

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

May 2024 – May 2025

About the artist

Mick Minin Adams is a descendent of the Yadhagana/Wuthathi peoples of Cape York Peninsula in Queensland (on his father's side) having traditional family ties with the Gurindji people of Central Western Northern Territory (on his mother's side) and extended family relationship with the people of the Torres Straits, Warlpiri (Yuendumu), and East Arnhem Land (Gurramaru) communities.

His inspiration has been motivated by many years of living, working and extended social relationships with both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Mick Minin Adams

About the artwork

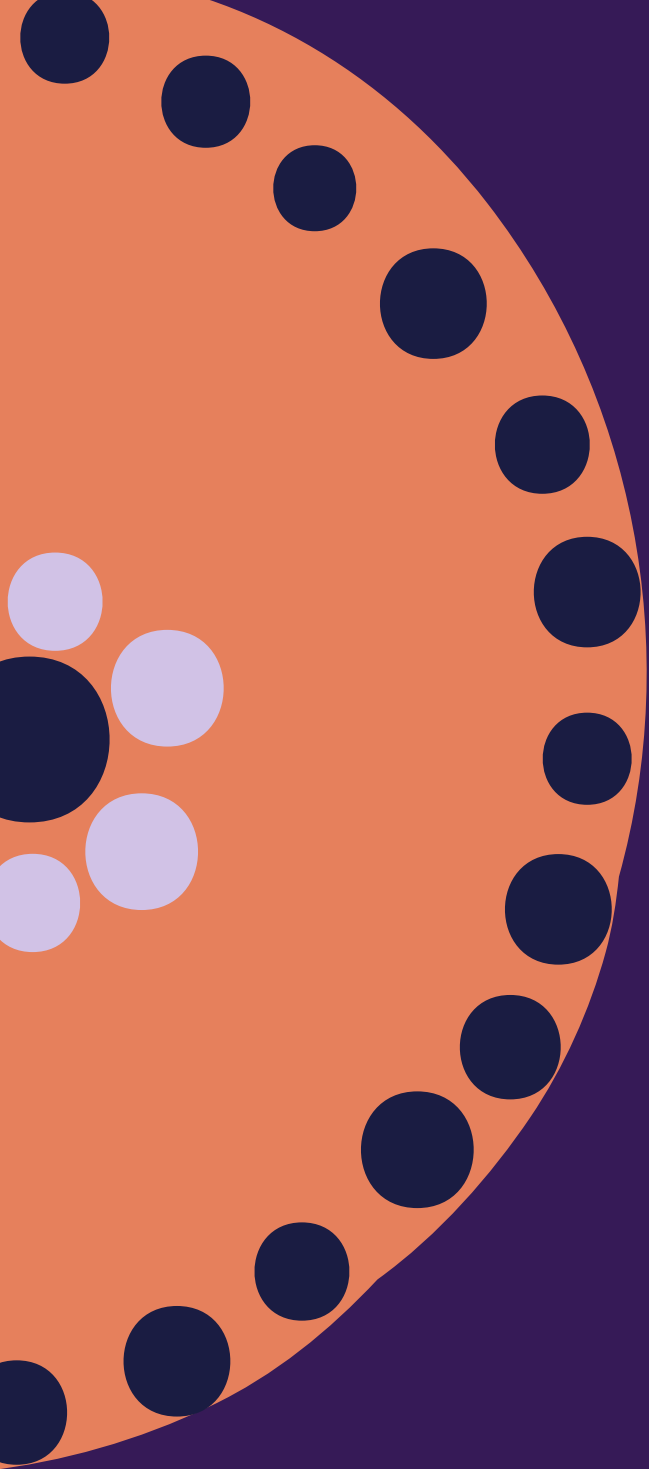
The painting represents the older people and ancestors who give wisdom and guidance to our young generation of people. The middle circles are spirit people and the other circles are the notions of clans who are guided by the songs, dances, and storylines handed down by older people.





We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work and recognise that it always has been, and always will be, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

We honour the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay our respects to all Elders past and present.



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Joint Statement from OPAN Chair and CEO

OPAN's vision is of a society where older people are heard, informed, and respected and where they enjoy and exercise their human rights. The rights of older people do not exist in isolation.

In undertaking this Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' rights as the Traditional Owners of this country. We thank them for 60,000 years' skillful stewardship of the land and waterways in spite of the careless disregard of those who came later.

In expressing our heartfelt sorrow for the trauma of the past, we recognise the systemic inequity and injustice experienced by generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Each and every one of us has a role to play in changing the nature of this country. Listening to – and learning from – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is an integral part of that process.

This year, we deepened our relationships with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council (NATSIAACC) and the National Aged Care Alliance First Nations Strategic Priority Group.

In 2022, OPAN established a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advocates Network. The network provides an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advocates to share their knowledge and advocacy experiences.

The network also aims to raise the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to OPAN and network members and to influence positive change in advocacy practice and the aged care service system.

Aged care advocates walk alongside their clients, supporting them to speak up for their rights. By natural extension, OPAN's Board of Directors and National Secretariat staff are committed to walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the path towards a better future.

This Reflect RAP is the first step on that journey.

Ara Cresswell
OPAN Chair

Craig Gear OAM
OPAN CEO



Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Inaugural Reflect RAP

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Older Persons Advocacy Network to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Older Persons Advocacy Network joins a network of more than 2,700 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

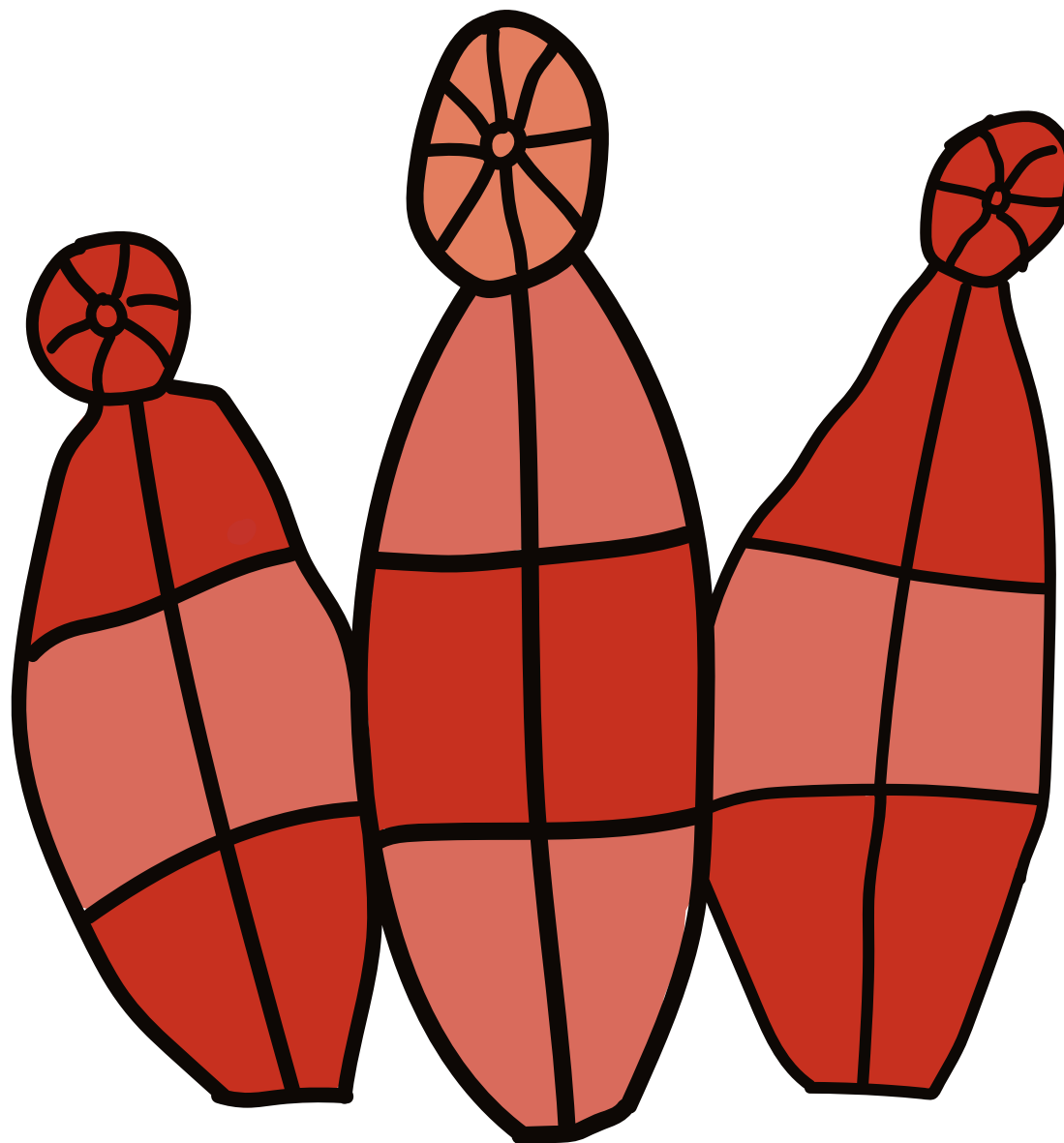
These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Older Persons Advocacy Network to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Older Persons Advocacy Network, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Statement of Intent

The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and the sovereign Custodians of the Country.

OPAN is an organisation which supports the human rights of older people and in supporting those rights OPAN recognises and respects the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

OPAN as an advocacy organisation walks alongside older people and takes direction from them. In supporting reconciliation, delivering services and in undertaking systemic advocacy OPAN will not speak on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and older people; we will listen, learn, engage and consult to advance self-determination and empowerment.

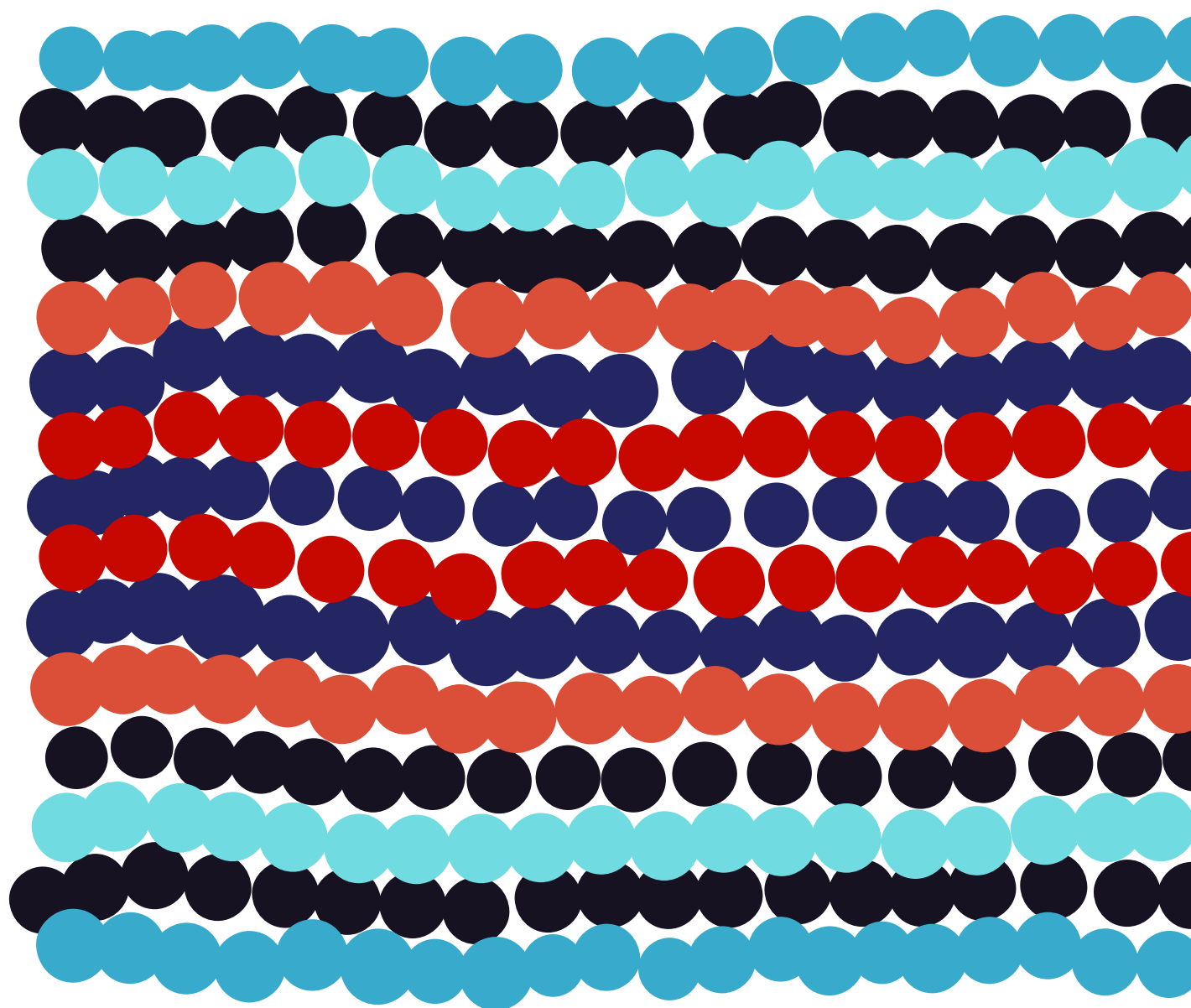
Key OPAN's values include Respect, Transparency and Accountability, Learning and Working Together. OPAN will deliver on its commitments within the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in line with these values.

OPAN will include the voices and perspectives of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families and carers, and OPAN Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advocates within our systemic advocacy, highlighting their needs and preferences for how aged care and related services should be delivered.

OPAN will listen and be informed on the actions we should take to achieve better aged care outcomes and more accessible, culturally safe and trauma-informed aged care advocacy services. We will be guided by OPAN's network members, the network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advocates, along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers and organisation partners.

We will do this by:

1. Developing, launching and effectively implementing our RAP.
2. Integrating the RAP with our Strategic Plan and embedding RAP actions in work plans, service delivery frameworks, and staff professional development.
3. Establishing and implementing an OPAN Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advocate Engagement Strategy.
4. Creating Collaboration Agreements and undertaking support activities with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisational partners and stakeholders.
5. Highlighting the specific issues and needs for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples seeking or receiving aged care as part of OPAN's systemic advocacy.
6. Participating in Community events with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations.
7. Providing information and alliance support for the ongoing campaign for Reconciliation, and Voice, Treaty, Truth, while respecting differing perspectives on this path.



Our business

OPAN is the national peak body for individual aged care advocacy support. Our nine member organisations cover every state and territory in Australia. Each year, the network's aged care advocates help tens of thousands of older people to work through issues with their home and residential aged care.

OPAN's nine member organisations provide free, confidential, and independent support to older people seeking or receiving Australian Government-funded aged care services as well as their families and other representatives.

Older people are at the centre of everything we do. OPAN's goal is to help older people understand and exercise their aged care rights, access aged care services that suit their needs, and find solutions to issues they may be experiencing with their aged care provider.

At a national level, we raise the voices of older people with governments, aged care providers and sector stakeholders to advance aged care reforms. Through our National Older Persons Reference Group, which includes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, we aim to ensure older people are actively involved in discussions that affect them, including changes to the aged care system.

OPAN is always on the side of older people and our independence is a key strength for both individual and systemic advocacy.

In delivering the National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) we focus on those diversity populations identified in the *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth) which include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Currently there are no known Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees at OPAN however there are 10 Aboriginal Advocates that work across our 9 member organisations and 3 Aboriginal members of our National Older Persons Reference Group.



Barry Fewquandie — First Nations Advocate



Elsja Dewis — First Nations Advocate

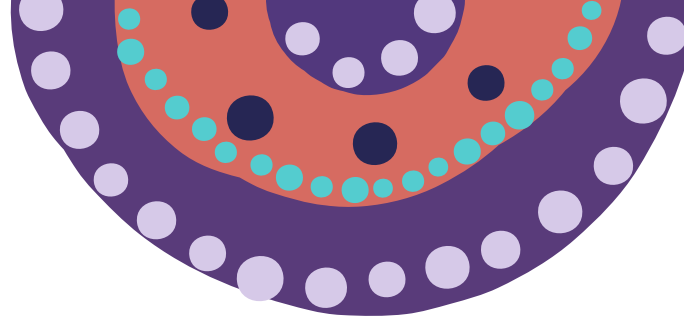


Gwenda Darling — Reference Group Member



Kevyn Morris — Reference Group Member

Our RAP



In order to advance reconciliation and restorative justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples OPAN commits to a formalised 'framework' via the RAP. This framework and principles will guide our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into the future. As the peak body representing older people's interests in the aged care sector, OPAN is committed to strong leadership on reconciliation. OPAN has a key role and responsibility as the voice of older people so that the voices of Elders and older peoples from the oldest continuing cultures in the world are heard, understood and actioned.

In OPAN's strategic directions the first focus states that we "Champion older people's human rights, embrace diversity and prevent abuse". The organisation must meaningfully embody and enact our directions. OPAN has a strong history of diversity and inclusion, and its values are at the forefront of all that we do. These values include respect; integrity; justice and equity; accountability and transparency; and working and learning together. The vision of OPAN is for a society where older people are heard, informed, and respected and where they can enjoy and exercise their human rights.

In order to deliver safe and inclusive advocacy services OPAN acknowledges the impacts of colonisation and that this may affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples interaction with our services. We are committed to reconciliation and to respectful relationships and spaces for all Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander peoples. We will walk alongside; we will not speak for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We will speak out against racism and injustice.

Furthermore, in developing the RAP we hope to increase awareness, knowledge and leadership, amongst board members, staff, member organisations, our National Older Persons Reference group and all stakeholders, of the histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

OPAN also provides selected national professional development support for its nine member organisations. The First Nations staff within those organisations have requested that OPAN support peer engagement opportunities and for their voice to be heard in the design and operations of NACAP. OPAN facilitates a National Older Persons Reference Group which includes 20% membership from diversity groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. OPAN believes the RAP guides and endorses their voice being supported in the delivery of NACAP and OPAN's strategic activities.

OPAN commenced a RAP Working Group in November 2022. The RAP is chaired by our independent Chair Ara Creswell and championed/supported by the OPAN Board, CEO and Senior Leadership Team.

Our Reconciliation Journey

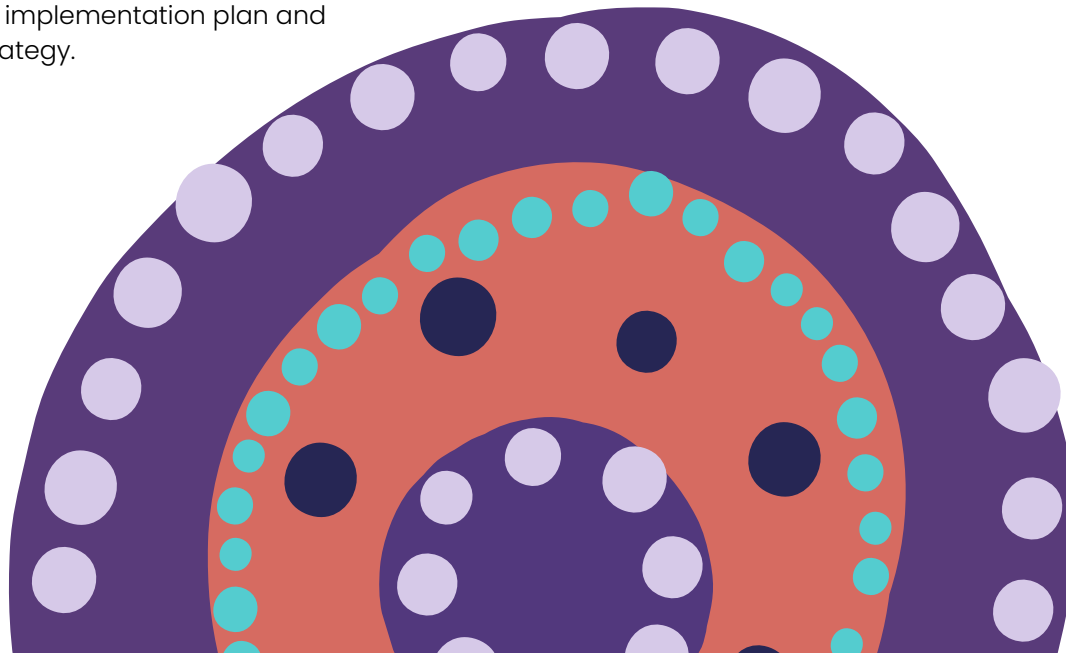
The RAP working group meets monthly and includes representation from across each of the different teams at OPAN – NACAP, NACAP Expansion Projects, Marketing, Learning and Communication and Policy & Systemic Advocacy. The RAP Working Group are completing a scoping document, which involves every member of the OPAN team, that identifies the work OPAN has done to date in relation to reconciliation. We will be inviting 2 Aboriginal Advocates and 2 Aboriginal members of the National Older Persons Reference Group onto the RAP Working Group as we move into developing and delivering our implementation plan and evaluation strategy.

OPAN's reconciliation journey began with ensuring that all OPAN meetings and events begin with either an Acknowledgement of Country or a Welcome to Country, conducted by a representative from the local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities. The team also acknowledges the land they are working on in any external meetings or events.

OPAN engaged Uncle Mick to paint artwork that reflects OPAN's purpose and work. This artwork is utilised in our publications, presentations and other work.

We have brought together a peer support group for the Aboriginal Advocates which is chaired and directed by the Advocates. OPAN has also sought to increase the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation on the National Older Persons Reference Group increasing from 1 to 3 members over the 3 years of its operation. Six of our member organisations have developed RAPs and are at various stages of the RAP process.

More recently we have become an associate member of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Committee (NATSIAAC) and are developing this partnership. OPAN has also delivered a webinar "The Ageing Mosaic – First Nations Communities", this webinar explored the importance of informative and inclusive aged care services and identifies programs and supports for older First Nations peoples. OPAN is also a member of the National Aged Care Alliance First Nations Strategic Priority Group.

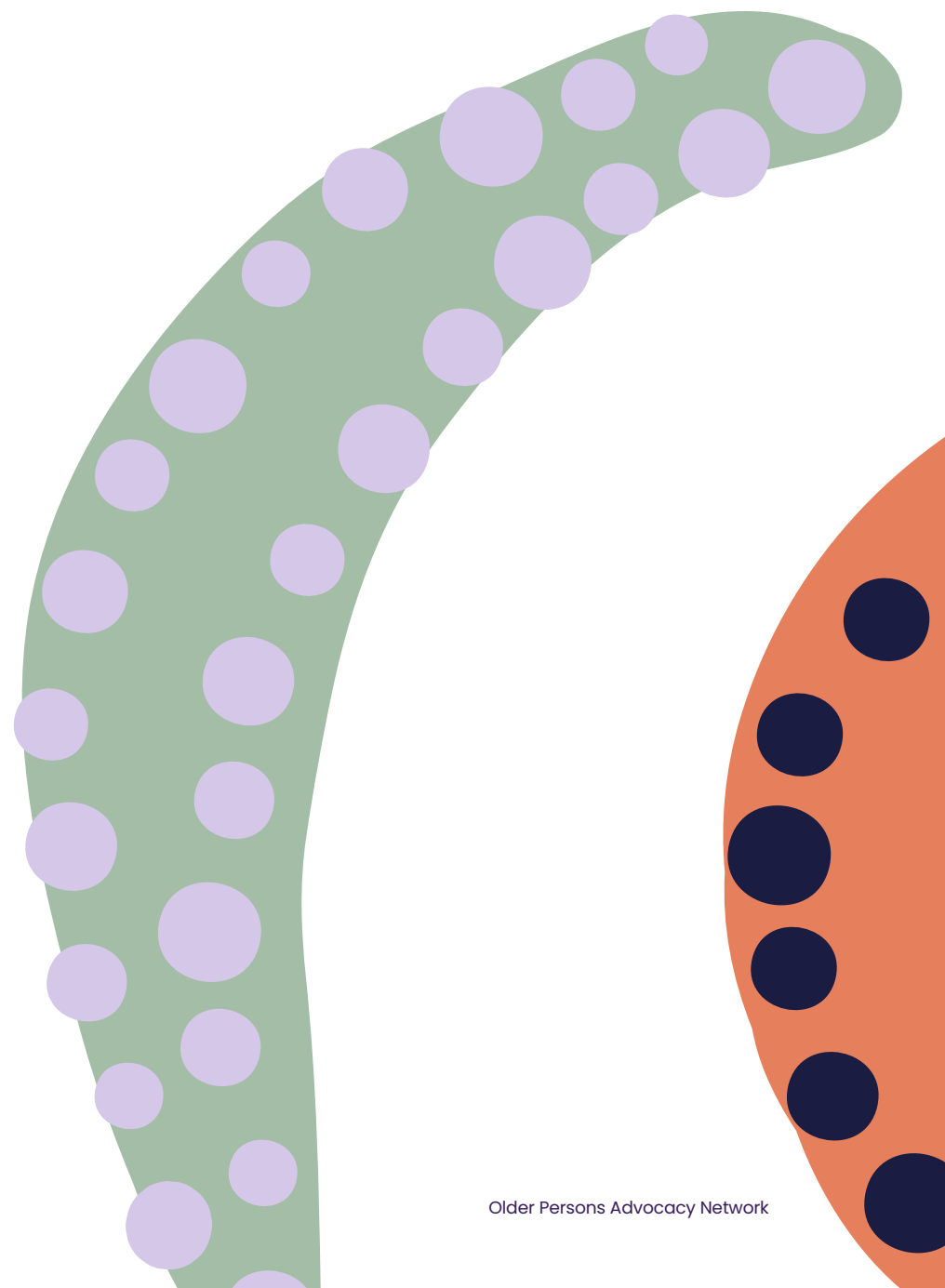


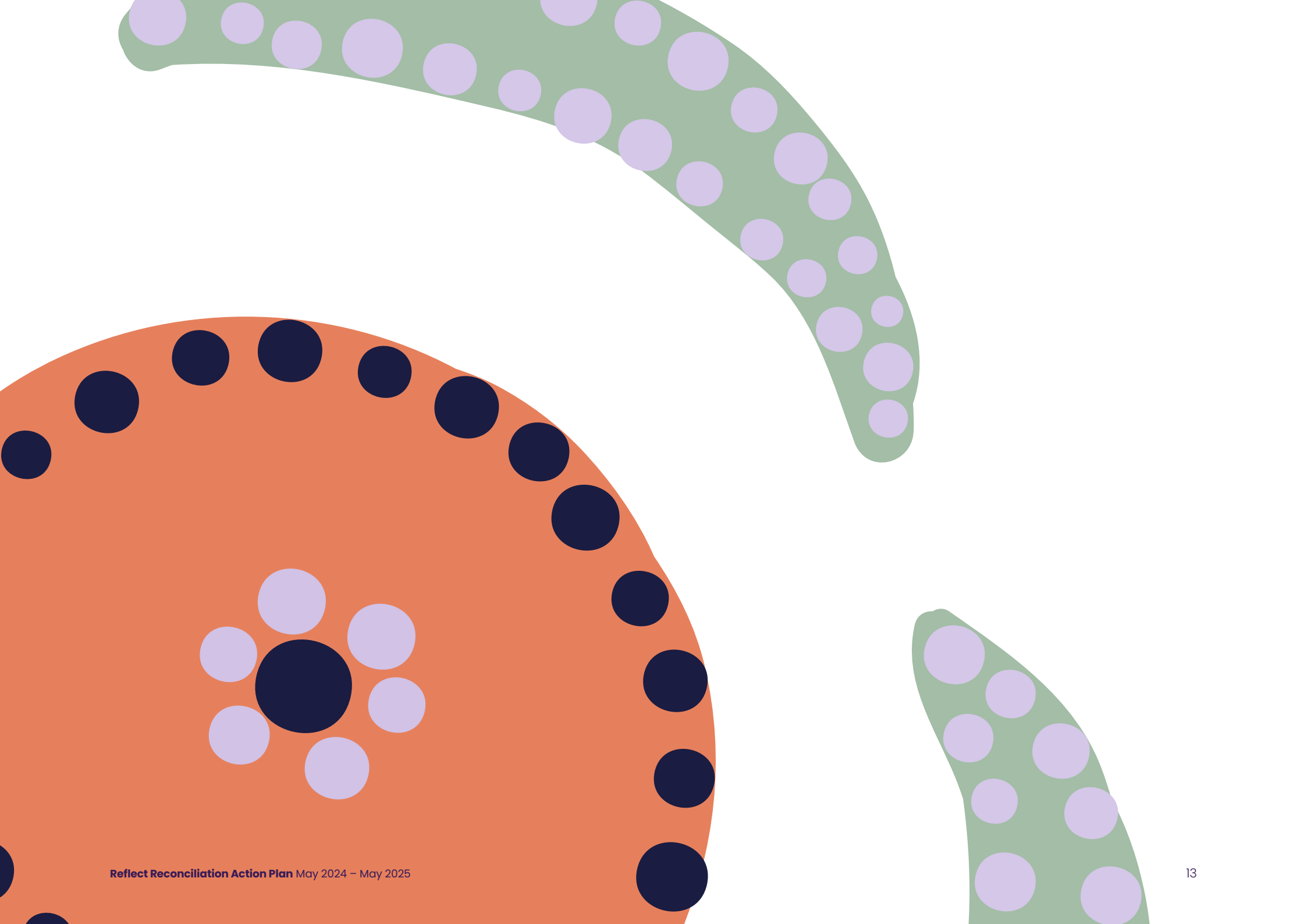
Our partners

OPAN does not currently have formal MOUs or agreements with any particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

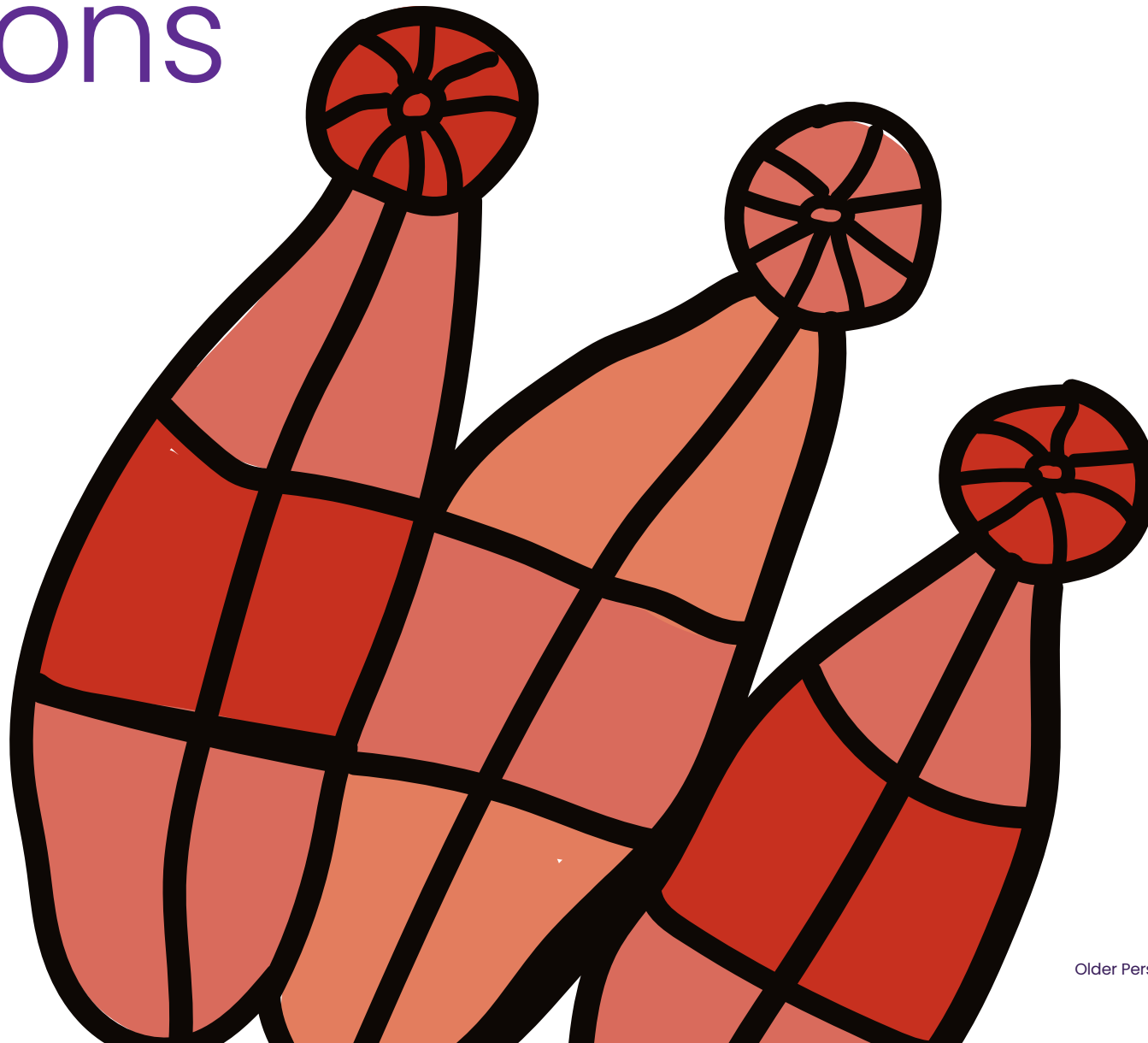
Though as noted above we have become an associate member of NATSIAACC and have met with the CEO to discuss how the organisations can work together. We also work with the National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) First Nations Strategic Priority Group and also Chair the Department of Health and Aged Care Diversity Consultative Committee, which includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander operated organisations.

Developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities is a priority of this Reconciliation Action Plan.





Our reconciliation actions





Relationships

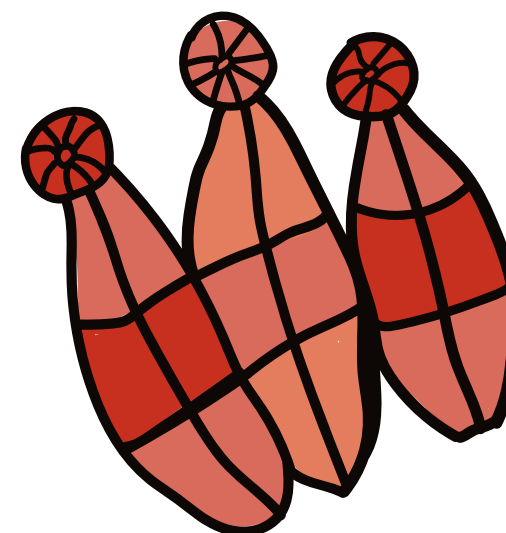
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	May 2024	CEO
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	June 2024	Director Policy & Systemic Advocacy
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024	Lead: Director Policy & Systemic Advocacy Support: Senior Media and Content Officer
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2024	Consumer Engagement Coordinator
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Chair

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	June 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Strategic Engagement Manager
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	July 2024	Director Policy & Systemic Advocacy
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	July 2024	Senior Project Officer — NACAP Projects
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	September 2024	Consumer Engagement Coordinator
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2024	Director Operations

Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learnings.	Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to determine best practice with cultural practices such as an Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	May 2024	Director Operations
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	July 2024	Learning and Development Lead
6. 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.	August 2024	Strategic Engagement Manager
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	August 2024	Director Policy & Systemic Advocacy

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. 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 2024	Lead: Strategic Engagement Manager Support: Senior Media and Content Officer
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	Senior Media and Content Officer
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week of July 2024	Consumer Engagement Coordinator



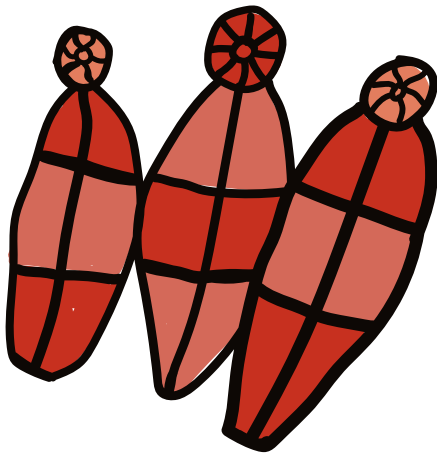
Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. 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.	October 2024	Director Operations
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	October 2024	Lead: Learning & Development Lead. Support: CEO OPAN

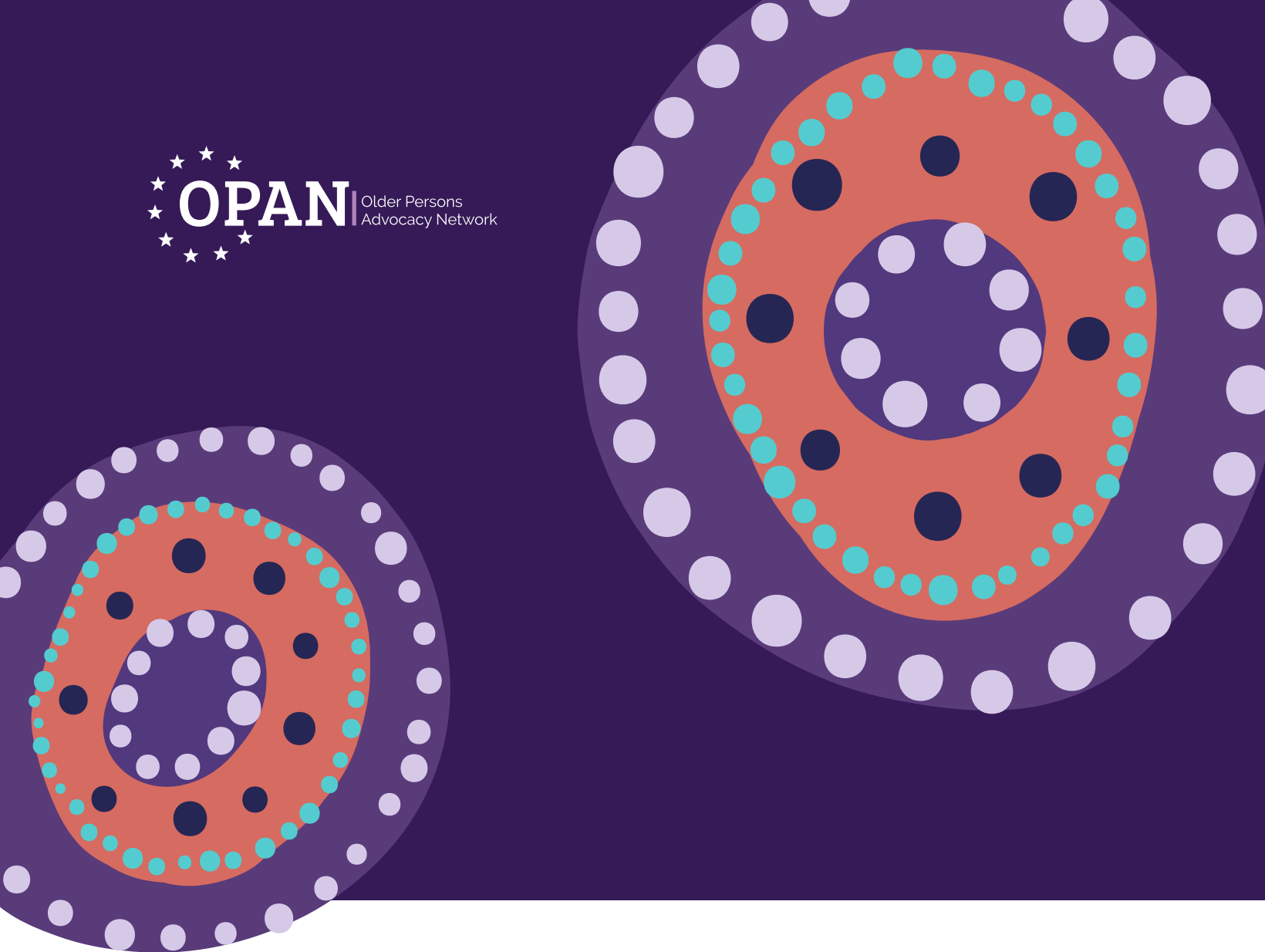
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	July 2024	Finance Manager
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	August 2024	Finance Manager

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	May 2024	Lead: CEO Support: OPAN Chair
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	May 2024	Board Chairperson
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	May 2024	Lead: Director Policy & Systemic Advocacy and Consumer Engagement Coordinator



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	May 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Finance Manager
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	May 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Director Policy & Systemic Advocacy
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	May 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Board Chairperson
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	June 2024	Lead: CEO Support: Director Operations
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June 2024	Director Policy & Systemic Advocacy
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August 2024	Director Policy & Systemic Advocacy
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2024	Senior Project Officer — NACAP Projects
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	February 2025	Director Policy and Systemic Advocacy



Contact details

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