



# Emerging Minds.

Reflect Reconciliation  
Action Plan  
October 2019 – October 2020

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# Our business

Emerging Minds is dedicated to advancing the mental health and emotional wellbeing of Australian infants, children, adolescents and their caregivers.

Emerging Minds develops training, programs and resources in response to the needs of health, social and community service professionals, children and their families. We partner with families, national and international organisations to develop and implement online resources, health information, online and face-to-face training.

Our organisation supports a greater focus on the mental health needs of Australian infants and children and their families. Our core business is to improve community literacy on the importance of children's mental health, and enhance workforce awareness and practice to ensure the child's voice is considered and heard and they are visible at all times within service delivery.

One of our core strategies is partnering with children, parents, families, carers, practitioners, researchers and organisations through the design, development and implementation of our resources. The importance of a focus on the mental health of infants and children has been reinforced by contemporary research, and there has been a gradual recognition that services need to better address mental health in the early years. This focus is particularly relevant given research on the impact of intergenerational vulnerabilities such as poverty, drug and alcohol issues, and domestic and family violence on infants and children. We proactively include the voices of children, parents and families in the design of workforce development resources and have incorporated these focuses into our constitution.

Emerging Minds' national workforce has 38 team members located across four sites in South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. This team provides workforce support and training across all Australian States and Territories.

Emerging Minds does not currently have any staff that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.





# Our work

The National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health (NWCCMH) was established by Emerging Minds in 2017 and is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program. Emerging Minds leads the project and it is delivered in partnership with The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), the Australian National University (ANU), the Parenting Research Centre (PRC) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

The NWCCMH has been established to assist professionals in the health, social and community sectors to have the skills to identify, assess and support children at risk of mental health conditions. Emerging Minds supports workforces that work directly with children (aged 0–12 years) and their caregivers; as well as assisting professionals who work with adults to recognise and respond to children affected by parental issues.

The overall objective of the NWCCMH is to ensure that all professionals have access to training, tools and support so that they are better equipped to identify, assess and support children and families at risk of mental health difficulties. The Centre engages in three strategic activities:

- A national web hub that acts as a free online gateway for the Australian workforce, providing free training, practice guides, webinars, podcasts, tools, information, news and events in relation to childhood mental health and wellbeing.
- Provision of a national network of Child Mental Health Workforce Consultants to support workforce development, systems change, information exchange and collaboration.
- Enacting a national communication and knowledge translation strategy to support the diffusion of evidence into practice.

Prior to this, Emerging Minds (formerly Australian Infant, Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association [AICAFMHA]) was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing to deliver the Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI) national initiative.

The aim of the COPMI initiative was the promotion of better mental health outcomes for children of parents with a mental health problem or disorder. Children and families where a parent experiences a mental illness can be supported by accessing information and education about mental illness, factors that can possibly put children's wellbeing at risk and ways their wellbeing can be enhanced. The focus of this program was similar to the NWCCMH, focusing on the development of free and accessible resources and workforce education. The cornerstone of the development of these resources was the involvement of parent consumers, carers and other stakeholders to enhance COPMI knowledge, information and resources.

The National Youth Participation Strategy (NYPS) in Mental Health arose out of the need for young people's voices to be involved in the development and implementation of programs under the National Mental Health Strategy (NMHS) and National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS). Emerging Minds was funded by the Australian Government under the National Mental Health Strategy to complete this program and develop a mental health strategy to systematically incorporate the voice of young people into the development and implementation of programs funded under the NMHS. Central to this was the engagement with and high value Emerging Minds places on lived experience expertise in asset and strategy development.

# Our RAP

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## Mission

Emerging Minds recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as the creators of the knowledge that will support First Nations children to grow up happy, nurtured, safe and protected within their culture, families and communities.

We are committed to a unified Australia that gives status to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and is underpinned by respectful relationships, trust, justice and equality. Emerging Minds strives to learn in partnership and build the capacity of people working with children to help them to grow strong in culture, identity and connection, and to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities.

## Why is your workplace developing a RAP?

Emerging Minds is developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to demonstrate our commitment to an Australia that values, recognises, respects and celebrates the diversity and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage. We are committed to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and cultures and to develop a strong partnership and relationship with Community.

We know there is much to be learned from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and cultures, particularly around values of community, kinship, cultural and spiritual identity; and feel that an understanding of First Nations cultures will enable non-Aboriginal practitioners to better support the social and emotional wellbeing of all children and their families.

We are committed to ensuring the voices of children, families and community members are incorporated into all of our work, and specifically committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We support self-determination and hold the need to work in partnership with First Nations communities at the core of our constitution. As an organisation in its infancy, we have undergone a significant amount of growth in a short period of time and now feel ready to take a more consistent and deliberate approach in partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.

This RAP will not only underpin our approaches to our own practices and interactions across the organisation but will also ensure that the products and resources we develop are infused with these values. It will help us ensure we integrate continuous learning and capacity building and that our work is developed in a respectful way.



# Our RAP continued...

## How do you intend to approach implementing your RAP?

Emerging Minds is committed to accountability to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. We also acknowledge the ongoing learning process that will occur during our RAP implementation. As such, we expect our RAP to be a dynamic document, that will evolve during implementation and will be regularly reviewed and updated. Emerging Minds staff will implement our RAP through proactive working groups or sub-committees (RAP Working Group) involving members from all levels of the organisation.

Our RAP Working Group will be accountable to both the Emerging Minds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing National Consultancy Group and the Emerging Minds Board of Directors Chair, who will oversee the RAP implementation and evaluate its progress, including the impact and outcomes at the end of the period.

We are committed to involving our entire workforce in the RAP implementation and staff will be updated during monthly staff meetings on the implementation progress. We expect staff participation in training and involvement in events will improve awareness and increase emphasis on reconciliation.

## Our reconciliation journey to date

The Emerging Minds workplace reconciliation journey is in its initial stages. This process commenced with the employment of an Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Officer in July 2018 and the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing National Consultancy Group in October 2018. The group is represented by members from Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

We aim to bring as many voices as possible with us on this journey, as we acknowledge that no one person can speak for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations.

# Our Partnerships

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## Community partnerships

Emerging Minds is in the early stages of engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and professionals in the development of materials and resources that accurately convey their experiences.

## Internal activities/initiatives

### 1. RAP:

A team of 19 Emerging Minds staff (50% of workforce), from across all areas of the organisation volunteered to help develop the organisation's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Due to the size of the group, staff formed sub-committees, each focusing on a specific section of the RAP. Each group met 3-4 times over a two-month period developing their RAP sections, discussing actions with colleagues and consolidating their thoughts and plans. We chose to approach our RAP in this way to ensure it is staff-led and driven, which will support the RAP's implementation but also increase our employees' engagement with the process. The remaining workforce has (and will continue to be) kept up to date on the RAP progress via regular staff meeting updates.

The Emerging Minds RAP aims to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued, recognised, respected and understood in everything that the organisation does. We will work to make sure continuous learning and capacity building happens in a respectful way to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal practitioners together to better identify, assess and support the social and emotional wellbeing of children (0-12yrs) and their families.

### 2. Visual communication - actors workshop and commissioned artwork:

In mid-2018 Emerging Minds commissioned an Aboriginal artist. We wanted to take the opportunity to work with a local artist to develop a piece that could communicate the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and community.

We also acknowledged the contribution this piece would have to our visual communication assets. The artwork depicts the child in the centre, surrounded by all the people in their family and wider community contributing to the child's physical, emotional and spiritual growth. The artwork has been used across Emerging Minds' marketing and promotional materials including postcards and notebooks.

**Actors workshop:** We aim to bring as many voices as possible to our work and acknowledge no one person can speak on behalf of all First Nations people. To support this Emerging Minds engaged a cultural consultant to observe and provide feedback on an actors workshop, for content being developed for Emerging Minds' e-learning platform. The purpose of the workshop was to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander actors to develop stories based on their own lived experience, ensuring the stories used in our materials are culturally sensitive, meaningful, engaging and highly relevant to the workforces we are designing the assets for.

### 3. The Whole Aboriginal Child:

Following requests from and consultations with First Nations communities, we developed a version of our 'Whole Child' video which tells the story of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families and their communities. The script was developed through consultation with a focus group and features footage filmed by Emerging Minds in Torres Strait, Northern Territory, and South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In keeping with the organisation's strengths-based approach, this video was created in collaboration with focus groups and community members to describe and demonstrate the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the many positive aspects of Community life.



#### **4. Including the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families:**

Emerging Minds' Workforce Development Officer, Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing presented on this topic at our annual all-of-staff workshop in October 2018. The presentation highlighted the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the considerations we as an organisation need to make to work effectively and respectfully with community.

#### **5. Established the Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing National Consultancy Group:**

This group was established to provide guidance and advice on effectively working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The group informs content for training and practice materials to be used with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal practitioners who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

#### **6. Cultural competency survey:**

All Emerging Minds staff were invited to take a baseline cultural competency survey in January 2019, with 68% of the workforce completing the survey. Findings from the survey will inform our cultural awareness training recommendations included in this RAP.

#### **7. Acknowledgement of Country:**

An Acknowledgement of Country is conducted at the commencement of all formal meetings, including all Emerging Minds staff meetings. Each Emerging Minds office also displays a plaque acknowledging the First Nations people as the Custodians of the land. All face-to-face workshops we facilitate across the country also include an Acknowledgement or a Welcome to Country as appropriate.

#### **8. Practice Resources:**

Two practice resources are currently being developed and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives. These resources are looking at how practitioners and organisations can incorporate culturally intelligent practices into their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

#### **9. Cultural mentoring:**

Our Workforce Development Officer, Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing position is mentored by several cultural consultants with differing areas of expertise. This position in turn provides mentoring to staff and guidance on all of our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

#### **10. Flags:**

The Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are displayed in Emerging Minds' Head Office Board Room in Adelaide.







### Program Director statement

Our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is an exciting milestone for Emerging Minds, and a great first step towards establishing the relationships, respect and opportunities essential for reconciliation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are among the most disadvantaged and over-represented group in crisis and statutory services; yet they are vastly underrepresented in early intervention services. It is our goal to not only bridge

this gap, but to help organisations and practitioners to develop an understanding of the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, cultures and experiences, and how this understanding can benefit all areas of their practice. The first step in building this foundation is to ensure that culturally safe and inclusive practices are embedded within our own organisation, starting with this plan.

As a connector between practitioners and community, Emerging Minds is well-placed to learn from Community and share our learnings about the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants and children by keeping reconciliation in mind through everything we do. This Plan is a visible commitment to bettering the lives of these children and their families through our relationships and resources. I'd like to thank the dedicated team of staff from across the organisation who have come together to develop this Plan, and the members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community who have supported us through the process. Through these practical actions, Emerging Minds will be able to build and develop respectful partnerships through relationships with the community, and maximise opportunities for cultural exploration and understanding. I can't wait to see the results.



### Chair, Emerging Minds Board of Directors statement

As the Chair of Emerging Minds, I am proud to launch our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Emerging Minds continues years of work towards supporting a greater focus on the mental health needs of Australian infants and children and their families. Studies have shown that almost all aspects of child rearing are shaped by culture, and that children with a strong cultural identity are well-placed to make positive social connections and feel a sense of belonging. Culture and spirituality give meaning to all aspects of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, making it especially important for practitioners working with First Nations children and families to understand and respect these traditions.

This Plan approaches the key domains of reconciliation – relationships, respect and opportunities – through a child-focused lens. Combined with Emerging Minds' guiding principles, it will help us to drive respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and cultures through everything we do.

In turn, we hope this will lead to more trusting relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and the practitioners and agencies working with them; for without trust there can be no reconciliation. I look forward to working with the team to help realise this vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.



# RELATIONSHIPS

**Emerging  
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Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify and map Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	September 2020	Director
	Continue to research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	September 2020	Director
	Maintain a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Consultation Group to provide guidance and advice to Emerging Minds.	September 2020	Cultural Development Officer
	Actively seek out cultural guidance from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and remunerate them appropriately for this provision.	September 2020	Director
	Investigate and develop mutually beneficial partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, under the guidance of the Workforce Development Officer, Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing.	September 2020	Director
	Promote self-determination principles in resource development, messaging and workforce training in the work of Emerging Minds to support individuals and families to be the change agents in their own lives, and keep this at the forefront as we create and deliver workforce training.	September 2020	Director
	Identify and commit to an Emerging Minds attendance at key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community conferences. Attendance will be under the guidance of the Workforce Development Officer, Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing and will demonstrate our commitment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families</li> <li>• hearing and learning</li> <li>• developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and stakeholders.</li> </ul>	September 2020	Communications Manager

Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Develop a communications plan to promote National Reconciliation Week, including both internal and external activities.	March 2020	Communications Manager
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our internal and external stakeholders.	April 2020	Communications Manager
	Host a National Reconciliation Week event for internal and external stakeholders.	May 2020	Director
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external National Reconciliation Week event.	May 2020	RAP Working Group Chair
	Create calendar of NRW events and encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.	May 2020	Director

Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	October 2019	Communications Manager
	Include the Reconciliation Action Plan as a standing agenda item in Emerging Minds staff and board meetings.	October 2019	Director
	Develop a list of external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2020	Director
	Develop a list of RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	February 2020	RAP Working Group Chair
	Hold at least one meeting with identified RAP and other like-minded organisations to share ideas and explore possibility of collaboration.	September 2020	RAP Working Group Chair
	Participate in National Apology events on 13 February 2020 and raise staff awareness of National Apology Day.	February 2020	Director
	Raise awareness within our workforce of resources and information available to promote Reconciliation by creating a place to share resources, encourage staff to review. Resources moderated by Cultural Development Officer.	November 2019	Project Support Officer
	Include an overview of the RAP and Reconciliation resources as part of the employee induction process	December 2019	Human Resources Manager



Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination and communicate these with all staff.	February 2020	Cultural Development Officer
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	December 2019	Human Resources Manager
	In staff meetings, show short educational videos to promote positive race relations and discussion, growth and learning within the workforce. Videos will be selected and identified as appropriate by the Cultural Development Officer.	September 2020	Cultural Development Officer
	As part of regular supervision with managers, encourage all staff to reflect on cultural bias when working in this space.	September 2020	Director





# RESPECT

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Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Ensure staff survey results inform the development of a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	October 2019	Workforce Development Manager
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	October 2019	Workforce Development Manager
	Organise cultural competency/fitness/knowledge training with local Aboriginal trainer.	October 2019	Director
	Review cultural competency training implemented and develop business plan for ongoing training.	January 2020	Workforce Development Manager
	Invite a Traditional Owner to each Emerging Minds office, to share local knowledge and history with staff.	September 2020	National to Local Manager
	Display AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia in all Emerging Minds offices.	October 2019	Cultural Development Officer
	Provide all staff with access to a copy of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.	October 2019	Project Support Officer

Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
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 2019	National to Local Manager
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	January 2020	Workforce Development Manager
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country on all staff email signatures	October 2019	Communications Manager
	Develop and distribute Emerging Minds Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocol document.	October 2019	Cultural Development Officer

Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
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.	June 2020	Communications Manager
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2020	Communications Manager
	Ensure there is an expectation of all staff, Board Members and RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	6-12 July, 2020	Director



# OPPORTUNITIES

**Emerging  
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Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	September 2020	Human Resource Manager
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	October 2019	Human Resource Manager
	Review all Emerging Minds job descriptions and position statements to include a statement regarding cultural competency and safety and our commitment to reconciliation.	December 2019	Human Resource Manager
	Develop standard interview question(s) to reflect the job descriptions and position statement on cultural competency and consult on an appropriate response.	December 2019	Human Resource Manager
	Ensure the addition of an inclusion and diversity statement on all Emerging Minds job advertisements.	December 2019	Human Resource Manager

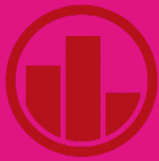




Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	November 2019	Chief Financial Officer
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	November 2019	Chief Financial Officer
	Investigate the addition of an inclusion clause in our standard agreement template used to engage sub-contractors.	November 2019	Chief Financial Officer

Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Reflect on existing work practice and identify gaps and opportunities to support the future inclusion of cultural considerations into our work.	Develop a framework to audit our current practice tools, processes, deliverables and projects to identify where cultural considerations need to be included, and amend these to address any issues identified.	November 2019	Workforce Development Manager
	Prepare a scoping document to inform priorities for improving the extent to which cultural considerations are embedded into our work.	November 2019	Workforce Development Manager





# GOVERNANCE

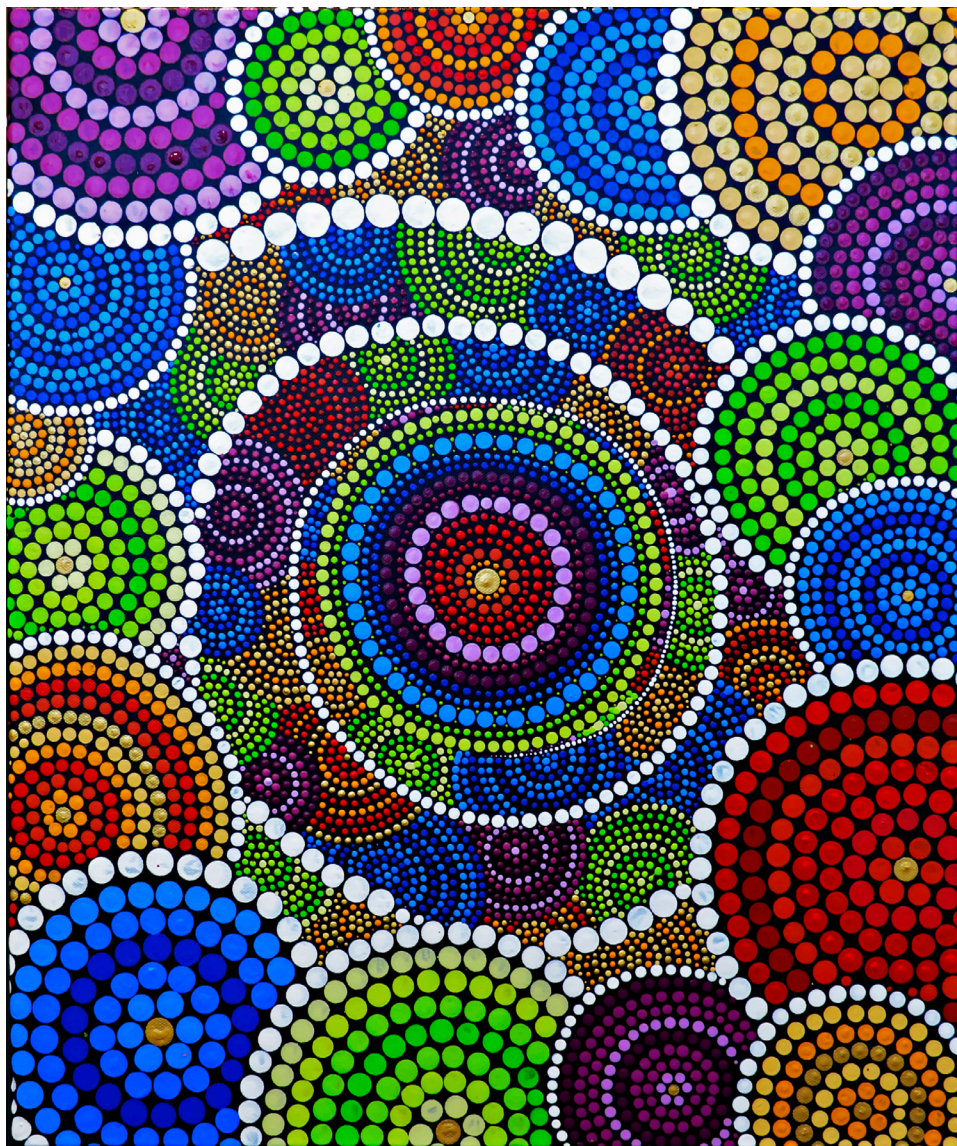
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Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	October 2019	Director
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	November 2019	Director
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	November 2019	Director
	Hold quarterly RAP Working Group meetings to actively monitor RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	October 2019–2020	RAP Working Group Chair

Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	October 2019	Director and Chair, Emerging Minds Board of Directors
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	October 2019	Director and Chair, Emerging Minds Board of Directors
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	October 2019	Director and Chair, Emerging Minds Board of Directors

Actions	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
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.	September 2020	Director and Chair, Emerging Minds Board of Directors
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	June 2020	Cultural Development Officer
Investigate options to incorporate our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultancy Group into our governance structure	Develop a Board Paper to outline the conditions under which a member of the Emerging Minds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing National Consultancy Group will be invited to provide advice to the Board.	January 2020	Director





### **About the artist**

“I wanted to give the artwork the feeling of the ‘village’; everyone contributing to the child’s development, empowering them to learn and grow.”

- Elizabeth Close

Elizabeth Close is a contemporary and traditional Aboriginal artist based in Adelaide. Her artworks reflect her experience as an Aboriginal woman. This piece focuses on the child in the middle, surrounded by all of the people in their family and wider community that contribute to their physical, emotional and spiritual growth. The work reflects Emerging Minds’ mission to put the child at the centre of every conversation.



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