





Althea  
PROJECTS

Innovate  
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN  
2016 – 2018



Althea Projects *Reconciliation Action Plan* was prepared and produced by:

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**RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN**

# Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and First Nations Peoples

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Althea Projects Incorporated (Althea Projects) recognise and acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples of mainland Australia and related Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of this country. We also acknowledge the Australian South Sea Island peoples for their contribution to our communities.



We acknowledge the Bindal and Wulgurukaba people and Traditional Custodians on whose country we walk, work and live and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We also pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians on whose country we do business spanning east to Magnetic Island, south to Home Hill and west to Hughenden.



We pay tribute to their enduring stewardship of this country, and honour their ongoing contribution to the spiritual, environmental, social, cultural, political and economic fabric of our society.

This acknowledgement is integral to the process of healing, recovery and development of relationships and our shared future with The First Nations people of Australia.

## A message from our Chief Executive Officer

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### On behalf of our Management Committee

It is with great pride that we have been privileged to participate in and lead the development of the Althea Projects first Reconciliation Action Plan.

As part of our responsibility to assist in healing hurts of the past, this plan will provide a strong framework, list of accountabilities and vision for any person to use within our organisation.

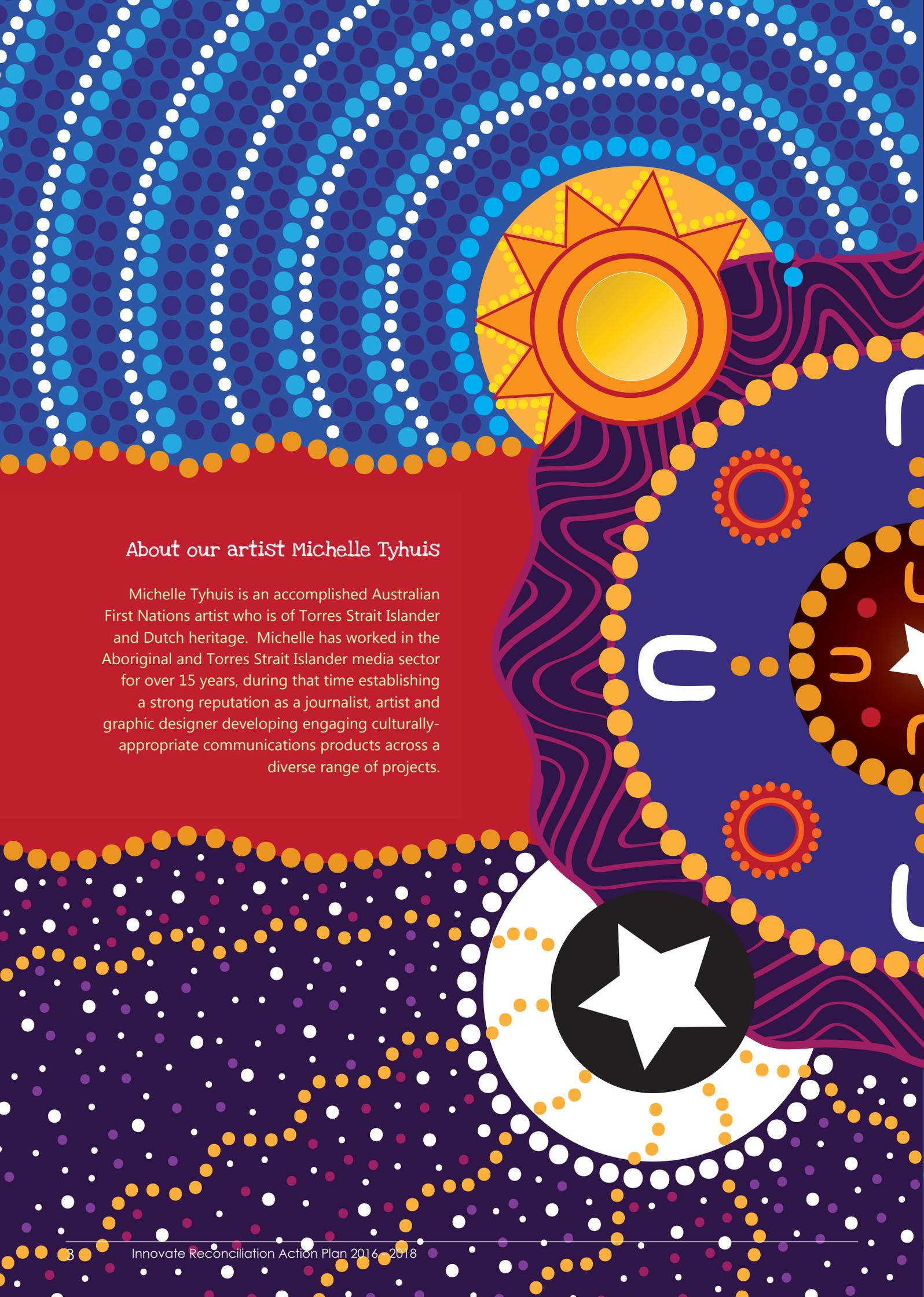
This plan is a message to our partners, stakeholders and the broader community that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, places and cultures matter at Althea Projects, and more importantly, we will be active, visible and accountable in our endeavours to play a role in a reconciled community.

Our reconciliation journey will be filled with opportunities and challenges that we are excited about. We will embrace and learn from this continuous journey and we will proudly continue to stand alongside and be guided by the First Nations Peoples of our community.

*Mandy Thompson*

Mandy Thompson  
Chief Executive Officer, Althea Projects





## About our artist Michelle Tyhuis

Michelle Tyhuis is an accomplished Australian First Nations artist who is of Torres Strait Islander and Dutch heritage. Michelle has worked in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media sector for over 15 years, during that time establishing a strong reputation as a journalist, artist and graphic designer developing engaging culturally-appropriate communications products across a diverse range of projects.

## About our RAP Artwork and Artist

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The Althea Projects Reconciliation Action Plan artwork, titled *'Together We Will Make It Right'*, is about the power of humanity and the deeply important work of Althea Projects in the Townsville region for the past 40 years.

The design acknowledges the organisation's beginnings, emerging from turbulent times, and signifies the 'around-the-clock' nature of the services Althea Projects provides, most notably through the Wee Care program.

*'Together We Will Make It Right'* is a celebration of Althea Projects overall commitment to reconciliation with First Australians, and their real work with, and for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their families in Townsville. It is guided by principles of mutual respect and caring and sharing.

The artwork reflects Althea Projects' theme of Families, Children and Communities, through the circular design elements and the 'U' people within who are seeking support, learning and growing through their challenges.

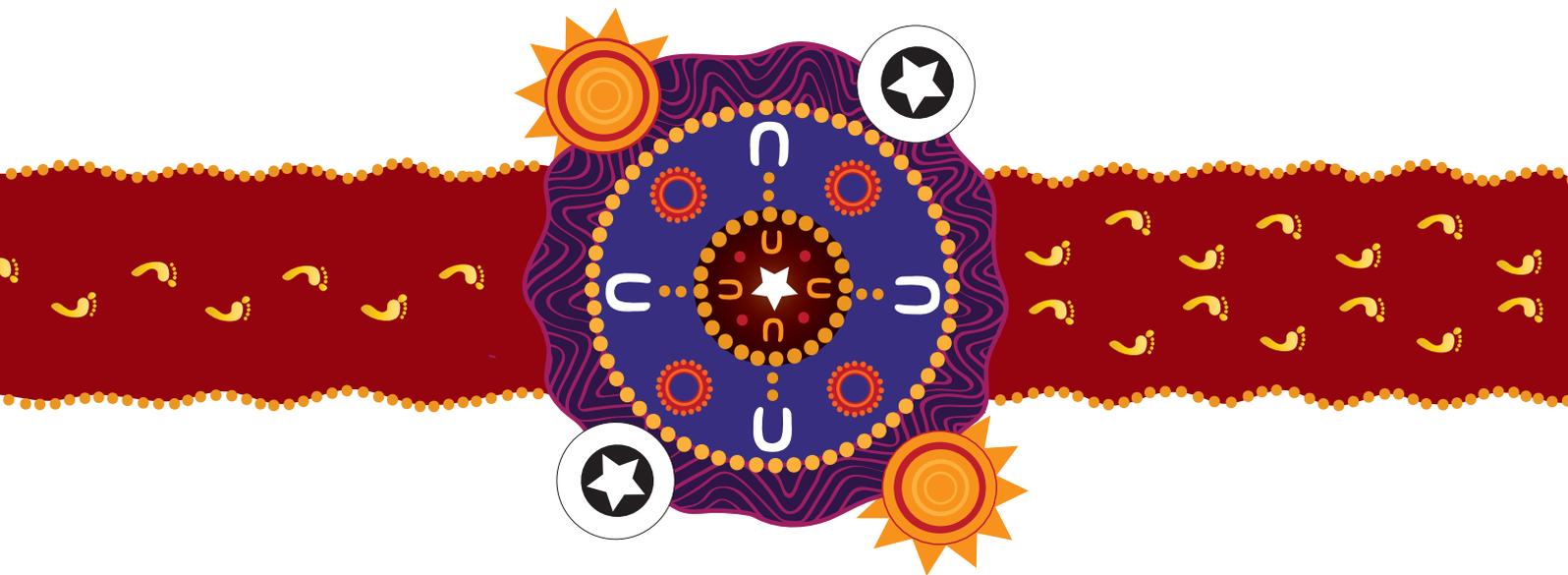
The children, at centre, are being sheltered and protected by the adults. Significantly, the large U shapes subtly form the cross, a beautiful commemoration to Mrs Kath Gordon and her colleagues of the Catholic Women's Group who saw a critical need and realised a dream that later became Althea Projects.

### SYMBOLISM IN THE ARTWORK:

<b>Sun and Moon:</b>	The 24-hour nature of Althea Projects holistic care.
<b>Footprints :</b>	The set of footprints coming in, is the person in-need. This person needs the support of others, or greater learnings and insight, to be able to continue on their path. The two pairs of footprints emerging out of the centre design, are about care and love leading to greater strength and ability - the core of reconciliation. It is also a beautiful testament to a Community of Caring; that each individual is important and valued, and the power of mutual respect. We acknowledge our past, see value in today, and aspire for tomorrow.
<b>Red Pathway (under footprints):</b>	Acknowledges the traditional lands of the Birri-Gubba nation on which Althea Projects operates, and acknowledges the traditional local clan groups of Wulgurukaba and Bindal. The path talks of the pain of the past, and the healing walk by First Australian Peoples and other Australians that is happening across the nation to recover from it.

## Our Vision for Reconciliation

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*"Together We Will Make It Right"*

Althea Projects' vision is to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children and young people who are in contact with the child protection and family support networks have the opportunity to reach their full potential in a reconciled community.

It is also our vision to work in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to build relationships and increase cultural understanding so that our work with and alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families supports independence from the child protection system.

Althea Projects has a firm commitment to embrace, engender respect for, and celebrate the culture of our First Nations people through the enactment of this Reconciliation Action Plan and this Vision.



## Our Business

### Althea Projects is a grass-roots, community based not-for-profit service.

Althea Projects operates from a child centred family focused and culturally inclusive framework. Althea Projects primary goal is to support and strengthen families so that children and young people can reach their full potential. Althea Projects provides the following services in the Townsville, Burdekin and Charters Towers region within the North Queensland region:



#### SHARED FAMILY CARE

Out of Home Care - Foster and Kinship Care Support Service for children who are subject to Department of Child Safety involvement.

#### WEE CARE FAMILY SUPPORT

24/7 residential emergency and respite accommodation and support service for children aged 0-11 years old.

#### EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDING

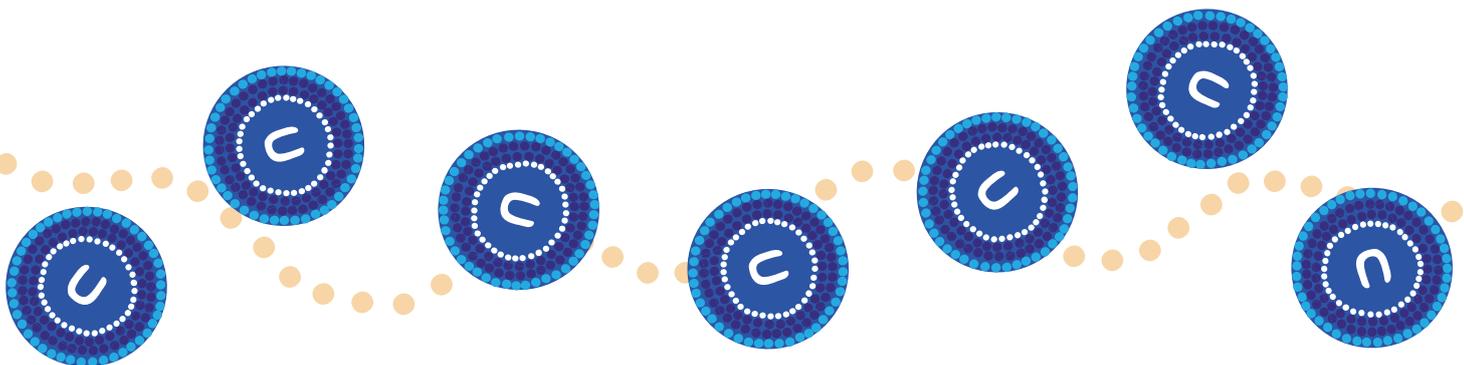
Operates 5 days per week and offers emergency relief funding, food boxes and other emergency items to families in crisis.

#### FIRST-STEPS TRIAL PROGRAM

Co-designed with the Department of Child Safety this unique trial provides intensive family support, accommodation and monitoring to new mothers and babies referred from Child Safety.

#### ANGEL IDENTITY

Provides assistance to families, children or young people who have special needs in the foster care system (co-delivered with Foster Care Queensland).



Althea Projects currently employs 28 permanent and casual staff working across all areas of the organisation, of which four are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. The organisation recently committed to a 12-month Indigenous Administration Traineeship to which the applicant was successful in completing and has now become a valuable permanent employee of the organisation. Althea Projects also has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Case Worker who provides support and strategic guidance to the organisation in relation to culturally appropriate practice and protocols.

## Our Reconciliation Action Plan

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From 1974 to present, Althea Projects has been consistent in our commitment to supporting and strengthening the capacity of vulnerable families, children and young people within Townsville and surrounding regions.

In 2014, the organisation underwent an internal governance restructure, and a review of our mission statement and values which introduced the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Places and Cultures value.

Approximately 38% of Althea Projects clients identify as either Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander peoples. In order to appropriately support clients Althea Projects needed a guiding tool, hence the development of the Althea Projects Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The development of this first RAP is supported by the Management Committee and Leadership Team with the goal that all employees and volunteers throughout the organisation will embrace their personal and professional responsibility for contributing to this vital work. Our RAP has been developed with the intent of formalising Althea Projects commitment to creating meaningful and productive relationships, enhancing respect and promoting sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, families, communities and businesses.

Our commitment to reconciliation is underpinned by a deep respect and acknowledgement for the rich, vibrant and diverse nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, places and cultures. We are honoured to have our RAP endorsed by both Reconciliation Australia and our RAP Working Group who convened in early August 2015 to commence our RAP journey.

Our RAP Working Group Terms of Reference state the group membership will comprise of a RAP Champion (Chief Executive Officer) and RAP Co-Champion (Management Committee representative). Membership will be a minimum of five (5) people not exceeding fifteen (15) members in total and comprise representation from across the organisation.

The RAP working group membership will be reviewed every twelve (12) months and any decision made at any meeting will only be valid if there is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation at the meeting or input received prior to the meeting. Our RAP Working Group membership currently includes eight members and is made up of a cross section of employees, including Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employees, with representations from all sections of our organisation.



RELATIONSHIPS



RESPECT



OPPORTUNITIES



TRACKING  
PROGRESS

## Our Reconciliation Action Plan

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Our current RAP Working Group membership consists of:

- Mandy Thompson (Chief Executive Officer)
- Jo-Anne Bentley-Davey (Management Committee)
- Sharon Thorburn (Program Manager)
- Teresa Smith (Quality Manager)
- Saku Mooka (Direct Care Worker)
- Ann-Marie Dawson (Direct Care Worker)
- Lena Watego (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Family Case Worker)
- Ana Togo (Administration Officer)
- Jemma Stewart (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Family Case Worker)  
- *resigned September 2016*

External input was welcomed from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), local Torres Strait Islander artist and consultant Michelle Tyhuis and other key community stakeholders.

The following aspirations will become a standard part of the way we do business and will become embedded in our culture, policies and practices:

- Listening to, learning from and consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Building and embedding an organisational culture embracing respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Promoting reconciliation and raising awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures with Althea Projects employees, service users, volunteers, partner organisations and wider stakeholders
- Promoting a changed community attitude about what a reconciled Australia looks like
- Promoting learning and education through embedded protocols and practices
- Increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed within Althea Projects
- Celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including significant events as it relates to the North Queensland community
- Ensuring Althea Projects programs and services are accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Celebrating and embracing our differences and leverage these to create positive change
- Respectfully walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their journey towards healing.



## RELATIONSHIPS

Althea Projects will enact governance practices to ensure our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are built in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner. The building of relationships through the RAP processes and National Reconciliation Week (NRW) events will embed the importance and meaning of reconciliation to our staff, volunteer, client and stakeholder groups.

**FOCUS AREA:** Althea Projects Strategic Goal 1. "All people, partners and stakeholders involved with Althea Projects take responsibility for creating an organisational culture that:

- Reflects our values
- Inspires
- Motivates
- Empowers

1	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<b>1. RAP Working Group</b>  The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group actively monitors the RAP development and implementation of actions in addition to tracking progress and reporting	<b>1.1</b> The RAP Working Group oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP  <b>1.2</b> Meet every 6 weeks to monitor and report on RAP implementation and progress  <b>1.3</b> Develops and is guided by a Terms of Reference	November 2016, ongoing	CEO & RAP Working Group

2	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<b>2. Celebrate National Reconciliation Week and other dates of significance in reconciliation</b>  Promote activities and support events that provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and other employees to build relationships during National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	<b>2.1</b> Each Althea Project Site will commit to organising at least one internal event for NRW each year  <b>2.2</b> Register NRW events on the Reconciliation Australia's website  <b>2.3</b> Support the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, RAP Working Group members and other employees to attend community NRW events	27th May - 3rd June 2017, annually	CEO  All Leadership Team members and consult with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees





## RELATIONSHIPS

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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3. Enhancing our external relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</b>  Althea Projects commits to proactively building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, communities and organisations to support and enrich positive outcomes	<b>3.1</b> Organise at least one internal event each year to promote networking between Althea Projects employees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and key stakeholders	July 2017, 2018	CEO  All Leadership Team members and consult with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees
	<b>3.2</b> Seek opportunities to partner and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations	March 2017, 2018	
	<b>3.3</b> All opportunities to network, consult, partner and promote are actively pursued	November 2016, ongoing	

4

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>4. Raising awareness of our Reconciliation Action Plan</b>  Althea Projects actively promotes our RAP within our organisation, and externally, promoting our commitment to and vision for reconciliation	<b>4.1</b> All Management Committee members and employees within the organisation are provided with an electronic copy of the RAP	December 2016	CEO  All Leadership Team members
	<b>4.2</b> All Management Committee members and employees are provided with a tool outlining ways in which they can actively engage in the RAP	December 2016	
	<b>4.3</b> Provide the published RAP to Reconciliation Australia for RAP registration and uploading to their website for promotion	November 2016	
	<b>4.4</b> Present and promote the RAP to all Management Committee Members, employees and service users during inductions and/or orientations	November 2016	
	<b>4.5</b> Publish the RAP to our website and social media page and organisational resources and publications	November 2016	
	<b>4.6</b> Promote our RAP and it's progress at the Annual General Meeting each year	November 2016 & 2017	





## RESPECT

A commitment to learning and engaging in cultural awareness training; development of cultural protocols; participation in NAIDOC celebrations; and, proudly incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork into our organisational story will build respect for First Nations people, places and history into our everyday practice at Althea Projects.

**FOCUS AREA:** This focus area is directly related to Althea Projects Organisational Value: “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Places and Cultures”.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>5. Cultural awareness training and development for staff</b>  Engage employees in a journey of cultural learning to increase their understanding and appreciation of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements	<b>5.1</b> Develop and implement a cultural awareness training strategy for employees which defines the cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business and considers various ways of which mandatory cultural learning can be provided (online, face-to-face workshops, cultural immersion) at induction and on a recurring basis	March 2017, Within 6 months of commencement of the RAP	RAP Working Group and Finance & Human Resource Manager
	<b>5.2</b> Senior employees are supported to undertake a more in-depth cultural awareness program at induction to the organisation and on a recurring basis	March 2017	All Leadership Team members
	<b>5.3</b> Facilitate opportunities for employees to visit prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local communities and engage in cultural immersion	May 2017, ongoing	All Program Managers

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>6. Incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols in Althea Projects practice framework</b>  Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as <i>Welcome to Country</i> and <i>Acknowledgement of Country</i> , to ensure there is a shared meaning behind these important ceremonies	<b>6.1</b> Develop, implement, communicate and regularly update a cultural protocol document for the organisation and include within the practice framework	March 2017, ongoing	CEO
	<b>6.2</b> Invite a Traditional Owner Elder to provide a <i>Welcome to Country</i> in the order of ceremonies for all significant events	November 2017, ongoing	CEO, All Leadership Team members and consult with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees
	<b>6.3</b> An acknowledgement of the local Traditional Owners is provided at the beginning of each formal presentation, training and formal meeting	July 2017, ongoing	All Management Committee members and employees
	<b>6.4</b> Ensure a written acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners is on each email signature block, external resource and publication	July 2017, ongoing	Quality Manager
	<b>6.5</b> Implement a ‘zero tolerance’ stance to racism and discrimination within organisational policies, resources, publications and social media	July 2017, ongoing	CEO
	<b>6.6</b> Visibly display at Althea Projects Sites our vision for reconciliation	November 2017	CEO, All Leadership Team members and consult with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees
	<b>6.7</b> Organise and display an <i>Acknowledgment of Country</i> plaque at Althea Projects Sites	November 2017	





## RESPECT

7	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>7. Celebrate NAIDOC Week</b>  Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to engage with their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week	<b>7.1</b> Review Human Resource policies to include appropriate entitlements and flexibility to meet their individual cultural needs	July 2017, annually	CEO, Finance and Human Resource Manager & All Management Committee members	
	<b>7.2</b> Review Human Resource policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to employees participating in NAIDOC week events	September 2017, ongoing		
	<b>7.3</b> Provide opportunities for all employees to participate in NAIDOC Week activities	July 2017, annually	CEO, All Leadership Team members and consult Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees	
	<b>7.4</b> Hold an internal or external NAIDOC Week event	July 2017, annually		
	<b>7.5</b> Support and promote an external NAIDOC Week community event	July 2017, annually		

8	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>8. Continuing and respecting culture</b>  Strengthen the visual presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture by displaying appropriate artwork and significant cultural material	<b>8.1</b> Implement a plan to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork within the Althea Projects offices and other appropriate resources and publications	March 2017	CEO, All Leadership Team members and consult with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees	
	<b>8.2</b> Ensure consent is clearly understood and appropriately collected and permissions are sought for the use of any artwork	March 2017, ongoing		
	<b>8.3</b> Uphold Cultural and Intellectual Property rights ensuring adequate recognition and protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cultural products and expressions	November 2017, ongoing		
	<b>8.4</b> Items that contain the photographs of those that have passed away will not be used unless contrary permissions have been received and warnings provided	November 2017, ongoing		
	<b>8.5</b> Subscribe to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander publications and resources, providing opportunities for all employees and service users to engage in the news, views, advertisements and other material of interest	June 2016, ongoing		





## OPPORTUNITIES

Creating innovative business and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people allows us to put tangible practices in place that support the Relationship and Respect sections of this RAP. These actions will deliver tangible and visible outcomes that will demonstrate the genuine nature of our commitment to reconciliation.

**FOCUS AREA:** Althea Projects Strategic Goal 4. “Explore and implement opportunities for Althea Projects that reflect the Mission and Values and ensure sustainability and growth. This includes reflecting on core business in a changing funding and policy environment and exploring new ventures.”



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>9. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment</b>  Althea Projects is committed to becoming an employer of choice and strives to provide opportunities for employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	<b>9.1</b> Scope, develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention strategy for Althea Projects	April 2017	Development – RAP Working Group & all Leadership Team members
	<b>9.2</b> Review Human Resource procedures and policies to ensure barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are addressed	February 2017	Implementation - CEO, All Leadership Team members and consult with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees
	<b>9.3</b> Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and volunteers to seek their input into employment and retention strategies	February 2017	CEO – develop program with tertiary education provider
	<b>9.4</b> Research and review a pilot program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to complete qualifications and engage in ongoing professional development opportunities	December 2016, ongoing	CEO, Finance and Human Resource Manager
	<b>9.5</b> Ensure culturally sensitive recruiting strategies and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply	December 2016, ongoing	CEO, Finance and Human Resource Manager
	<b>9.6</b> Advertise all vacancies in relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and/or community networks	December 2016, ongoing	CEO, Finance and Human Resource Manager





## OPPORTUNITIES

10	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<p><b>10. Promote dedicated or identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions within Althea Projects</b></p> <p>Investigate the capacity to create dedicated or identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions within the workforce, volunteer pool and governance structure</p>	<p>10.1 Althea Projects Management Committee to consider the constitutional changes required to have an identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander permanent position on the committee</p> <p>10.2 Continue to seek opportunities to have a Cultural Advisor role embedded within the Althea Projects organisation structure</p>	December 2018	CEO & Management Committee

11	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<p><b>11. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity</b></p> <p>Create opportunities to increase supplier diversity within Althea Projects to encourage the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses</p>	<p>11.1 Scope and implement a strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity. This will include a list of suppliers</p> <p>11.2 Investigate becoming a member of Supply Nation or partnering with the local Chamber of Commerce or equivalent service</p> <p>11.3 Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business</p>	<p>February 2018, ongoing</p> <p>June 2018, ongoing</p>	CEO, Leadership Team and consult with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees

12	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<p><b>12. Promote work experience and undergraduate student opportunities</b></p> <p>Actively seek out and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work experience and undergraduate student placements within the organisation</p>	<p>12.1 Develop relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student, training and educational groups and services</p> <p>12.2 Develop a plan and provide work experience opportunities within Althea for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</p>	<p>December 2017, ongoing</p> <p>December 2017</p>	<p>CEO &amp; Leadership Team</p> <p>CEO &amp; Leadership Team</p>

13	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<p><b>13. Publication of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's book</b></p> <p>Investigate opportunities for the publication of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's book with participation from local children and community service users</p>	<p>13.1 Scope and develop a strategy for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in our care to participate in the publication of a children's book</p>	December 2018	CEO, Leadership Team and consult with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees



## TRACKING PROGRESS & REPORTING

14	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<b>14. A report of achievements, challenges and learning's is provided annually to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the RAP Annual Impact Measurement Report</b>	<b>14.1</b> Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually	Submit by 30th September 2017 and 2018 Biennial	CEO, RAP Working Group
		<b>14.2</b> Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer		

15	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<b>15. Develop a methodology for measuring, tracking and reporting RAP progress, outcomes and any road blocks</b>	<b>15.1</b> Develop a methodology and incorporate into existing survey and feedback mechanisms where possible	November 2016, 2017 and 2018	CEO, RAP Working Group

16	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<b>16. Progress of the RAP is reported annually to the RAP Champions, Management Committee, employees and external stakeholders</b>	<b>16.1</b> Reports provided to the Management Committee quarterly as part of the organisations strategic plan	January, April, July, October 2017, annually	CEO
		<b>16.2</b> Reports provided at the Annual General Meeting to employees and external stakeholders	November 2017 and 2018	

17	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<b>17. Review, refresh and update the Althea Projects Reconciliation Action Plan</b>	<b>17.1</b> Review, refresh and update the organisation's plan based on challenges, learnings and achievements from previous RAP	May 2018	CEO, RAP Working Group
		<b>17.2</b> Provide draft RAP (2018 – 2020) to Reconciliation Australia for review and endorsement		



## Contact Details

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