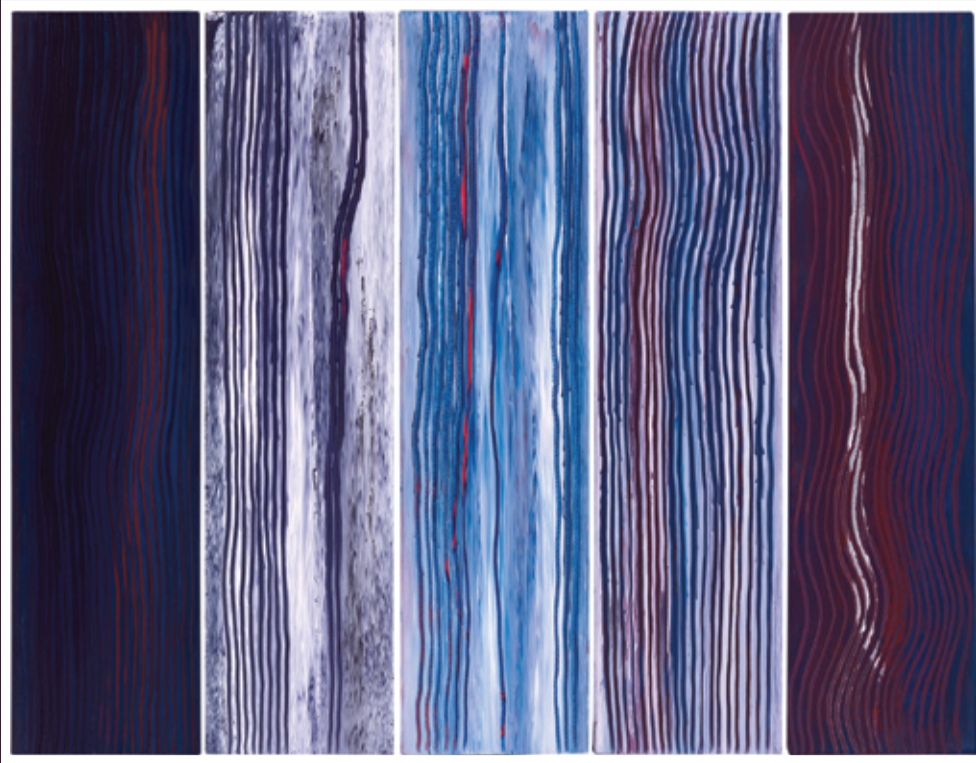




FAMILY RELATIONSHIP SERVICES AUSTRALIA
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN
2010 – 2013



The artwork reproduced on the front cover and throughout the document is titled 'Old girls...yarn for us young girls...about country and family' (2004) by artist Rosella Namok of the Ungkum (Angkum) people. This painting is in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

From before time...Kuuku Ya'u...Lockhart River sandbeach people...talk in the sand. Mission came...teachers showed people how to draw...today kids learn to write... but we still talk in the sand. Those old girls... they yarn for us...they remember before time...they were small girls...grandmothers for them talk in the sand for them. When I was small...I remember 'Queen'... grandmother for me...remember she yarned to me...drew in the sand for me...about before time. Old girls yarn... specially when they make necklaces or weaving...always yarn about when they were young. One old lady will draw in the sand...they will yarn about grass and Puunya... show you where to walk... go find things.

FRSA is very grateful to Rosella Namok and the National Gallery of Australia for permission to use this very beautiful and powerful artwork in the presentation of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

To view more of Rosella Namok's work please visit www.nga.gov.au

FOREWORD

On behalf of FRSA Board, staff and membership we are delighted to present the FRSA Reconciliation Action Plan 2010 – 2013.

The 12 month development of this plan has been a learning process for all of us at Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA), one in which we have matured in our understanding of reconciliation and identifying ways in which we can contribute.

We would like to thank all those who have assisted to the development of this Plan including the members of our Reconciliation Advisory Group (listed beside), Reconciliation Australia and all those who provided feedback at various stages of consultation. Particular thanks to Bonnie Montgomery (Communications Officer) for her enthusiasm and stewardship of this process and to Sharon Payne (Consultant) for her wise counsel.

This is the beginning of a significant journey for FRSA and its members. We have worked hard to ensure that the good intentions with which we began have been translated into practical strategies and actions that we and our members can commit to. We recognise that we have set ourselves some ambitious targets that will require sustained commitment over the next three years. We look forward to a sense of achievement as we deliver on the actions we have identified through the active engagement of members, staff and Board.



Sam Page
Executive Director



Anne Hollonds
Chairperson (FRSA)

FRSA sincerely thanks the Reconciliation Advisory Group:

Debra Bennet

Director – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs, Relationships Australia Queensland

Glenda Devlin

Chair Counselling and Relationship Services Team and Manager Shoalhaven Community Care, Anglicare Diocese of Sydney

Elizabeth O'Connor (FRSA Board)

Executive Manager – Family Relationship Services, Centacare Adelaide

Terri Reilly

CEO, Relationships Australia WA

Bobette Robinson

Inclusion Support Facilitator – Garndoo Jarowair, Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland

John Swann

Centre Manager, Men's Information and Support Association

Steven Torres-Carne

Indigenous Advisor, Kimberley Family Relationship Centre

Rae Walter

CEO, Ngala

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

FRSA has developed this Reconciliation Action Plan to give life to our vision for reconciliation. In doing so we have clearly stated our commitment to reconciliation, identified the actions that we can take to make a difference to closing the gap and set targets that can be used to measure our progress.

The development of the Reconciliation Action Plan has followed the framework provided by Reconciliation Australia (www.reconciliation.org.au).

We have sought feedback on this action plan from our member organisations, funding bodies and other stakeholders. Within our member organisations feedback has been received from staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and staff who are non-Indigenous. We have also consulted with other peak groups, national networks and government agencies with relevant interests.

In implementing this plan, FRSA will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tap into the resilience and strength of their culture and people.



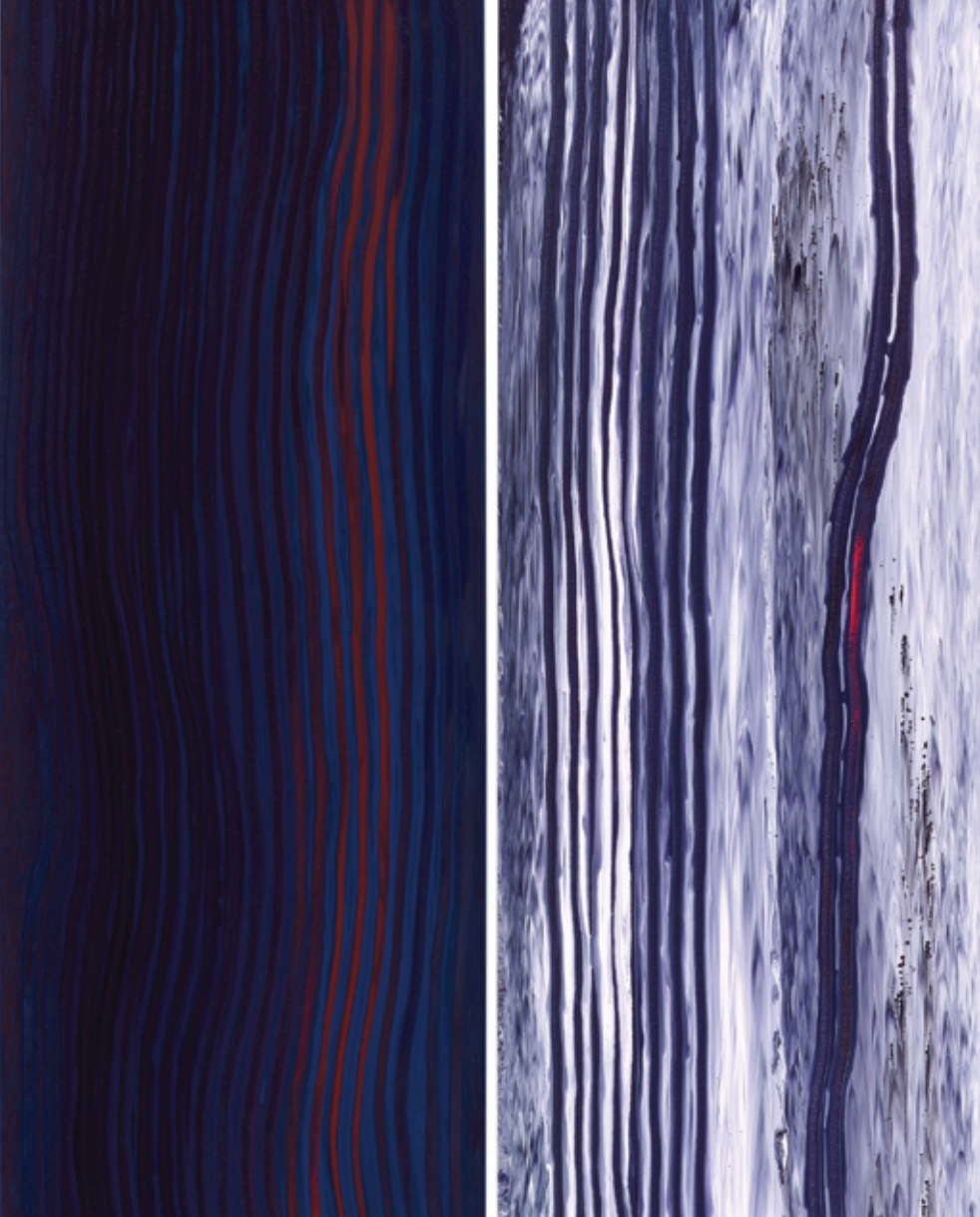
OUR WORK

Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA) is a national peak body for community organisations who work to strengthen the wellbeing, safety and resilience of families, children and communities across Australia. FRSA has member organisations ranging in size from very large organisations that work across multiple state/territory jurisdictions to very small organisations that are focused on providing services to a local area and/or specific population group. Many of our member organisations deliver services that are funded by the Federal Government as part of the Family Support Program and/or the Family Law System. FRSA works in partnership with member organisations and with the Federal Government to enhance service delivery and inform public policy. In a Workforce Mapping Survey undertaken in 2009, organisations estimated that 6% of their Family Relationship Services Program-funded workforce identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

For more information on FRSA please visit www.frsa.org.au



OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION



FRSA's vision for reconciliation is that we recognise, respect and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in all of our efforts to enhance the wellbeing, safety and resilience of Australian children, families and communities. To achieve this we will:

1. Promote understanding and respectful relationships by working with and valuing the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
2. Support and highlight positive practice in the delivery of family and relationship services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities;
3. Demonstrate our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and leadership by supporting the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision making;
4. Acknowledge the ongoing harm done to families and communities by disrespectful and disempowering social policies and practice;
5. Increase training, employment and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in the family services sector; and
6. Work collaboratively with our member organisations and related social service sectors to address disadvantage and enhance the wellbeing, safety and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Action 1.1: FRSA values, fosters and strengthens respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders and organisations. (p.5)



Dixie Link-Gordon (CEO, Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Women's Corporation) presents at the FRSA National Conference 2009



Michael West of the Gamilaroi Nation (CEO, Guwaali Consultancy - Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement) presents the Welcome to Country at the FRSA National Conference 2009

RELATIONSHIPS

The wellbeing, safety and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities must firstly be enhanced through respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people, this is fundamental to all of our work.

Focus area 1: Promote understanding and respectful relationships by working with and valuing the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGETS
1.1 FRSA values, fosters and strengthens respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders and organisations.	FRSA Board, Executive Director and Staff	Ongoing	FRSA has regular contact (at least once every 6 months) with other peak bodies and identified community leaders to gain input on our work including events and submissions. This contact is reported to the Board quarterly.
1.2 FRSA invests in the ongoing development of cultural competency in our staff team through training and learning opportunities.	Executive Director	From 2010 then ongoing	All FRSA staff to attend at least one training event every 2 years and at least once a year visit an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander specific service or learning event.
1.3 FRSA supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency training for practitioners working in family support services through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting training opportunities; • Connecting training providers and practitioners; • Working with training providers and universities; • Encouraging investment in training (by funding bodies, service providers, corporate sponsors, philanthropic donors and communities); • Recognising the value of ongoing skills development; and • Understanding and working to address barriers to training – particularly for smaller organisations and those in rural/remote locations. 	FRSA Board, Staff and Membership	2010 – 2013	Training opportunities are promoted through our website, newsletters and program of events. The FRSA National Conference is used to promote the importance of developing cultural competency and access to training. FRSA supports the inclusion of cultural competency training in the Workforce Development Plan for the Family Relationship Services Sector.

RELATIONSHIPS

Focus Area 2: Support and highlight positive practice in the delivery of family and relationship services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGETS
2.1 Support the dissemination and implementation of resources that support good practice in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.	Deputy Director and Communications Officer	2010 – 2013	FRSA disseminates information on useful resources for service providers on a monthly basis.
2.2 Enhance the FRSA website to provide information about resources and ways to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and communities. This could include programs that outline partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities, and highlight positive resources and models already developed. This could also provide a sharing space for ideas and programs.	Communications Officer with advice from Membership	Upgrade website in 2010 then ongoing	FRSA website is enhanced as indicated by feedback from service providers.
2.3 Include services and programs that work primarily with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the mix of service visits that are undertaken every year by FRSA staff and Board Members to build understanding and engagement across the FRSA network.	FRSA Board and Staff	2010 – 2013	At least two visits to services or programs that work primarily with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are undertaken every year.
2.4 Actively promote and showcase examples of good and emerging practice, projects and programs that enhance service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and/or promote reconciliation at a local level. This will include identifying practice, projects and programs through our communication with members as well as promotion both within our network and beyond to related sectors and networks.	FRSA Staff	2010 – 2013	Examples of practice, projects and programs are identified and promoted in FRSA's submissions and publications, newsletters, conference presentations, website and other mechanisms. Events such as Reconciliation Week are promoted as opportunities for member organisations to instigate or participate in local activities that promote reconciliation and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Action 3.2 FRSA Event Planning to include Celebrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage. (p.8)



Thullii Dreaming perform a traditional Aboriginal dance at the FRSA National Conference 2009 Welcome Event



Baiwa Dance Company performed a traditional Torres Strait Islander Dance at the FRSA National Conference 2008 in Cairns

RESPECT

Identity and wellbeing are built on the connections between people, culture, land and heritage this is central to our work, it underpins our capacity to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Focus area 3: Demonstrate our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and leadership by supporting the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision making.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGETS
3.1 Advocate for new advisory mechanisms to support continuous improvement in service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children and young people, including (but not limited to) the establishment of a National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service Delivery in the Family Support Program.	FRSA Board and Staff with advice from RAP Reference Group	2010 – 2011	An Advisory Group (or alternative) for the Family Support Program is established and/or other mechanisms are developed to support continuous improvement.
3.2 Incorporate guidance for event planning in the FRSA policy manual to ensure that FRSA events include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to Country • Acknowledgement of traditional owners • Content relevant to reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service delivery • Involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in event planning and delivery • Celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage (where appropriate) 	Executive Director	By November 2010	FRSA's National Conference and other events demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.

Focus area 4: Acknowledge the ongoing harm done to families and communities by disrespectful and disempowering social policies and practice.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGETS
4.1 FRSA works to recognise and respect the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities when undertaking policy or program analysis and developing recommendations.	FRSA Board and Staff	Ongoing	FRSA publications and submissions include reference to the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
4.2 Develop a statement for use in FRSA publications that acknowledges the ongoing harm of former and current policies to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Executive Director	2010	A suitable statement is developed and included in publications and submissions.

Action 6.2: Support economic development by utilising and promoting products, services and initiatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and businesses. (p.12)



In both 2008 and 2009 FRSA has purchased conference gifts from enterprises owned and run by Aboriginal people including bush tucker products (pictured above left) from Thulli Dreaming (www.thullii.com.au) and the Jukurrpa diary (pictured above right) from IAD Press (www.iad.edu.au/press). We further commit to developing a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers for our website, to support the economic development of communities and families.

OPPORTUNITIES

Our work is enhanced by the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities; opportunities for leadership can be increased through training, employment and ongoing skills development.

Focus area 5: Increase training, employment and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in the family services sector.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGETS
5.1 Convene and support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioner network.	FRSA Staff and Membership	2010 – 2013	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioner network is convened (subject to resource availability).
5.2 Adapt employment practices that maximize opportunities for the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at FRSA.	FRSA Board and Staff	2010 – 2013	Employment practices are reviewed and practical strategies adapted.
5.3 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioner involvement in the FRSA National conference and other events.	FRSA Staff	2010 – 2013	Practitioner involvement is demonstrated through delivery of workshops and attendance at events.
5.4 Encourage member organisations to provide opportunities to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unemployment and non-Indigenous employment rates.	FRSA Board, Staff and Membership	2010 – 2013	Identify and share strategies for increasing or enhancing employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

OPPORTUNITIES

Focus area 6: Work collaboratively with our own member organisations and related social service sectors to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage and enhance the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGETS
6.1 Develop and maintain supportive partnerships with relevant organisations including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNAICC; • Reconciliation Australia; and • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned organisations working with families. 	FRSA Board and Staff	2010 – 2013	Partnerships develop and grow.
6.2 Support economic development by utilising and promoting products, services and initiatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and businesses.	FRSA Staff and Reference Groups	2010 – 2013	Purchase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander products and services for FRSA events, including gifts for speakers. Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers for use by FRSA, members and anyone else who wants to support economic development.

TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGETS
RAP developed in consultation with members and stakeholders, approved by Reconciliation Australia and publicly celebrated.	FRSA Staff in consultation with the RAP Reference Group	March 2010	RAP on FRSA website and Reconciliation Australia's. RAP publicly launched and celebrated. RAP distributed to members and stakeholders.
RAP implementation monitored regularly.	FRSA Staff and Board with advice from RAP Reference Group	6 monthly commencing August 2010	Executive Director to report to the Board and RAP Reference Group.
RAP reported on annually.	Executive Director – Reporting to the FRSA Board and Membership	March 2011 and annually	RAP Report sent to Reconciliation Australia and publicly celebrated on both the FRSA and Reconciliation Australia's websites. Actions have been performed and targets measured.
RAP refreshed annually.	FRSA Staff and RAP Reference Group	March 2011 and annually	Refreshed RAP sent to Reconciliation Australia, accepted and publicly celebrated on both FRSA and Reconciliation Australia's websites.

