level positions and barriers to career progression removed. Activities will include succession planning, learning, development and promotion opportunities.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD) Support: POD Team
	d. Ensure our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Retention Strategy maintains a strong, culturally safe, and self-determined workforce, committed to keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in IAP at 50% or above.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD) Support: POD Team



Eye Health Coordinators Nicole Byrne and Jeriah Coutts support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote parts of Queensland access eye health care.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	e. Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Retention Strategy maintains a strong, culturally safe, and self-determined Australian workforce committed to increasing workforce representation outside IAP that exceeds population parity (3.8%).	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD) Support: POD Team
	f. Offer or support at least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeship across the duration of the RAP.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD) Support: POD Team
	g. Maintain investment in our Indigenous Australia Program and Social Justice roles to reduce inequitable disparities in eye health/health between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD) Support: POD Team

Note: Timeline annual review unless noted otherwise



COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	a. Advocate for widespread utilisation of the Foundation’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy including ensuring appropriate remuneration of the suppliers.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director – Technology and Business Services Support: Business Operations Team (Bus Ops Team)
	b. Proactively engage Supply Nation for social procurement processes.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director – Technology and Business Services Support: Bus Ops Team
	c. Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director – Technology and Business Services Support: Bus Ops Team
	d. Increase the Foundation’s overall spend on Australian-based goods and services purchased each year with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses by 3% each year.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Technology and Business Services Director Support: Bus Ops Team
	e. Develop and maintain a database of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers on the intranet for staff to access at the start of the procurement process.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director -Technology and Business Services Support: Bus Ops Team
12. Build awareness of reconciliation and issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples amongst the broader Australian community and proactively advocate for positive change.	a. Actively support truth-telling and address the resurgence of racism in the media through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting positive narratives through celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander excellence; and • Elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and lived experiences through our communication channels. 	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director -Brand & Communications Support: PA Team



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Build awareness of reconciliation and issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples amongst the broader Australian community and proactively advocate for positive change.	b. Provide feedback and support for government and sector advocacy and influencing initiatives that advocate for positive change.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director - Global Policy & Advocacy Support: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD), IAP and Philanthropy & Government Relations team
	c. Actively support the Close the Gap campaign through representation on the Close the Gap Steering Committee and participation in Sub-Committees.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD) & IAP Support: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor & RIWG
	d. Engage other non-Indigenous organisations in conversations on reconciliation, allyship and the Uluru Statement from the Heart through Allies for Uluru.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Manager – Global Partnerships, Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD) & IAP Support: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor & RIWG
	e. Ensure all corporate partners have access to educational resources and learning opportunities to further their understanding and encourage opportunities to be engaged with our advocacy and the Allies for Uluru Coalition.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: General Manager – Global Philanthropy Operations, Manager – Global Partnerships Support: Social Justice & Organisational Development Partner (POD), IAP, Senior RAP Implementation Advisor & RIWG

Note: Timeline annual review unless noted otherwise



Governance

The governance of the RAP is led by the Executive Sponsor and the Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIWG). The RIWG comprises 12

members, chosen through an expression of interest process. THE RIWG works directly with the Foundation’s leadership team to ensure that the deliverables are met in accordance with timelines.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
13. Maintain an effective RAP Implementation Working Group to drive governance of the RAP.	a. Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Implementation Working Group (RIWG).	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: RIWG
	b. Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and partners to define what allyship means to them to inform the development of an (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led) Accountability Assessment Tool which will define accountability for Allies/the Ally group.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: RIWG
	c. Implement an Executive-led allyship model / structure and Charter which clearly defines with whom The Fred Hollows Foundation are allied with and who our primary stakeholders are.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor, RIWG Support: RIWG
14. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	a. Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations of leadership, senior management, and all Australian staff.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director – POD Support: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor, RIWG
	b. Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on progress and key decisions relating to RAP commitments.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Director – POD Support: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor, RIWG
	c. Maintain an internal RAP Champion (Sponsor) from executive leadership.	December 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: RIWG
	d. Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at quarterly FHF leadership meetings.	December 2025,2026, 2027	Lead: RAP Executive Sponsor Support: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor, RIWG

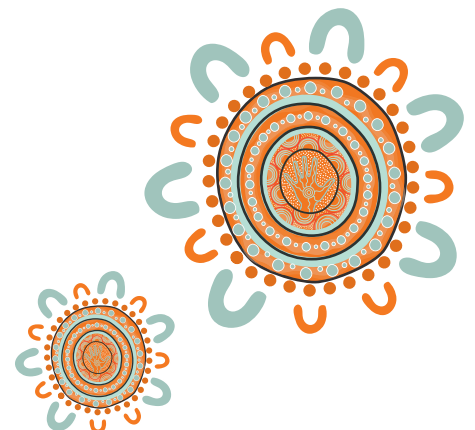


Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
15. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	a. Publicly report progress against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings.	September 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor, RIWG Support: Brand and Communications team (BC Team)
	b. Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	March 2028	Lead: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: BC Team
	c. Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	February, May, August, November 2025-2028	Lead: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: BC Team
	d. Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2025, 2026, 2027	Lead: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: BC Team
	e. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing an Elevate Reconciliation Action Plan.	30 September 2026 - 2028	Lead: Senior RAP Implementation Advisor Support: BC Team

Note: Timeline annual review unless noted otherwise

‘Fred, if you make a commitment to go out and learn what is important to the holders of the Law you will get their respect and support.’ Fred went out and listened to the Tjilpis, old men that are law makers, winning their respect and, in turn, people came in great numbers to be surveyed and treated.

– Gordon Briscoe





APPENDIX 1: Reflecting Our Vision for Reconciliation – Indigenous Australia Program Case Studies

Case Study 1

Indigenous Australia Program's (IAP) Advocacy Rapid Review & Country Strategy

Background and Purpose

Between October 2022 and April 2023, the Indigenous Australia Program Advocacy and Engagement team undertook a rapid review of the advocacy activities during 2021 and 2022. The aim was to assess the effectiveness of past activities, reflect on key learnings and inform the future direction of IAP's advocacy work.

A central focus of the review was evaluating how well IAP supports genuine engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and community-control organisations. The review reinforced that meaningful consultation and engagement are critical to IAP's success and its foundational principle of self-determination.

Review Highlights and Stakeholder Engagement

Staff praised the review's 'transparent and inclusive' approach taken in the design and implementation of the advocacy review and acknowledged it as a demonstration of IAP's meaningful commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in eye health.

Key findings will be shared with key Indigenous stakeholders, Deadly Vision Enterprises and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) to ensure ongoing responsiveness to sector voices.



Advocacy Strategy and Guidelines

To strengthen current approaches and ensure sustained commitment to genuine engagement, the Advocacy and Engagement team began developing advocacy strategy and engagement guidelines in partnership with internal stakeholders. These resources aim to:

- Reinforce IAP’s principles of self-determination.
- Provide clear standards and best-practice approaches to engagement.
- Support mutually beneficial relationships with partners.

The 2024–2029 Advocacy Strategy, built on recommendations from the review, is currently in its implementation phase.

Three Key Advocacy Outcomes (2024–2029)

Outcome 1.

Leadership: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations are leading the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health sector through sustained investment directly into ACCHO eye health sector

Outcome 2.

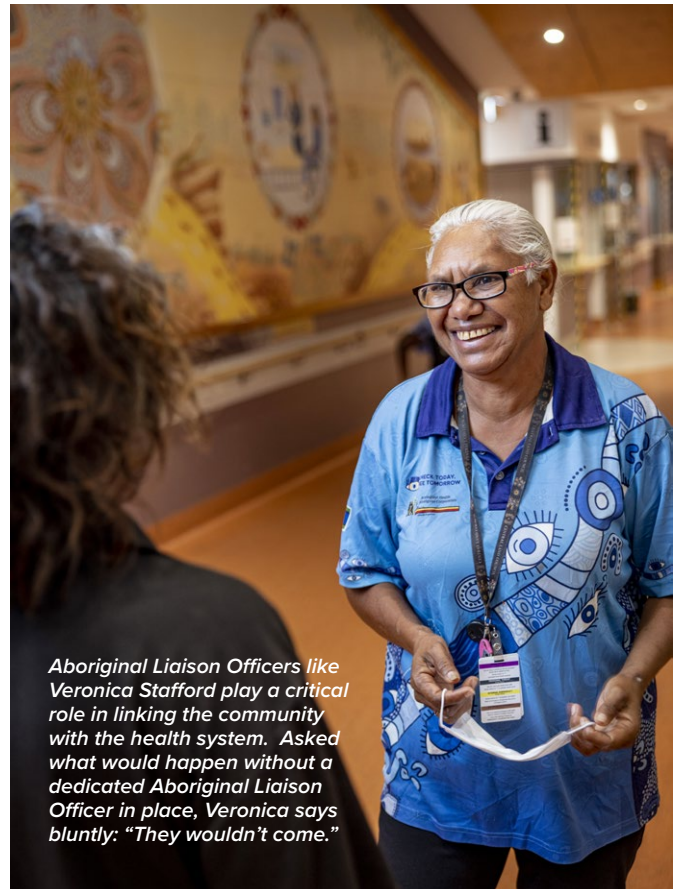
Integrated Eye Health: Eye health is an integral component of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services, and ACCHOs have the capacity to develop locally tailored, gender and equity inclusive eye health models for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples

Outcome 3.

Allyship and Justice: The link between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health, allyship and social justice reform advocacy is defined with ongoing promotion.

Ongoing Commitment

In 2025, the IAP Policy & Advocacy team remains focused on delivering outcomes, aligning with sector leadership, and driving systemic change. The team continues to support the right to sight, free prior and informed consent, and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Aboriginal Liaison Officers like Veronica Stafford play a critical role in linking the community with the health system. Asked what would happen without a dedicated Aboriginal Liaison Officer in place, Veronica says bluntly: “They wouldn’t come.”



After surgery to remove her cataract, Warlpiri Elder Gwen Brown is looking forward to collecting bush medicine again. “I can’t sit and do nothing you know. I’m always moving around.”



The Fred Hollows Foundation and 25 organisations have joined forces to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to call for a First Nations Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution.

Allies for Uluru Coalition

In February 2023, The Fred Hollows Foundation partnered with ANTA, Oxfam Australia and the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) to launch Allies for Uluru – a coalition of organisations working together to support education and advocacy on the Uluru Statement from the Heart and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

The Foundation recognises that eye health inequity sits within the context of broader social and economic inequity that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face. Since the Uluru Statement from the Heart was issued in May 2017, The Foundation has been an active supporter of its calls, recognising that it offers fair and practical reforms to address ongoing marginalisation of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The concept and model for Allies for Uluru was developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in 2022 as a way to support increased awareness and understanding of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, build support for a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament and amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to ensure they are at the centre of national dialogue. In 2023, Allies for Uluru membership grew to over 300 cross-sector organisations in 2023, all actively engaged in supporting implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full and building support for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice enshrined in the Constitution ahead of the referendum in October 2023.

Allies for Uluru CEO Forum – a collaborative leadership forum for cross-sector organisations to share ideas and opportunities in supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.



The Foundation continuously worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders to inform the approach, strategic direction and activities of Allies for Uluru coalition and ensured adherence to a set of key principles in undertaking this work:

We are guided by and will amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, in commitment to being a true ally

Our approach is strengths-based and leaning into the positive, affirmative change to come

We support the implementation of all calls in the Uluru Statement from the Heart: Voice, Treaty and Truth

We will leverage our combined and individual influence and agency for change while not competing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations for funding

We will be a conduit for information and action, using our position as leading organisations to generate more awareness and knowledge of the Uluru Statement from the Heart





Case Study 2

Our Work on the Ground

A love of reading rekindled

Strengthening Aboriginal Led Eye Health Services in the Top End of the Northern Territory

“I’m me again,” Uncle Jimmy says with a beaming smile and eyes full of hope, as he adjusts his new glasses.

For nearly a decade the 69-year-old Yolngu man had struggled with “smoky eye”, a colloquial term for cataracts, which had gradually diminished his vision and zest for life.

Jimmy learned to read at an early age and says he had a natural gift for it.

“I remember when I was about 7 years of age at school, the words just made sense, and I fell in love with reading. I could imagine things I’d never thought of before - the words would paint pictures for me. I started with comic books and worked my way up to novels.”

As a young boy growing up in Maningrida in North East Arnhem Land, Jimmy would sit on the ground, surrounded by elders, reading the newspaper out loud.

“I always started with the sports - everyone wanted to know what was happening in the VFL (football) and then what the politicians were saying in Canberra. It made me feel really proud doing that.

“Words are a big part of my life, and not being able to read the paper, books, or even watch TV was a real problem for me.

“I used to get headaches, my eyes would be sore, so I just gave up. I’m an active old fella. I like to get out and about. But when everything is smoky and hazy, what can you do?”

Frustrated with his vision and battling depression, Uncle Jimmy decided he wanted his life back, so he walked into a local optometrist in his shopping centre seeking help.

He was quickly referred to the Darwin Deadly Vision Centre, a partner of The Fred Hollows Foundation, for a comprehensive eye health check.

“The optometrist knew about the Deadly Vision Centre and called them straight away to make an appointment for me.

“Two days later, I was getting my eyes checked and found out that my smoky eyes were cataracts that could be fixed. I got very emotional. I didn’t know if I’d ever see properly again.”

He had his left eye operated on in April and his right eye in July 2024 at Darwin Private Hospital, during an eye surgery intensive organised by The Fred Hollows Foundation and Deadly Enterprises.

The surgeries were performed by Australia’s first Aboriginal ophthalmologist, Associate Professor Dr Kris Rallah-Baker.

“I was a bit scared at first because there are lots of rumours in the Aboriginal community about what happens in surgery, like they take your eyeball out and put it back in. But it’s all nonsense!

“Dr Kris sat me down and talked me through it all, he explains it all really well, he’s a Countryman to, so we know what is going to happen.”

In the Northern Territory, accessing cataract surgery is a significant challenge for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

"I'm me again," Uncle Jimmy Maralunga says with a beaming smile and eyes full of hope, as he adjusts his new glasses.



Islander people, with only 38.2% of the need being met in Greater Darwin.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients across Australia rely on the public system for cataract treatment at more than twice the rate of other Australians (65%), highlighting the difficulty in accessing private ophthalmology services and the need to ensure equitable access through the public system.

Cataract intensives also help reduce the backlog and

provide much-needed treatment to those who have been on waiting lists for years.

Cultural barriers and myths about what happen in surgery add to the challenge of closing the gap in eye health in Aboriginal communities in the Top End.

But Uncle Jimmy wants to change that. He is now a passionate eye health advocate, encouraging more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to get their eyes checked and not be afraid of the surgical experience or the hospital.

"I explain to people all the time what happens in the surgery, both before and after. I like to explain everything and make people feel at ease and have a laugh. It's only one day in and out at the hospital you don't stay overnight."

"It's fear of the unknown, fear of hospitals, and the eyes are really sensitive, they can cause a lot of pain, so I try and be a messenger and speak about my experience, so they get the real story."



RESTORING SIGHT, BUILDING TRUST

Kerry Woods is a proud Palawa takoanta with ancestral ties to the Plangermaireener people of northeast Tasmania.

Now based in Perth, she plays a crucial role as the Aboriginal Eye Health Coordinator for Lions Outback Vision — a program dedicated to bringing specialist eye care to some of Western Australia’s most remote communities.

With a career grounded in Aboriginal health and chronic disease management, Kerry has built strong connections in both metropolitan and regional settings.

Her work takes her across vast distances, helping Aboriginal patients navigate a complex healthcare system and access the services they need.

“I support patients at all stages of their eye health journey,” she says.

“From coordinating appointments and travel to providing cultural support during treatment, my role is about making sure people feel safe, respected, and cared for.”

Eye care where it’s needed most

Lions Outback Vision delivers ophthalmology services through a unique, culturally responsive model.

The team travels 2000km across the state from Esperance in the south to Port Hedland in the north with a mobile Vision Van and regular outreach clinics providing critical eye health services, including surgeries in regional and remote locations.

Kerry’s work focuses particularly on Aboriginal patients, who often face significant barriers to accessing specialist care.

“Many of the communities I work with have limited access to healthcare,” she explains.

“Our role is to make sure no one is left behind, especially when they have to leave home and family to attend treatment far away.”

Connection, culture and car

For Kerry, the human connection is what makes her work meaningful.

“Every trip with the Vision Van brings new faces and stories. It’s a privilege to walk alongside patients — not just as a healthcare worker, but as someone who truly respects and understands their culture.”

Her motivation comes from seeing tangible results: patients regaining sight, restoring independence, and feeling empowered to manage their health.

“When people call me ‘Aunty’ or ‘Sis’ months after a visit, it reminds me this work is about trust and cultural safety. That’s what drives me — helping to close the health gap and support my mob to live healthier, happier lives.”

Overcoming challenges with respect and persistence

Accessing eye care isn’t always straightforward for those in remote communities.

Kerry regularly faces challenges such as missed appointments due to distance, fear of hospitals, or patients being lost to follow-up when travelling for other medical needs.

“There’s also a gap in communication between optometry and ophthalmology services at times. This can lead to confusion or missed treatment.”

Her approach focuses on building trust and offering consistent, respectful support.

She works closely with community health workers, families, and service providers to break down barriers and ensure patients feel comfortable engaging with care.

“Sometimes I’m not the one booking the flights, but I’ll be on the phone checking that nothing’s fallen through the cracks. That consistency really helps people feel less overwhelmed.”

A small win with a big impact

One of Kerry’s most rewarding moments involved tracking down an elderly patient who had not been seen since 2022 and had only one functioning eye.



Uncle Ross Jakamarra Williams listens to his favourite song during cataract surgery, as music helps Dr Tim Henderson keep patients calm at Alice Springs Hospital Eye Clinic.

Through persistence and cultural sensitivity, she was able to reconnect him with eye care services just as he was being discharged from a nursing home and relocated to an aged care facility in Derby.

“It took multiple calls, home visits, and navigating a confusing system. But in the end, we got him the care he needed,” she says.

“That wasn’t just about his eye — it was about dignity and making sure he wasn’t forgotten.”

Creating a ripple effect

Kerry believes her biggest impact lies in helping Aboriginal patients feel seen, heard, and safe within the health system.

“I remember one Elder who missed several appointments because she thought her eyeball would be taken out during surgery.

“I sat with her, explained everything simply, and supported her every step of the way.

“After her surgery, she became an advocate in her community, encouraging others to seek care too. That ripple effect is powerful.”

More than just eye care

For Kerry, being part of Lions Outback Vision is about far more than treating eyesight — it’s about restoring quality of life and ensuring health care is inclusive and accessible.

“As an Aboriginal woman, I know how vital culturally safe care is. I’m proud to work for a service that shows our people their health matters — and to walk beside them on that journey.”

The Lions Outback Vision Project builds on an existing strong partnership with the Lions Eye Institute that has been operating since 2014.

The partnership is based on a mutual commitment to increasing the capacity and sustainability of eye care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in rural and remote Western Australia (WA).

Through this partnership, The Fred Hollows Foundation supports an Aboriginal Liaison Officer to focus on improving the cultural responsiveness of service as well as engagement with eye health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACCHO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ACOSS	Australian Council of Social Services
ANTAR	Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
FHF	Fred Hollows Foundation
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
HR	Human Resources
I CARE	Integrity; Collaboration; Action; Resourceful; Empowerment
IAP	Indigenous Australia Program
IAPB	International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness
NACCHO	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
NAIDOC	National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NATSIHA	Northern Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Alliance
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRW	National Reconciliation Week
POD	People and Organisational Development
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RIWG	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Working Group
UAT	UNDRIP Assessment Tool
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples



Contact details

Gerry Finnigan - Senior RAP Implementation Advisor
Email: SeniorRAPImplementationAdvisor@hollows.org



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“With her sight back, Aunty B tells Foundation Ambassador, Turia Pitt she is excited to be able to use her eyes again in her role as an educator and healer. “I’ll be able to see what the ancestors show me – to do my work as a Gurdimin-ba Bali.”