



Multicultural Communities
Council of Illawarra Ltd

RECONCILIATION PLAN

2023 - 2025



Artist and Artwork Story: JS KOORI DESIGNS

The artwork used throughout this Reconciliation Plan was created by Jasmine Sarin from JS Koori Designs. Jasmine is a proud Kamilaroi and Jerrinja woman from NSW. Born and raised in Wollongong (Dharawal country) as well as the South Coast in Nowra (Jerrinja and Yuin country) Jasmin has family connections to Coonabarabran (Kamilaroi country).

BUTBOT
(NOUN) BOOT.BUT

DHARAWAL WORD MEANING HEART



The work of MCCI is so important for creating connection and you cannot have meaning connection without heart. Butbot (Heart) was the inspiration I used to create this work. Overall I wanted this artwork to represent diversity and journey through connection. The largest circle in the artwork represents MCCI, the other circles represent the diverse and varied communities and groups that engage with MCCI.

Predominantly featuring the colours of MCCI throughout the work I also wanted to include a variety of connection lines to reflect the different ways we engage and connect in community.

We are all on a journey in this life and we make meaning of this through our connections and ability to share and learn from each other.

Message from the Chairperson and CEO



Ken Habak OAM
Chairperson



Chris Lacey
Chief Executive Officer
& Company Secretary

On behalf of the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra Ltd (MCCI), we are pleased to present our first Reconciliation Plan. This plan has been developed to help guide MCCI as we seek to work more closely and in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

MCCI's vision is for a cohesive multicultural society that embraces, celebrates and values diversity. Our commitment to embracing Reconciliation is underpinned by a deep respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Australians, whose connections to country, culture and language have endured despite many injustices. We consider that as the oldest living culture on earth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have much to teach us all if we are open to walking together as one community.

We acknowledge the diverse cultures and languages of First Nations Peoples. As a regional leadership body for multicultural communities, MCCI seeks to ensure that there is growing awareness about Reconciliation both within our organisation and with the members and communities we represent. We are committed to the principles outlined within the Uluru Statement from the Heart and we commit our organisation to supporting their implementation for the benefit of all Australians.

We hope that this Reconciliation Plan will act as an important step towards strengthening our unity and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across the areas in which we live and work.

Acknowledgement of Country

MCCI acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands upon which we live and work. We offer our deepest respect to Elders, past, present, and emerging, and we extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

We recognise their unique and continuing connections to land, sea, culture, language, customs, and community. Acknowledging past injustices, we admire the resilience and strength of First Nations Peoples and we hope for a future where we walk together as one inclusive and supportive multicultural community.

About MCCI

MCCI is a non-profit company limited by guarantee and registered charity.

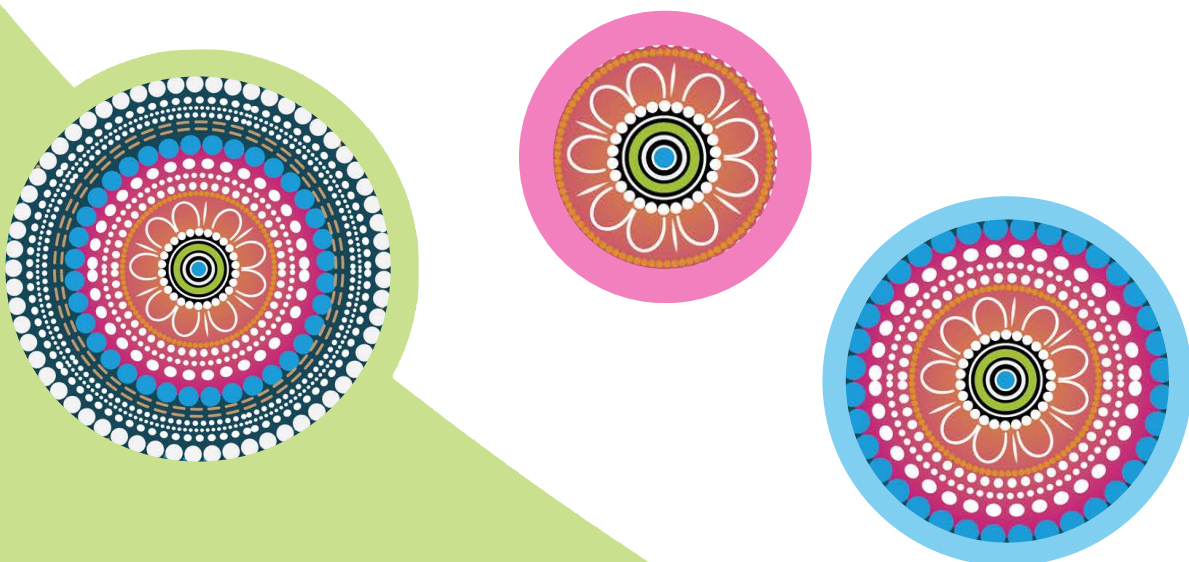
Formed in 1975 as a regional peak body to advocate for culturally & linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, our vision is for a cohesive multicultural society that embraces, celebrates and values diversity.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were the first culturally and linguistically diverse communities of Australia, comprising many nations with unique cultures, languages, customs, traditions and connections to country.

As a community-based organisation, MCCI is made up of over 50 local multicultural association members who elect a skills-based board of directors as the governing body to represent their interests to a wide range of stakeholders.

In 2023, MCCI employs 150 staff in the Illawarra-South Coast (Dharawal, Yuin) and Canberra (Ngunnawal) regions, supported by 200 active volunteers. Through this plan, we seek to use our influence and voice to support Reconciliation efforts in partnership with First Nations Peoples.

We provide a wide range of non-profit service activities primarily to migrant communities and individuals from CALD backgrounds. These services include community-based aged care, allied health and youth development programs, refugee settlement support, cultural training, and volunteering.



Our Path to Reconciliation

Reconciliation is important to MCCI because we believe our commitment to multiculturalism and social cohesion should be inclusive of a strong and ethical relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

We seek to support a growing awareness and understanding of historical injustices as a result of colonisation. Equally, we seek to play a greater role in acknowledging and celebrating the strength, resilience and positive contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in our community.

With some shared experiences of racism, discrimination, systemic disenfranchisement, and settlement dislocation between migrant and First Nations Peoples, we are also eager to develop shared approaches to understanding and tackling these issues together.

Through this plan, MCCI seeks to play a greater role in helping to inform and connect those within our organisation and broader sphere of influence with the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the aspirations of First Nations communities generally.

We are also eager to pursue future employment, business, and community development partnership opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their organisations.

MCCI's Reconciliation Plan will act as an organisation-wide framework for the delivery of our aspirations. It contains commitments and actions aimed at improving Reconciliation and our relationships with First Nations Australians.

Our vision for Reconciliation mirrors that of our national peak body, FECCA, which is to promote unity, respect, and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other multicultural communities of Australia.



Our Reconciliation Journey So Far

MCCI's Reconciliation Journey has begun.

We've taken a number of initial steps which include:

- Adopting a Respect for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples Policy in 2017 and reviewed in 2021. This policy
 - Acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Australia
 - Commits MCCI to supporting initiatives that advance Reconciliation and respectful relationships with the community
 - Outlines organisation-wide protocols for embedding Welcome to Country and Acknowledgements of Country into our official organisation events and at the commencement of board and staff team meetings
- Forming a Reconciliation Working Group
- Supporting our Reconciliation Working Group with cultural awareness training and participating in a yarning circle with local Elders
- Completing the online AIATSIS Core Cultural Competency Training for our working group and board directors
- Respectfully displaying the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia
- Commencing research about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples organisations and associations in the Illawarra and ACT regions
- Embedding references to Dharawal Country and Ngunnawal Country in our email signature blocks, respectfully acknowledging the First Nations places where we work and live
- Circulating translated versions of the Uluru Statement from the Heart to our members and local multicultural associations
- Signing the Joint Resolution of Multicultural Community Organisations in support of the First Nations Voice Referendum



Our Partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

MCCI's partnerships and activities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to date have involved:

- Working with the Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation to organise Welcome to Country presenters for our major company events
- Community partnerships to support Elders such as the delivery of freshly cooked meals during the COVID-19 pandemic via the Illawarra Koori Mens' Support Group
- Engaging with the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Lands Council as a member of the Migration Museum steering committee to ensure that First Nations history was included
- Working with the Woolyungah Indigenous Centre (University of Wollongong) and community leaders to develop a greater understanding of country via MCCI's youth programs
- Involving the community as part of our Intergenerational Cook-Off programs with 'Koori Teams' from Corrimal and Lake Illawarra High Schools; and
- Commissioning a locally-owned Indigenous training provider to deliver cultural awareness training for our working group

MCCI's relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations are currently stronger in the Illawarra region than they are in the ACT. This is primarily because of MCCI's long history of working in the Illawarra and the relative recent commencement of our operations in Canberra.

Our Commitments

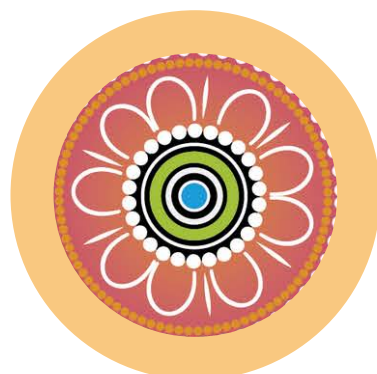
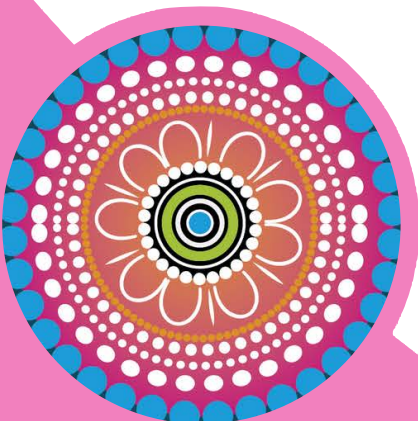
MCCI is committed to a more inclusive and equitable future for all Australians. We acknowledge the effects of colonisation continue to impact the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples today and that tangible commitments to work together via a Reconciliation plan is just one of the steps that helps remedy this.

This plan has been guided by the approach taken by Reconciliation Australia. However for the sake of clarity, accreditation from Reconciliation Australia has not been sought by MCCI for this Plan. Our commitments and actions to advance Reconciliation are what matter most to us and to which we will hold ourselves accountable.

As an organisation and through this Plan, we commit to:

- Better informing ourselves about the issues impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Working in closer partnership with First Nations community organisations on shared interests, issues and initiatives
- Supporting the principles outlined in the Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Demonstrating leadership on Reconciliation with our members and stakeholders

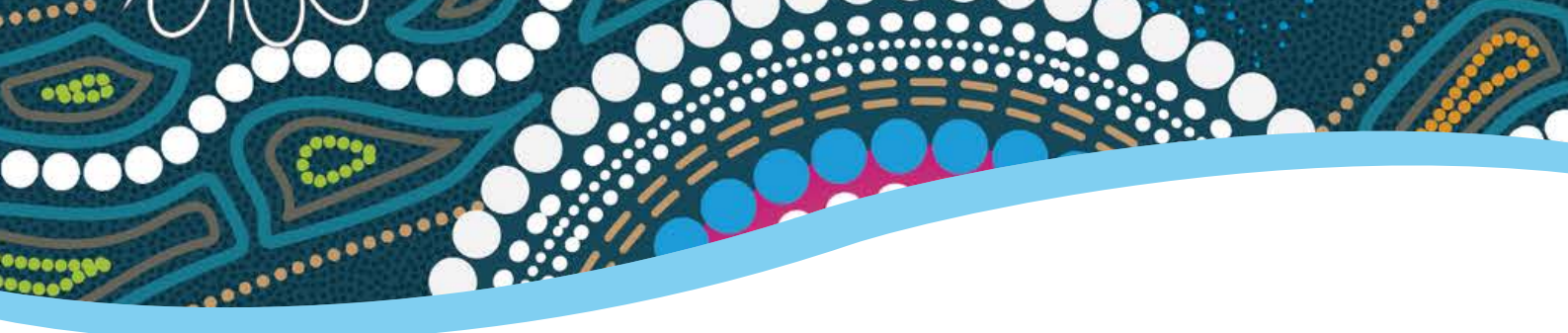
Our Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Reconciliation Plan. A report will be prepared for the board of directors annually on our progress. Implementation will be supported by a Reconciliation Work Group drawn from personnel across the organisation who have agreed to act as Reconciliation Champions for MCCI.



Our Action Plan

This Action Plan is for a two year period and will be formally reviewed in 2025.

Relationships	We will seek strengthened relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within the Illawarra-South Coast and Canberra regions• Introduce MCCI to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to explore future partnership opportunities• Ensure that engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations is incorporated as part of MCCI's Community Engagement Framework
Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	We will demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Australians and valued members of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop our understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area• Ensure our Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples policy is implemented and complete a review of the policy to ensure our current protocols are appropriate• Seek representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on our working group to continue our learning and help guide us




Awareness	We will raise our awareness of and participation in important dates/events for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey our staff & volunteers on their understanding of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples• Educate our team about National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, National Sorry Day, Mabo Day, Survival Day (Australia Day) and their significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples• Support our Reconciliation Working Group members as MCCI's Reconciliation champions to participate in community events on these occasions• Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations about potential partnership events with MCCI
Influence	We will encourage and promote Reconciliation through our sphere of influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate our commitment to Reconciliation to our members and stakeholders upon launch of the Reconciliation Plan via our e-newsletter and website• Encourage our members and stakeholders to pass resolutions of support for the Uluru Statement for Heart and sign up to the Joint Resolution of Multicultural Community Organisations in support for a First Nations Voice referendum• Develop a guideline for our members on appropriate Welcome and Acknowledgment protocols to incorporate into their events




Services	We will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have equitable access to our services that are culturally appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review our services to remove any access barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples• Ensure that staff who are delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have had appropriate cultural training• Consider ways of involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within our services and programs• Invite Elders from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to MCCI's annual Seniors Fiesta events to participate with elders from other communities
Employment and procurement partnerships	We will explore opportunities to increase employment pathways and new business partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review MCCI's human resources policies to ensure they align with best practice for supporting sustainable employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples• Identify potential opportunities to network with and share current MCCI job vacancies with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and networks• Review Supply Nation to identify potential suppliers and opportunities to procure services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses



 Offices in the Illawarra-South Coast (Dharawal, Yuin)
and ACT (Ngunnawal)

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