

# Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

October 2022 – October 2023



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

Mater RAP ID  
RAP 029086



Mater People recognise National Close the Gap Day.

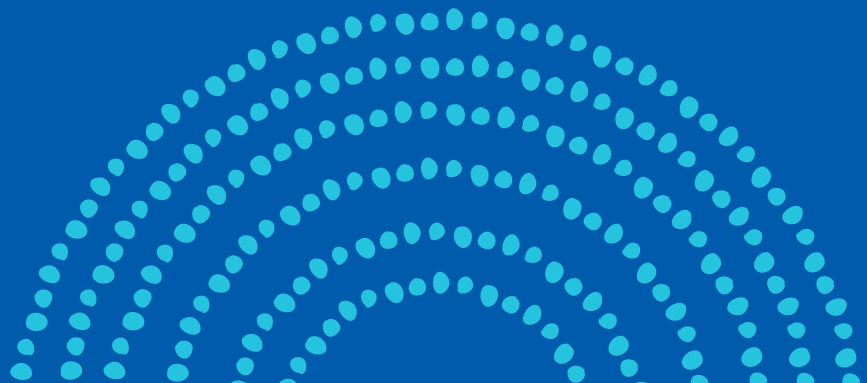


Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)  
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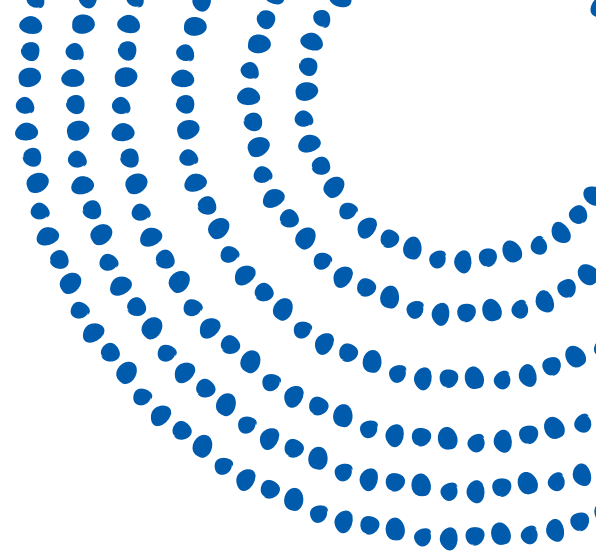
Artwork by Gilimbaa

Mater Misericordiae Ltd  
ACN 096 708 922

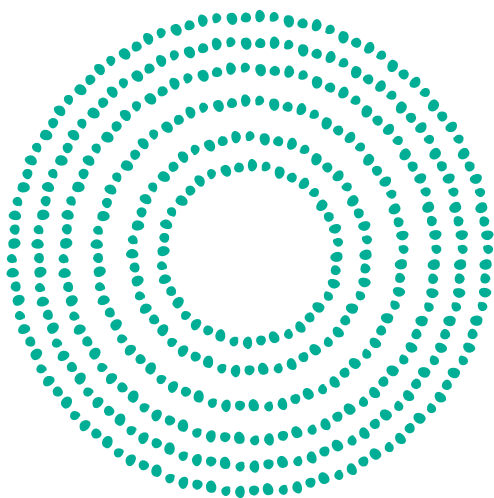
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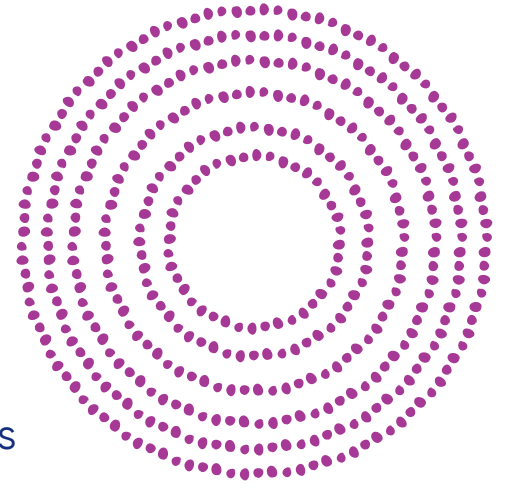


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# Acknowledgement of Country



Mater acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their continuing connections to the lands and seas throughout Australia and pays our respects to Elders both past and present.



*Mater CEO Dr Peter Steer and Mater Foundation Executive Director Andrew Thomas with Derek Oram-Sandy of the Yerongpan Aboriginal Dancers and Elders at an event to mark National Reconciliation Week.*





# Reflection



Reconciliation is about bringing people together. It focuses on all people striving for a society of right relationships.

"The God who creates the world also invites people into becoming fully human in their togetherness, embodying right relationships with God and neighbour and thus creating a truly human community."

(Mercy Partners Theological Framework)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander understanding of the sacredness of all creation, partnered with the divine spirit of a creator, resonates with the Mercy charism, which inspires Mater.

Relationships that purposefully work towards health improvements are vital to create better pathways to a promising future. A true partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples enhances the lives of all Australians.

## **Prayer of Aboriginal People**

Father of all, you gave us the Dreaming.

You have spoken to us through our beliefs.

You then made your love clear to us in the person of Jesus.

We thank you for your care. You own us.

You are our hope. Make us strong as we face the problems of change.

We ask you to help the people of Australia to listen to us and respect our culture.

Make the knowledge of you grow strong in all people, so that you can be at home in us and we can make a home for everyone in our land.

Amen.

(Aboriginal people composed this prayer for St Pope John Paul II's visit to Australia in 1986. This prayer is now prayed in many Catholic Aboriginal groups around the country).



# From the of Mater's Steering

Mater aspires to be a leader in providing culturally safe healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia.

For more than a century, Mater's Mission has been to respond to unmet community need and provide compassionate care to those who need it most. Reconciliation is key to both of these aspects.

A key objective of this 'one Mater' is to provide a holistic approach to care for the spiritual, emotional, physical and social wellbeing of all God's creation. This is closely aligned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' holistic approach to health care: of treating the person, not the disease.

Reconciliation Australia has identified five dimensions of reconciliation. Mater understands that this path is a long one, but we are committed to realising the long-term goal of achieving meaningful progress in all of these dimensions: Race Relations; Equality and Equity; Institutional Integrity; Unity, and Historical Acceptance.

Mater has been practising the principles of reconciliation for many years. The *Reflect RAP* is an opportunity for Mater to showcase our current initiatives in the public arena and to reinforce our commitment to reconciliation.

Spiritual wellbeing is core to cultural safety, and spirituality is core to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. It is synonymous with their continuing connection to Country, their Lore/Law, their communities and their families.

Mater does not seek to be everything to everybody. We will remain true to our Mission and aspire to be a catalyst for change. Our reconciliation activities are akin to a pebble in a pond, gently creating a ripple that reaches all.

We strive to play our part in writing a new chapter in the story of Australia – a modern nation proud of our diverse, rich cultural heritage and identity.

*Dr Peter Steer*

Chief Executive Officer, Mater

Co-Chair,

Mater Reconciliation Action Plan Steering Committee

# Co-Chairs RAP Committee



I am honoured to co-chair the Steering Committee to develop Mater's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

We must work together as an Australian community – and certainly as a statewide Mater community – to increase everyone's understanding of the unique culture and spirituality of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Indeed, the provision of quality healthcare to indigenous Australians is a national priority of the highest order.

While many Australians may believe that most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live in remote regions, the majority (79%) live in urban areas, where Mater operates. In fact, in recent years, South East Queensland in particular has recorded the largest and equal-fastest growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the country.

To address this growing population and demand for health services, my organisation, the Institute for Urban

Indigenous Health (IUIH), was established in 2009 to assist the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services with regional planning, development and delivery of comprehensive primary health care services. Working with key healthcare providers like Mater is integral for us to achieve improved health outcomes for all.

IUIH's *Deadly Choices* program – “deadly” means “excellent” to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community – is a strengths-based approach that uses cultural identity to define what it means to make healthy choices and reinforce our people as leaders and health promoters. So it's vital that our leading healthcare providers, like Mater, understand and respect that cultural identity. The *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan* will become the centrepiece of Mater's ongoing engagement with the Indigenous peoples of Queensland, and I am pleased to be able to play a part in its development.

*Adrian Carson*

Chief Executive Officer,  
Institute for Urban Indigenous Health  
Co-Chair,  
Mater Reconciliation Action Plan Steering Committee



# From the Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Mater to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Mater joins a network of more than 1,100 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 Mater 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 Mater, 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

# About Mater

Mater is a Catholic not-for-profit ministry of Mercy Partners. For more than 100 years, Mater has been guided by the spirit of the Sisters of Mercy in our mission to meet unmet needs. This tradition of care remains at our core today.

As the largest not-for-profit healthcare provider in Queensland, Mater's Mission extends across all aspects of our organisation, through our people, and to the communities we serve. We are dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve.

Committed to a culture of compassionate care, each year Mater responds to the needs of more than 700 000 people who seek expert healthcare, advice and support when they need it most.

Our network of hospitals and care services stretches across Queensland to deliver world-class health outcomes.

As a not-for-profit provider, Mater delivers on its Mission by continuing its philanthropic efforts in the community and reinvesting proceeds back into delivering exceptional care.

## Our Mission

We serve together to bring God's mercy to our communities through compassionate, transforming, healing ministries.

## Our Values

We honour and promote the dignity of human life and of all creation.

We act with compassion and integrity.

We strive for excellence.





# Our Objectives



## Express mercy

Care for the spiritual, emotional, physical and social wellbeing of all God's creation.



## Improve access to expertise

Engage the community when and where it is most relevant to meet their needs.



## Deliver excellence in care

Focus, enhance and continuously improve our expertise in high-quality care.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students use Mater's world-class OptiSim methodology during International Healthcare Simulation Week.

# Our Locations

Mater serves many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We are cultivating partnerships with local community service providers to walk with us on our journey of reconciliation.

Mater employs more than 9 000 people across Queensland. In the last two years we have been capturing more information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at onboarding allowing use to better understand our team.

Mater provides a range of healthcare services from seven hubs across Queensland, serving many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



**Townsville** - Bindal and Wulgurukaba Nations

**Mackay** - Yuwi Nation

**Rockhampton** - Darumbal Nation

**Bundaberg** - Taribelang Nation

**Redlands** - Qandamooka Nation

**South Brisbane** - Yuggera and Turrbul Nations

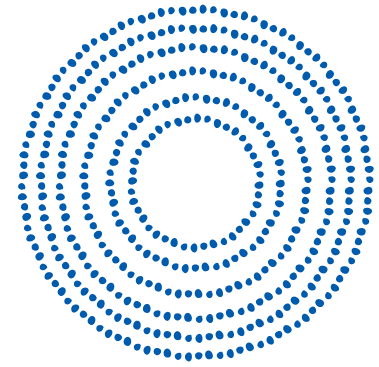
**Springfield** - Jagera, Yuggera Ugargpul People

Wulgurukaba Walkabouts Welcome to Country at the Mater Private Hospital Townsville Mercy Centre opening.





# Our Reconciliation Action Plan



“Our door is open; everyone is welcome, and no one gets left behind.”

- Mater’s RAP philosophy

In 2019, Mater engaged the services of Dr Sophie Hickey from the Molly Wardaguga Research Centre at Charles Darwin University to conduct an Organisational Cultural Competency Research study among staff. One of the outcomes of this project was Mater’s commitment to develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan.

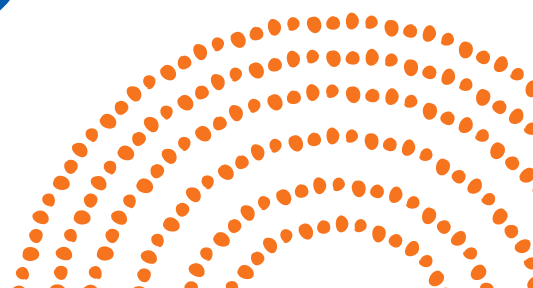
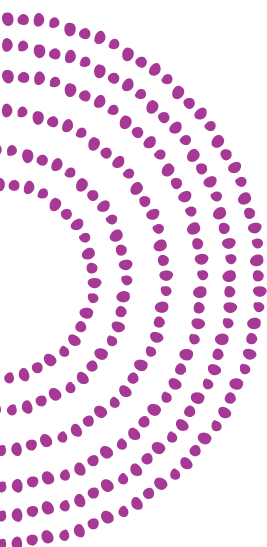
Our Reconciliation Action Plan is a platform allowing us to view the Mater landscape through the lens of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We are working to embed this perspective into Mater’s strategic operations in meaningful and ongoing ways.

This approach allows all Mater People an opportunity to engage in open dialogue and develop cohesive strategies underpinned by cultural safety. We are establishing collaborative partnerships with all Mater People and the wider community through sustained

engagement and action. We will share responsibilities and facilitate activities to achieve transformation in our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Our RAP Steering Committee has a mix of internal and external stakeholders. It is co-chaired by Mater CEO Dr Peter Steer and CEO of the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health Adrian Carson. It also includes representatives from peak bodies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

The inclusion of these external stakeholders is crucial to Mater’s decision-making on how best to seamlessly embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ cultural safety, health and wellbeing aspirations into the framework.



# Our partnerships and current activities

In preparing this Reconciliation Action Plan, an overview of Mater's ministries revealed a variety of initiatives that demonstrate reconciliation in action already embedded in our work.

## Current Initiatives

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Liaison service

A dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Service was established in 1997. The liaison workers advise and support staff to help Mater provide a safe cultural environment to meet the needs of, and provide appropriate care for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. The team works with inpatient and ambulatory clients and also provides onboarding sessions for new starters.

### Health Equity Strategy

Mater has made a commitment to work collectively with four Hospital and Health Services to develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equity Strategy that will:

- Deliver safe, accessible and sustainable health services for Indigenous communities.
- Identify and co-design Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service priorities to be addressed over the next ten years.
- Reorient local health systems to maximise available resources, identify and fill service gaps and minimise duplication.
- Establish a baseline and develop regional KPIs against which to measure performance to achieve equity of outcomes in South East Queensland by 2031.
- Strengthen the service interface between Hospital and Health Services and Child Community Health Services.
- Work with other providers across the health system and social service sector to integrate services, enhance care coordination and eliminate service gaps.

### Mental Health Services

Culturally appropriate support is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through Mater services in perinatal mental health (soon to be expanded with the new Mater Family Wellbeing Centre) and support for young adults in our Emotional Health Unit.

### Education

Mater provides sponsorship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants to undertake the Diploma of Nursing, delivered through Mater Education. In the secondary education sector, schools are offered access for their students to non-clinical certificate training, allowing for the development of post-school pathways.

### Cataract surgery project

More than 700 cataract procedures have been conducted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients at Mater Private Hospital Springfield, in partnership with the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH). A grant from Mater Foundation Health covers the cost of discharge medications including eye drops.

### Redland Healing Garden

A local indigenous artist was commissioned to complete a piece of art for the Healing Garden at Mater Private Hospital Redland. In addition, Quandamooka Elders have been approached to join Redland's consumer advisory group, and a new acknowledgement plaque and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags have been given prominence in the foyer of the hospital.

# Focus Areas

Mater's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan encompasses four focus areas:



**Relationships**



**Respect**



**Opportunities**



**Governance**

## Relationships

Mater has a strategic vision to empower people to live better lives through improved health and wellbeing. Through developing relationships that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values Mater's commitment to spiritual, mental, physical, emotional and social wellbeing will become a reality.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	• Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	September 2022	Project Manager RAP
	• Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	September 2022	Project Manager RAP
<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	External Relations, Marketing and Engagement
	• RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May 2023	RAP Working Group
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2023	CEO
<b>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	August 2022	External Relations, Marketing and Engagement
	• Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.		
	• Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	August 2022	Project Manager
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	• Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	December 2022	People and Learning
	• Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.		



# Working together to Close the Gap

'Closing the Gap' in health and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians is the shared responsibility of all Australians.



Jamie-Lee and her Mater baby Kayden.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers are at increased likelihood of suffering pregnancy complications, including gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia. They also have higher rates of babies being born early or at a low-birth weight.

A partnership between Mater Mothers' Hospitals, the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane is working to Close the Gap in maternal and infant health outcomes.



There have been dramatic improvements in many maternal and infant health outcomes.

Adrian Carson,  
CEO, Institute for Urban Indigenous Health



Developed in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, the Birthing in Our Community (BiOC) program is a Birthing on Country service tailored to an urban setting. Mothers are offered culturally-appropriate care away from the hospital, with 24/7 access to pregnancy, birthing and postnatal care provided by their midwife and family support worker.

'Birthing on Country', recognises the importance of a woman giving birth on the lands of ancestors, ensuring a spiritual connection to the land for her baby.

Institute for Urban Indigenous Health CEO Adrian Carson reports that BiOC has significantly improved health, wellbeing and perinatal outcomes for women and children.

"Birthing in Our Community helps to make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women feel confident and safe to access the care they need for themselves and their babies. This has seen more mothers attend all of their antenatal and postnatal care appointments and fulfil all of their vaccinations. As well, we have seen a reduction in smoking in pregnancy," Adrian said.

"As a result, there have been dramatic improvements in many maternal and infant health outcomes."

A five-year National Health and Medical Research Council-funded cohort study of the BiOC program showed improvements included more than halving the national pre-term birth rate (six per cent compared with 14 per cent), and almost closing the gap altogether in comparison with non-Indigenous pre-term birth rates. Also, low birth weight was half the national rate (six per cent compared with 11 per cent) as was admissions to neonatal units (10 per cent compared with 22 per cent).



# Respect

Through compassion, Mater promotes mutual respect. Being authentic and respectful in our engagement ensures knowledge is shared comprehensively and inclusively. Mater is committed to increasing its understanding of Indigenous cultures and practices.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	• Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	October 2022	Project Manager, RAP
	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	December 2022	Mater Education
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 areas.	August 2022	People and Learning
	• Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	September 2022	People and Learning
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.	July 2022	Working Group
	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.		

On 29 November 1986 Pope John Paul II issued this ground-breaking address to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Blatherskite Park, Alice Springs.

*"Your culture, which shows the lasting genius and dignity of your race, must not be allowed to disappear. Do not think that your gifts are worth so little that you should no longer bother to maintain them. Share them with each other and teach them to your children. Your songs, your stories, your paintings, your dances, your languages, must never be lost."*



# Making space for respect

Reconciliation is about strengthening respectful relationships. At Mater, this extends to supporting the spiritual needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, through initiatives such as the multi-faith prayer room at Mater Private Hospital Rockhampton.

A feature of the prayer room is a poster illustrating the principle of the 'Golden Rule': "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This basic rule is common to the 13 religions and faiths represented in the poster, of which Christianity is one.



Although there is a chapel at the hospital, it was important to Mater that we provided a space where patients, families and staff who are not Catholic would feel welcome and comfortable.

Sister Maria Jean



The Golden Rule is a simple guide for relating with people of different religions and cultural backgrounds. Mission and Pastoral Care Coordinator Sr Maria Jean Rhule said it was very much in mind when establishing the multi-faith prayer room.

Guided by the spirit of the Sisters of Mercy, Mater welcomes people of all cultures and faiths.

"We have set up the prayer room to include resources and artefacts relevant to other religions and cultural backgrounds. For example, a copy of the Koran and two prayer mats donated by one of our doctors who brought them back from a recent visit to Mecca. There is also a Hindu religious book, Bhagavad Gita, which, in keeping with the culture, is kept covered by a cloth to keep dust away as a sign of respect," Sr Maria Jean said.

"We also have a booklet of resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and they are welcome to take away any of these resources, such as information on grief."

Other items including an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander painting and a boomerang have been purposefully included to encourage a feeling of belonging when using the prayer room.

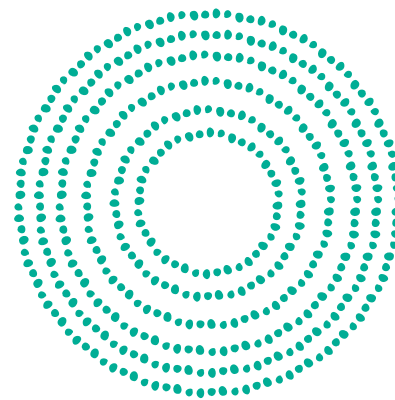


*The Golden Rule poster in the Prayer Room at Mater Private Hospital Bundaberg.*



*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art features in the prayer room reflection space at Mater Private Hospital Rockhampton.*

# Opportunities



Mater creates culturally-immersed environments that nurture the career aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We respond to and meet the needs of individuals, families and communities through employment, contracts and partnerships.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	• Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	December 2022	People and Learning
	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2022	People and Learning
	• Develop a plan for the onboarding of 2% of new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees for Mater Springfield Stage 2.	December 2022	People and Learning
<b>9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	• Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses.	December 2022	Procurement
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2022	Procurement
	• Review Mater supplier list and increase the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses.	December 2022	Procurement



Gail Mabo with her painting which will be featured on the new carpark at Mater Private Hospital Townsville.



*Click to view a video on Gail Mabo unveiling her artwork at Mater Private Hospital Townsville.*



# Mater Townsville project building opportunity for jobs and inclusion

In addition to improving functionality and access to the campus, a new building project will provide a highly visible connection with indigenous heritage and employment and training opportunities.

Mater Private Hospital Townsville's new six storey, 400 space carpark is the second stage of a 10 year masterplan for the Pimlico campus.

Mater is working with the project managers, Paynters, to develop an Indigenous Employment Strategy for the project, to improve engagement, create jobs and improve the cultural capacity of staff, with a focus on training and educational opportunities.



I am extremely proud to be partnering with such a renowned artist to bring the story of this country and its traditional owners to life here at Mater Townsville.

Libbie Linley,  
Mater Townsville Executive Officer



As part of its contract with Mater, Paynters engaged an indigenous school-based apprentice, and has committed to further indigenous employment hours of up to 10% over the life of the project.

Paynters' North Queensland Manager, Michael Koen, said Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were also part of the broader construction team with job opportunities for 11 indigenous apprentices.

"In addition to our apprentices, we have also committed to 10 indigenous school-based trainees and work experience students for this project," he said.

Mater also specified the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses and a two-phase procurement process to boost indigenous contracting and participation in the supply chain.

Construction of the car park is supported by a \$19.75 million loan from the Federal Government's Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, based on indigenous employment, procurement and participation in the project.

Mater is also committed to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the hospital's workforce and is offering scholarships for its Diploma of Nursing course in Townsville to help build indigenous employment in the health sector.

The carpark will feature a specially-commissioned artwork by local artist Gail Mabo.

Gail said her painting reflected the importance of connection to Country and acknowledged the four different clans around Townsville, including the Gurambilburra Wulgurukaba, Bindal, Nywaigi, and Gugu Badhun People.

"The painting also reflects the spirits of this land as well as the blue and earthy tones of this region. We believe that when people know the story of place, they can own the space," she said.

Mater Townsville Executive Officer, Libbie Linley, said the bespoke artwork was unveiled to great acclaim during NAIDOC Week.

"The theme for NAIDOC Week is *Heal Country!* which is about embracing the cultural knowledge and understanding of the land as part of Australia's national heritage," she said.

The painting will be converted to a digital format and then recreated on the façade of the carpark.



# Governance

Self-determination means having the freedom to exercise the same rights as all citizens. Mater is seeking to embed holistic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance into its usual business practices.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>10. Review/revise an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	• Review a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	August 2022	Project Manager RAP
	• Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	August 2022	Project Manager RAP
	• Revise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	August 2022	Project Manager RAP
<b>11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	August 2022	Project Manager RAP
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	August 2022	Project Manager RAP
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	August 2022	Project Manager RAP
<b>12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2022	Project Manager RAP
<b>13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	December 2022	Project Manager RAP



# Ancient governance model inspires new way of working together

The journey to reconciliation is one in which we all have a part to play in valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, histories, cultures and futures.

Inspired by the Aboriginal Engagement model of governance, Mater Foundation's Philanthropy team has recently introduced a new approach to their way of working with each other.

Director of Philanthropy, Lesley Ray has commenced implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander model of governance in team workshops and meetings after being introduced to the concept through Mater's Reconciliation Action Plan.

"The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance structure is different from the hierarchical structure found in most organisations. There is no hierarchy! Everyone is a leader; everyone is a follower. Everyone's voice is valued equally and there's a shared responsibility for everything," Lesley said.

"The model just made sense to me and really resonated with me as a leader."

Soon after learning of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance model, Lesley trialled the model at a workshop with the Philanthropy Team and received positive feedback.

"The team found the whole approach really refreshing. We sat in a circle, like a 'yarning circle', and instead of me leading the meeting as I usually would, we agreed as a

group that everyone was a leader in the meeting.

"If there was an idea to be considered, or if there was a problem, it would be presented by anybody in the group and it would be discussed as a shared responsibility. It was not one person's problem.

"Everyone agreed that they felt that they were really listened to and they felt empowered by this new approach."

The Philanthropy Team have embraced the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance model and now try to employ it at their weekly meeting and even use a symbolic 'message stick' as part of the process.

"We pass the symbolic message stick around and when you have the stick, it's your turn to speak without interruption from others. Everyone has the opportunity to speak in a safe space, and it encourages deep listening," Lesley said.

"Being open to this new way of thinking, which is actually tens of thousands of years old, has transformed our way of working with each other and I'm excited to explore how we can embed it further within our team."



*Lesley Ray, Director of Philanthropy, Mater Foundation.*

# Aboriginal Engagement model of governance



## **This is a flat power structure:**

Everyone is a leader and a follower.  
We sit side-by-side as there is no hierarchy.  
Everyone's voice is valued.  
There is more truth-telling as there is trust with this model of engagement.  
There is a tangible presence in the community.  
Shared responsibility and shared decision-making.



Mater Education supports nursing training in Townsville.



# Mater's RAP Artwork

## The Heart to Heal, the Strength to Grow

Our spirit is strong, it thrives as we embrace those who we must always care for. Our journey has been long and we will continue to flourish as we open our hearts to those who walk with us. Always.

The artwork concept and narrative was developed by David Williams. David is a proud Wakka Wakka artist at Gilimbaa.







For further information about  
Mater's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan,  
please email [rap@mater.org.au](mailto:rap@mater.org.au)

