



QCOSS
Reconciliation Action Plan
2011—2013



Cover artwork by Artist Luke Mallie

Luke Mallie's inspiration comes from his family, his Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and his tropical Queensland surroundings. He says he feels that his artwork is his gift to help others see the beauty of Aboriginal culture, appreciate Indigenous issues, and bring joy to people through colourful art and designs.

While born and bred in Brisbane, Luke's heritage is from North Queensland. His mother is from the Kuku Yalanji people in the Daintree/Mossman area. His father comes from Kubin Village on Moa Island in the Torres Strait Islands.

Luke Mallie currently lives and works in Mackay: www.malliedesigns.com.au

QCROSS asked Luke to produce artwork that would represent the optimism of this Reconciliation Action Plan. It depicts the spirit of fairness: Working and living together with respect, understanding and a common purpose. It highlights the diversity of Queensland's natural beauty, its built environment, and its communities and families.

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Thanks and Acknowledgement

This plan was written for and with all QCOSS staff. Particular acknowledgement and thanks go to the inaugural RAP Committee members—Katharin Bartley, Anne Curson, Nadine Lester, Kate Lowah-Bond, Lacreicha Major, John Mikelsons, Adam Wenitong, and Jenny Whitworth. We also acknowledge the considerable contribution of Garth Morgan, Executive Director of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Services Coalition. We appreciate the assistance and advice of Reconciliation Australia—particularly Caitlin Buxton and Claire Toepfer. And finally, we acknowledge and value the creativity and expertise of QCOSS’s May Kabay in the layout of this document.



Our Vision for Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is an end to poverty and inequality among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, achieved through respect, understanding and working together with a common purpose. We stand for a fair, inclusive and sustainable Queensland and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our Business

Our Vision: A fair, inclusive and sustainable Queensland.

Our Purpose:

- Provide a voice for and with Queenslanders affected by poverty and inequality
- Lead on issues of significance to the social, health and community sectors state-wide
- Contribute to a national voice on these issues through membership of the nation-wide network of state and territory Councils and the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS).

We achieve this vision and purpose through the key outcome areas in our strategic plan, including:

Policy Advocacy

We will advocate for social change – focused on poverty and inequality – that is also economically and environmentally responsible.

Sector Development

We will lead the development and promotion of an influential and sustainable community services sector with the capacity to provide high quality, effective support to vulnerable Queenslanders.

Community and Member Engagement

We will inform public opinion on issues that affect Queenslanders experiencing poverty and inequality. We will foster member, sector and community participation in our work and form partnerships and alliances within the community services sector and among other stakeholders.

Leadership, Governance and Management

We will be a strong, sustainable organisation that is an employer of choice and has an effective and committed Board and workforce.

Our Values: QCOSS shares the values outlined in the Queensland Community Services Sector Charter:

Human rights

We uphold and advance the fundamental rights of people in Queensland

Individual and community wellbeing

We are committed to advancing the wellbeing of individuals, communities and our society as a whole

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination

We stand for self-determination and an end to disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Cooperation and participation

We foster active participation by our members and communities, and cooperation within and beyond our sector

Excellence

We value the commitment, knowledge and skills of our workers and volunteers, and strive for excellence in our organisation and our sector

Independence

We affirm the importance of our autonomy from government, commercial interests and political parties.



Our Members: QCOSS is a member-based organisation. Our members include peak bodies, advocacy and consumer groups, service providers, mutual support and self-help groups as well as individuals. Associate members include for-profit organisations and government departments that commit to supporting our purpose.

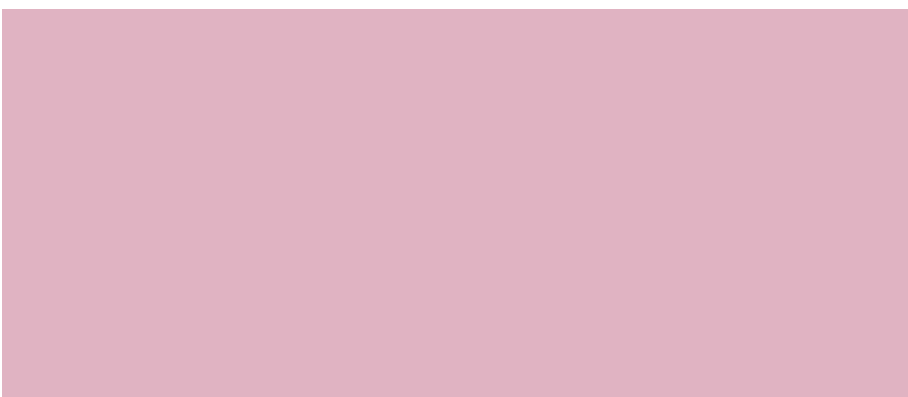
Our Staff: We have a diverse, skilled and committed team of approximately 50 people working to achieve our mission. Eighty percent are women, 21 percent identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and 12 percent were born overseas. Our staff support and advocate for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities across the state, including in inner city and suburban Brisbane, regional towns and cities, rural settings and remote communities.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a reflection of our firm commitment to contribute to reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the broader Australian community. It is a three year plan developed in line with our strategic plan and aligned with our overall planning cycle. The RAP will be refreshed annually at the same time as our Operational Plan to ensure that the two plans are aligned and that our reconciliation goals form part of our every day work practices. Elements of this RAP will also be embedded in our Performance Agreements.

The plan was developed by a RAP Committee of seven employees representing every team in the organisation. The Committee is chaired by a senior manager with direction and support from the Executive Director of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Services Coalition. Half of the committee identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

All QCOSS staff, management, and the Executive were consulted on the development of this plan. This consultation process also involved engagement with some of our key external stakeholders. An important element of the process included the close involvement of the Executive Director of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Services Coalition (the Coalition) in every step of our development process. The RAP was reviewed by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, consisting of members of the Board of the Coalition, and approved by our Board and Reconciliation Australia.





Relationships

Our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities is integral to the success of the work that we do. We know that all of our advocacy on issues of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage must be done with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We commit to respectful and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations.

Focus Area

Building relationships that improve our advocacy in the identified areas of homelessness and children and families; and changing our broader engagement to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are included in all our work.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
1.1 – Maintain and build our relationship with and support to the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Services Coalition so that we learn from one another and build both our (and the Coalition’s) capacity	Deputy Director and Director	Dec ‘11 ‘12 & ‘13	Board, Executive Director and staff of the Coalition report that they are satisfied with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational support to the Coalition - Professional advice and support - Relationship with QCOSS
1.2 – Consult meaningfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities when developing policy and undertaking advocacy so that their perspectives inform the work that we do	Senior Manager Policy Advocacy	Jun ‘11 Dec ‘11	New engagement model developed following consultation with relevant stakeholders New engagement model implemented and informing our policy advocacy work
1.3 – Build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples organisations and communities, through the Homelessness Planning and Coordination initiative	Team Leader Homelessness Planning and Coordination; and Senior Manager Sector Development	Jun ‘11 Dec ‘11	Engagement plan developed in partnership with the Coalition Establish meaningful relationships with a long term focus on addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness in each of the seven regions
1.4 – Continue to build our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations with a shared focus on demanding better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through our participation in the Combined Voices campaign	Senior Manager Communications and Membership; and Senior Manager, Policy Advocacy	Dec ‘11 ‘12 & ‘13	Attend all Combined Voices steering committee meetings Maintain regular engagement with project partners to ensure the progress of the campaign



Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
1.5 – Engage effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media to raise public awareness of QCOSS’s policy advocacy work and campaigns (such as Combined Voices) to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Senior Manager Communications and Membership	Dec ‘11	Working relationships established with NITV, 98.9 country radio, Koori Mail and Torres News
		Dec ‘11 ‘12 & ‘13	All media releases distributed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media outlets





Respect QCOSS respects and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as being amongst the oldest living cultures on the planet. The contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, organisations, communities and people make to our work is vital to its success. Appropriate and respectful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and people makes our work towards ending poverty and inequality among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples more effective and relevant.

Focus Area
Celebrating and respecting the unique cultures, stories, traditions and right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
2.1 – Acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land we work and meet on	Director and all staff	Dec '11 '12 & '13	All staff and team meetings include an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners or Welcome if Traditional Owner present All conferences, forums and other major events include a Welcome to Country or Acknowledge the Traditional Owners
2.2 – Respect our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and Board members' knowledge of country, communities and peoples and the contribution this makes to all aspects of our work	Director and all managers	Dec '11 '12 & '13	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with specific local or community knowledge are involved in planning and implementing projects outside their team eg: QCOSS Conference Regional Conference Forums Staff planning days The vast majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees report in the staff survey that they feel their knowledge and understanding of their culture and country are valued by our organisation
2.3 – Make regular cultural awareness training part of our whole-of-workforce training plan to ensure that we move towards culturally competent work practices	Deputy Director	Dec '11 '12 & '13	Cultural awareness training included in annual training plans 90 percent of staff and Board attend cultural awareness training annually Training includes an introduction to 'yarning circles' and opportunities for staff to learn about country



Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
2.4 – Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through appropriate visible displays in our offices and marketing material	Senior Manager Communications and Membership; and Deputy Director	Jun '11	Membership brochure is culturally appropriate and has relevant representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities
		Dec '11	Membership brochure developed which targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations
		Dec '11	The Townsville and West End offices display items of cultural heritage chosen by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in consultation with appropriate cultural advisers
2.5 – Advocate for self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations through our role on the Compact Governance Committee	Director and Senior Manager, Sector Development	Dec '11, '12 & '13	Government consultation processes on reform issues are used to advocate for the important, legitimate and on-going role of community controlled organisations in the service system
2.6 – Celebrate events important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a reflection of our commitment to the underpinning messages of those days and a celebration of the enduring and ancient cultures that they represent	Senior Manager Communications and Membership	Jul '11, '12 & '13	75 percent of staff participate in NAIDOC Week celebrations in Musgrave Park and around the state
		Jul '11, '12 & '13	All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are provided with a <u>paid</u> holiday during NAIDOC week
		Aug '11, '12 & '13	75 percent of staff participate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day celebrations
		Dec '11 '12 & '13	Important cultural and related events are publicised on our website and in ENews
2.7 – Respect the moral rights, intellectual property and traditional and cultural sensitivities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, communities, organisations and peoples	Director and all managers	Dec '11, '12 & '13	<p>Permission of the author/owner of all traditional stories sought before publishing</p> <p>No material is published that is deemed to be secret to a specific groups or gender or where the name, image or recording of a recently deceased Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is contained within it</p> <p>No traditional or cultural material is published that Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people or Elders report is disrespectful of the material</p>



Opportunities

For QCOSS, working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, staff and Board is vital to the success of our work. By building opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to contribute to all aspects of our work we ensure improved knowledge, relationships and promotion of the Queensland community services sector and our successful contribution to reconciliation. Our efforts focus on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, and people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness.

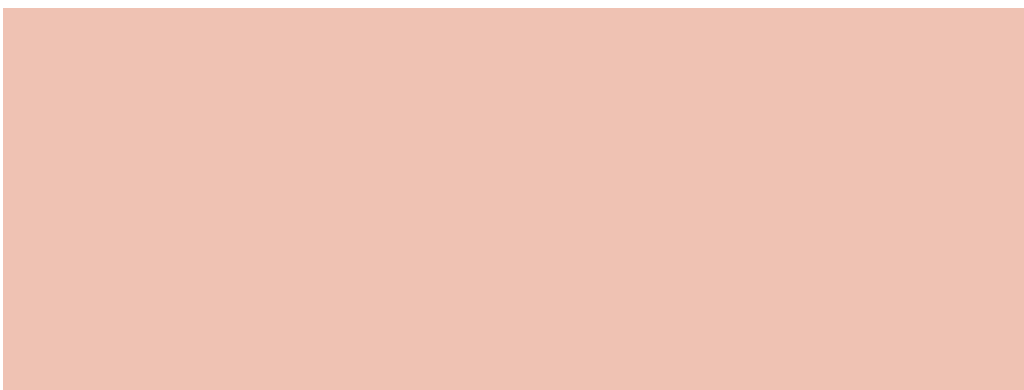
Focus Area – External Opportunities

Contributing to ending poverty among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our Policy Advocacy and Sector Development work

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
3.1 – Advocate and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities to end poverty and disadvantage among all Queensland peoples	Senior Manager Policy Advocacy	Jun '12 Dec '11 '12 & '13	Specific policy paper developed which advocates an end to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage and makes recommendations on how to achieve this aim Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspective included in all policy papers dealing with poverty and disadvantage
3.2 – Include a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all advocacy and planning aimed at reducing homelessness among people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness	Team Leader Homelessness Planning and Coordination	Dec '11 Dec '11 '12 & '13	Responses that specifically address Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander homelessness included in each of the seven community plans developed as part of the Homelessness Planning and Coordination initiative Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspective included in all policy papers dealing with homelessness
3.3 – Demand better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through our participation in the Combined Voices campaign	Senior Manager Communications and Membership	Dec '11 Dec '11 '12 & '13	All Members of Parliament contacted about the objectives of the campaign Website and other online social media mechanisms developed and maintained Events and other support provided to the campaign
3.4 – Promote quality service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients by both community controlled and other agencies via the Community Door website	Senior Manager Sector Development	Dec '11 '12 & '13	Section developed and maintained on the Community Door website which contains information about service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users



Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
<p>3.5 – Promote management and governance resources designed specifically for use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations that promote their capacity and support self-determination</p>	<p>Senior Manager Sector Development</p>	<p>Dec '11, '12' and '13</p>	<p>Representative sitting on Community Door Reference Group from a community controlled organisation</p> <p>Resources available on Community Door website that specifically target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations and support quality human resource management, governance and financial management</p>
<p>3.6 – Provide high quality, flexible and innovative professional development and support that is targeted to meet the identified local needs of eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s services and their staff</p>	<p>Team Leader Indigenous Professional Support Unit</p>	<p>Dec '11 '12 & '13</p>	<p>High quality training and resources delivered (measured in evaluations and surveys)</p> <p>Biennial conference held (measured in evaluations/surveys)</p> <p>Each of the 76 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s services in Queensland visited twice annually</p> <p>Website, quarterly newsletter and 1800 hotline maintained to ensure services’ access to relevant information</p> <p>Forums held in at least two regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities annually</p>





Focus Area – Internal Opportunities

Promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and making our workplace welcoming and inclusive

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
3.7 – Contribute to the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and employment in our organisation through the maintenance of identified traineeships and identifying other positions where appropriate	Deputy Director	Dec '11 '12 & '13	One identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeship in place at QCOSS Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are employed in our West End and Townsville offices and working in our Policy Advocacy, Sector Development and Organisational Services areas 20 percent or more of employees identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
3.8 – Ensure our recruitment and other HR processes are respectful and attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work for our organisation	Deputy Director and all Managers	Dec '11	75 percent of selection panels include an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander member 100 percent of external jobs advertised in Koori Mail or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media Quality Manual amended to require consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on HR policy reviews
3.9 – Make our induction processes for the Board and staff respectful, inclusive and targeted so that all staff feel welcome, understand this plan and are committed to its aims	Deputy Director	Dec '11 '12 & '13	100 percent of staff induction programs include a briefing on this plan by a member of the RAP committee Induction program for new Board members includes a briefing on this plan by the Director Induction program for all staff includes an introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff including their heritage and country





Tracking Progress and Reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
4.1 – Our RAP Committee, made up of QCOSS staff and a representative from the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Services Coalition continues to meet on a regular basis to lead our RAP journey	Deputy Director and RAP Committee	Dec '11 '12 & '13	RAP Committee meets every two months prior to Board meetings and reviews progress against the plan RAP committee reports every two months to the Board on progress against the plan
4.2 – Seek and receive feedback and input about our RAP from an external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group	Deputy Director	Dec '11 '12 & '13	Advisory Group reviews progress against the plan annually Advisory Group provides input into refreshing the plan annually
4.3 – Develop whole-of-organisation ownership of our RAP	Deputy Director and all Managers Deputy Director	Jan '11 '12 & '13 Jan '11 Jan '12 & '13	RAP implementation responsibilities embedded in all staff performance agreements and appraisals RAP available on our website and intranet RAP objectives and actions include in operational plans
4.4 – Regularly share progress, achievements and lessons in implementing the RAP	Director President Deputy Director	Dec '11 '12 & '13	Managers meetings to consider progress against the RAP every two months in conjunction with Board reporting Board to review progress against the RAP at each Board meeting RAP included in Quality Management System and audited annually for compliance
4.5 – Report on and refresh our RAP annually	Deputy Director Deputy Director	Jan '12 & '13 Feb '12 & '13	RAP Report available on our and Reconciliation Australia websites Refreshed RAP available on QCOSS and Reconciliation Australia websites



Queensland Council of Social Service
Ground floor, 20 Pidgeon Close
(off Beesley St), West End
PO Box 3786, South Brisbane 4101
Phone (07) 3004 6900 Fax (07) 3004 6999
Toll Free 1800 651 255 Email qcoss@qcoss.org.au
www.qcoss.org.au

