



Reconciliation and
**Dietitians
Australia**

November 2020



Dietitians
Australia



Dietitians Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and Traditional Owners across the lands, and honours their Elders: past, present and emerging. Dietitians Australia acknowledges with respect, our members who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

Dietitians Australia is committed to advance reconciliation and is delighted to have a proactive Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) and the guidance of two Reconciliation Action Plans (Reflect RAP 2017-2018 and Innovate RAP 2019-2020) to improve cultural capability among our members and staff by improving knowledge and observance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, protocols and dates of significance. Thanks to Reconciliation Australia, we are delighted to have greater clarity for race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance.

Robert Hunt, CEO, Dietitians Australia

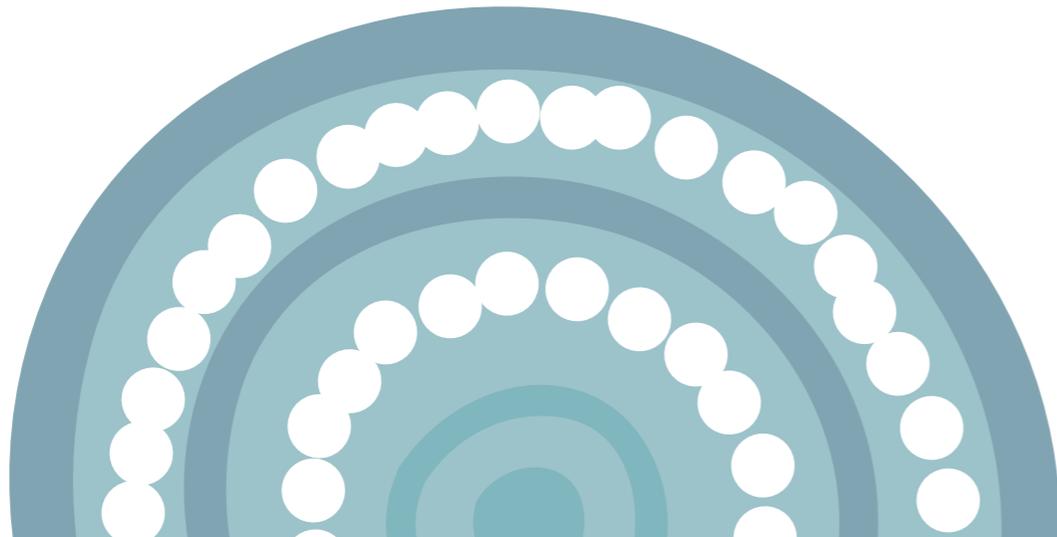


OUR RAP WORKING GROUP

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey, one that is vital for the establishment of equality for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples that we have yet to see in Australia. At Dietitians Australia, this journey has included both big and small contributions, working reconciliation into the fabric of our organisation together as staff and members. We are acting and reflecting, we have some successes and some trip ups and we are learning along the way.

We're pleased to present our journey so far, while we look to the road ahead.

Robyn Delbridge, AdvAPD, RAPWG Chair





What have we
achieved
to date?

THE START OF OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

In late 2013, the Board of Dietitians Australia (DA) requested that the Indigenous Nutrition Interest Group (INIG) scope a reconciliation plan for the next Dietitians Australia strategic plan. Consequently, the INIG identified the need for a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to formalise our commitment to Australia's First Peoples, and a RAP Working Group (RAPWG) was formed.

In the early stages of our reconciliation journey, staff, Board and members of the RAPWG attended a briefing by Reconciliation Australia about the RAP process in 2015. Staff and Board members also participated in a Cultural Awareness Workshop with Uncle Benny at the Burringiri Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture Centre in 2015. The principal objectives for which Dietitians Australia is established were amended in May 2015 to include: "Recognise and support diversity in cultures and practice areas and foster collegiality, collaboration and reconciliation for Australia's First Peoples".

OUR REFLECT RAP

With assistance from the RAPWG, our first RAP (a REFLECT RAP) was developed and launched in February 2017. A REFLECT RAP allows organisations to spend time scoping and developing relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, to decide on the vision for reconciliation and explore the sphere of influence, before committing to specific actions or initiatives.



The key achievements made in the 12+ months following the launch of our first RAP

- We developed 'Terms of Reference' for the RAPWG, established quarterly RAPWG teleconferences and introduced RAP activity updates as a permanent feature on the agenda for Dietitians Australia staff meetings.
- We established and implemented a communications plan to raise awareness amongst staff and members across the organisation, as well as external stakeholders, about our RAP commitments.
- Relationships were initiated and strengthened with a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations including Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association (NATSIHWA), Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA), Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM), and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO).
- Significant cultural events (e.g. National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week, Close the Gap Day), were promoted by social media to, and celebrated by, our members.
- Welcoming and acknowledgement protocols were reviewed and updated in the Dietitians Australia Events Manual, with information packages sent to event organisers. An Acknowledgement of Country was also imbedded in Dietitians Australia Board and staff meeting agenda templates.



OUR INNOVATE RAP

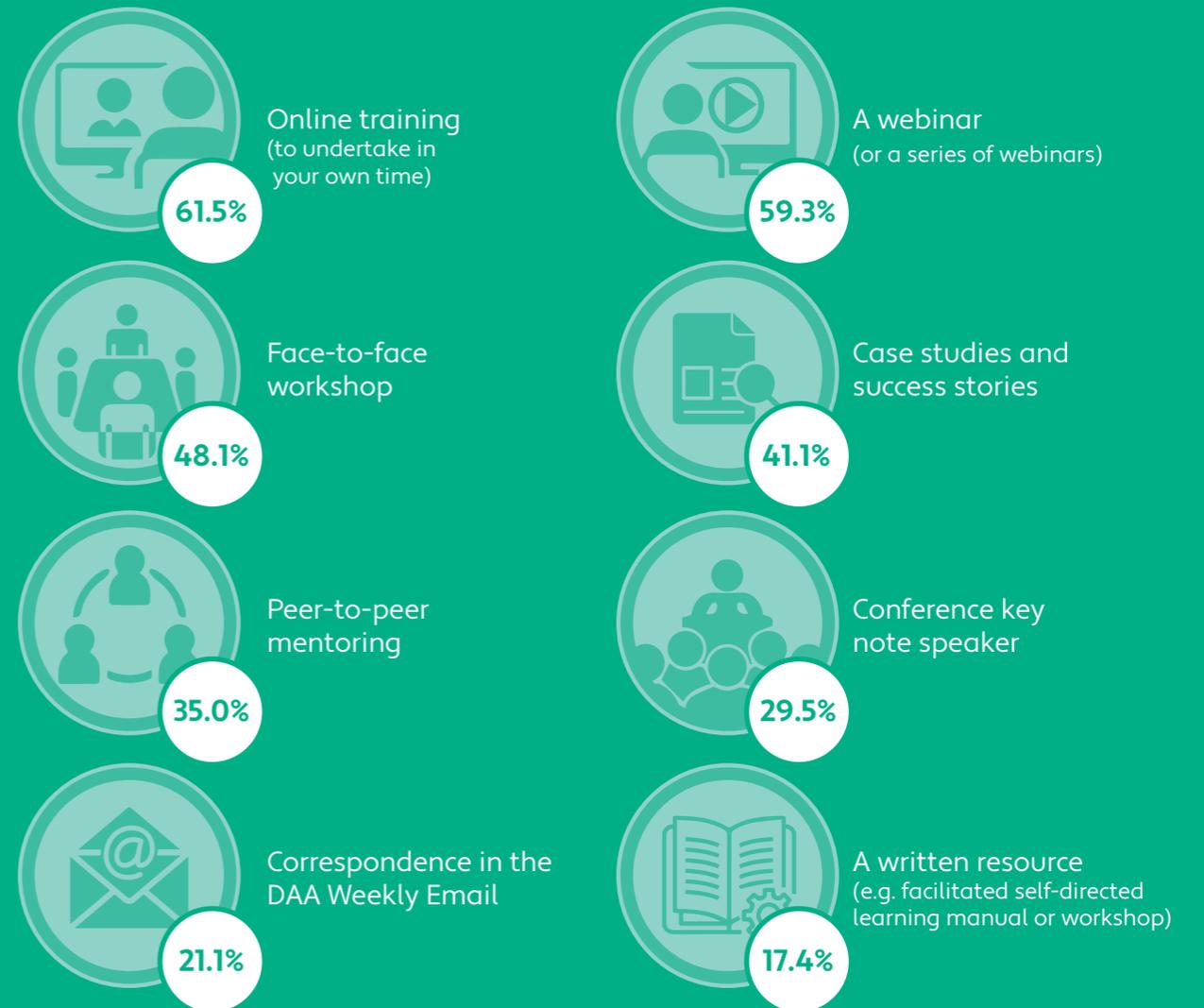
Following on from our REFLECT RAP, we developed and launched our second RAP (an INNOVATE RAP) on 28 February 2019, with a free webinar titled 'Reconciliation and Good Tucker in Action' for members, hosted by an Aboriginal RAPWG member and other members who work with Aboriginal communities. An INNOVATE RAP focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and developing/piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Since the launch, Dietitians Australia has strengthened its commitment to reconciliation, as demonstrated in the summary of these key achievements:

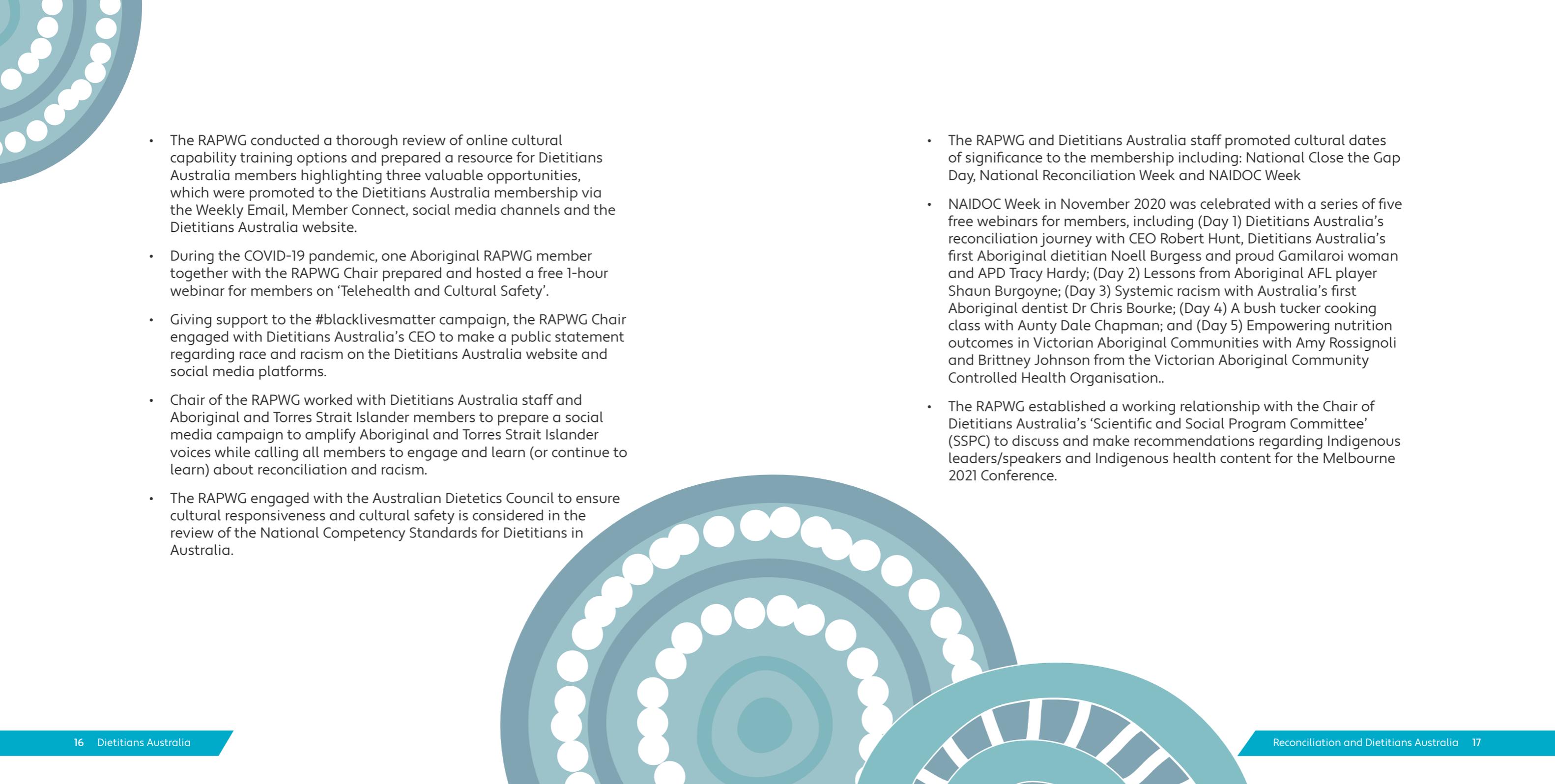
- We developed and implemented an 'INNOVATE RAP Communications Plan' to advance staff and member knowledge of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and encourage and promote participation in national dates of significance.
- We included 'Indigenous Health' in the theme of the Dietitians Australia National Conference in 2019, with a captivating Welcome to Country, an Indigenous Health Plenary and a workshop on 'Celebrating Culture: Adopting a strengths-based approach in nutrition and dietetic practice'.
- We developed and disseminated a 'Cultural Capability Survey' for Dietitians Australia staff and members to identify the appetite for cultural capability training and determine the best platform to meet their needs. Results from the surveys clearly revealed an appetite for Dietitians Australia staff and members to develop cultural capability when working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. As a platform to achieve this, online training and a webinar (or a series of webinars) were identified as the two preferred options, followed by face-to-face workshops and case studies with success stories.





Q: If Dietitians Australia provided training to develop your cultural capability when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, what would be the best platform to meet your needs?



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- The RAPWG conducted a thorough review of online cultural capability training options and prepared a resource for Dietitians Australia members highlighting three valuable opportunities, which were promoted to the Dietitians Australia membership via the Weekly Email, Member Connect, social media channels and the Dietitians Australia website.
 - During the COVID-19 pandemic, one Aboriginal RAPWG member together with the RAPWG Chair prepared and hosted a free 1-hour webinar for members on 'Telehealth and Cultural Safety'.
 - Giving support to the #blacklivesmatter campaign, the RAPWG Chair engaged with Dietitians Australia's CEO to make a public statement regarding race and racism on the Dietitians Australia website and social media platforms.
 - Chair of the RAPWG worked with Dietitians Australia staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to prepare a social media campaign to amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices while calling all members to engage and learn (or continue to learn) about reconciliation and racism.
 - The RAPWG engaged with the Australian Dietetics Council to ensure cultural responsiveness and cultural safety is considered in the review of the National Competency Standards for Dietitians in Australia.
 - The RAPWG and Dietitians Australia staff promoted cultural dates of significance to the membership including: National Close the Gap Day, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week
 - NAIDOC Week in November 2020 was celebrated with a series of five free webinars for members, including (Day 1) Dietitians Australia's reconciliation journey with CEO Robert Hunt, Dietitians Australia's first Aboriginal dietitian Noell Burgess and proud Gamilaroi woman and APD Tracy Hardy; (Day 2) Lessons from Aboriginal AFL player Shaun Burgoyne; (Day 3) Systemic racism with Australia's first Aboriginal dentist Dr Chris Bourke; (Day 4) A bush tucker cooking class with Aunty Dale Chapman; and (Day 5) Empowering nutrition outcomes in Victorian Aboriginal Communities with Amy Rossignoli and Brittney Johnson from the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation..
 - The RAPWG established a working relationship with the Chair of Dietitians Australia's 'Scientific and Social Program Committee' (SSPC) to discuss and make recommendations regarding Indigenous leaders/speakers and Indigenous health content for the Melbourne 2021 Conference.

- The RAPWG obtained support from Dietitians Australia's CEO to imbed cultural capability and cultural safety training in annual professional development plans for staff. All staff and Board members participated in 'Cultural Foundations for Workplaces' training, facilitated by Ngarluma-Aboriginal woman Jolleen Hicks from Aboriginal Insights in October, 2020.
- Dietitians Australia engaged with Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) to secure a representative from the Indigenous health workforce for Dietitians Australia's Workforce Development Working Group.
- Late 2020, our first Aboriginal Board Director, Tracy Hardy, was nominated and appointed to Dietitians Australia.

All members of the RAPWG are APDs and three members identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, which is key to our ongoing commitment to reconciliation-in-action and strong working relationships within our profession.

The RAPWG continues to drive the aspiration of developing cultural awareness and responsiveness among our members and staff through professional development, transformational knowledge and skills, and observance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, protocols and dates of celebration and significance.



Policy Statements and Submissions

Over the past few years, Dietitians Australia has prepared a series Policy Statements and Submissions that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander food security and health matters. Examples include:

- Food prices and food security in remote Indigenous communities (2020)
- Medical Benefits Schedule Review – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (2019)
- Closing the GAP Refresh (2018)
- Case for Change - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Training Package Products (2018)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Industry Skills Forecast (2018)
- Optimal Care Pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Cancer (2017)
- My Life, My Lead. Social and Cultural Determinants of Indigenous Health (2017)
- A Joint Policy Statement on Food Security for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples (a Joint Policy Statement and a Background Paper) (2016)

Opportunities for growth

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey and Dietitians Australia is committed to continue its journey to support unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. Some key opportunities for growth include:

- As part of Dietitians Australia's workforce development plans, establish mentoring pathways for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander high school students, and develop an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment and retention strategy.
- Develop mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, including members and student members.
- Establish impactful and mutually beneficial collaborations with Indigenous organisations on projects specific to reconciliation and Indigenous health matters.
- Introduce measurable commitments to embed cultural capability, cultural safety and reconciliation in the fabric of the organisation (e.g. RAP related KPI's for CEO and the Board).
- Implement strategies to drive reconciliation through Dietitians Australia business activities, such as through the procurement of Supply Nation services.

Our RAP Design

The design illustrates the reciprocal sharing and understanding of the importance of a healthy diet in maintaining overall good health. The centrepiece of the design is a contemporary representation of a coolamon, which in some locations was used by Aboriginal people to carry water and food, and to soak medicinal plants. Depicted in this design are both traditional bushfoods and western fruit, which are symbols of healthy eating.

Throughout the outer design of the coolamon are contemporary design elements, which are representative of both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous communities working together towards healthy pathways. Imperative to finding healthy pathways is the sharing of knowledge between cultures and generations to raise awareness of healthy eating.

The overall design depicts both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through contemporary design elements and motifs. Graphic artwork designed by Creative Director of ingeous studios, Leigh Harris.

Publication design by Indigenous creative and digital design agency, ingeous studios.





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