



ST VINCENT'S  
HOSPITAL  
MELBOURNE

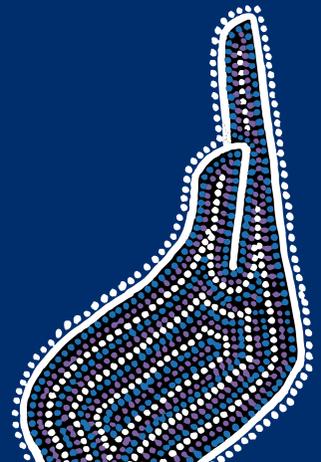


ST VINCENT'S  
PRIVATE HOSPITAL  
MELBOURNE



# IT'S A RAP

Highlights from our  
Reconciliation Action Plan 2021-2022





## Cultural Disclaimer:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document may contain images or content referring to deceased persons. It may also contain words or descriptions that may be deemed culturally insensitive.

## Acknowledgement of Country:

St Vincent's Health Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work. We respect their historical and continuing spiritual connections to country and community and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. As a health and aged care ministry, we commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

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# Reconciliation is OUR core business

At St Vincent's Public and Private Hospitals we are walking alongside our First Nations patients, staff and communities in a Reconciliation journey to improve health outcomes for Indigenous people.

Relationships are at the heart of Reconciliation as we respect and listen to First Nations people by giving them a voice at every level of our organisation.

In the past year our commitment to Reconciliation, self-determination and to closing the gap in health outcomes has evolved into meaningful action, expanded services, new procedures and enhanced cultural safety. These actions have been wholeheartedly supported by Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders and staff.

Our organisation is committed to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its roadmap of 'Voice, Treaty and Truth' for First Nations people to take their rightful place in Australia.

The Cross Campus Reconciliation Action Plan Steering Committee has worked with Indigenous organisations to review our

cultural safety processes, for both patients and staff, and to identify areas where we can improve. We want our First Nations staff and communities to feel safe and welcomed from the moment they walk into our hospitals.

We are pursuing sustainable changes to our governance structures so that First Nations staff are at the centre of collaborative decision-making and are consulted about the impact of policy and services for Indigenous patients and staff. We have expanded our Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer Service and now provide seven-day support for First Nations patients with dedicated staff.

There is an organisational focus on the importance of trauma-informed care for First Nations people and this includes extensive staff education and policy changes to accurately identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in order to prioritise their person-centred care.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan is supported by people from diverse clinical and non-clinical backgrounds and we are grateful to walk alongside our friends and allies.



**Margaret Stewart**  
*Executive Director,  
St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne*



**Christopher Delamont**  
*Indigenous Recruitment Coordinator*

**Co-chairs, Cross-Campus Reconciliation Action Plan Steering Committee**

# Our HEALTH, our WAY

St Vincent's Public and Private Hospitals Melbourne are deeply committed to our responsibility to promote the health, wellbeing and cultural safety of First Nations patients, staff and visitors in our community and health facilities.

We are guided by frameworks and strategic directives that articulate how we can achieve this. One of the most important is the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*, a UN resolution that sets out the human rights of Indigenous peoples around the world, including in Australia, in recognition of the historical and ongoing impacts of colonisation.

St Vincent's Public and Private Hospitals fully commit to ensuring the rights described in UNDRIP – in particular, the rights in Articles 23 and 24. These articles guide our approach to First Nations health and cultural safety.

**Article 23 says:** *"Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions."*

**Article 24 says:** *"1. Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.*

*2. Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realisation of this right."*



## Cross Campus RAP Steering Committee Members:

**Margaret Stewart**, Executive Director, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, Co-Chair

**Christopher Delamont**, Indigenous Recruitment Coordinator, Co-Chair

**Julie Wain**, Mission Integration Manager, SVPHM

**Deborah Barnes**, Aboriginal Health Services Coordinator, Executive Officer

**Nicole Watt**, Team Leader, Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Service

**Diana Smith**, Quality and Risk Consultant, SVPHM

**Jacqui Bilo**, General Manager Medicine and Emergency

**Luke McLaughlin**, General Manager Quality and Risk

**Tam Nguyen**, Deputy Director Research Governance Unit

**Nicole Jolley**, General Manager Strategic Finance

**Brad Wynne**, General Manager Mental Health and Addiction Medicine

**Amber McCullagh**, General Manager Continuous Improvement

**Eliza Short**, Communications Officer

**Clynt Bernhardt**, General Manager Access and Imaging

**Jade Murphy**, General Manager Education and Learning

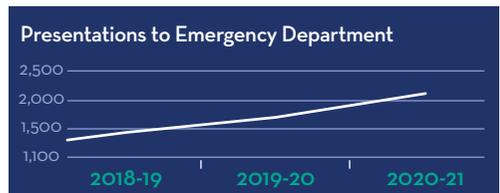
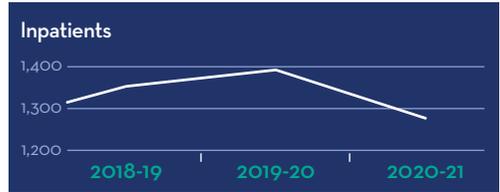
# How WE are tracking

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne has a long-standing history and commitment to providing culturally safe care to improve the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

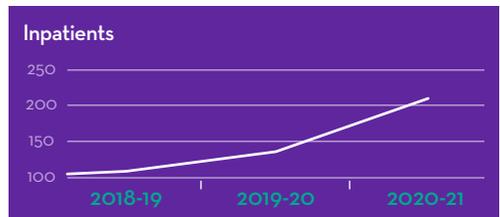
The number of Indigenous patients attending St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne has continued to grow over the last three years, with the total admission numbers increasing from 133 in 2020 to 206 in 2021.

## Presentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Patients

### St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne



### St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne



92

**Indigenous staff members at SVHM**

*(as of June 2022)*

3

**Indigenous staff members at SVPHM**

*(as of June 2022)*

3

**Scholarship recipients at SVPHM**

*(as of June 2022)*

# CULTURALLY safe care

## Improving access to cultural support

A reimagined seven-day service at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne with better referral pathways is improving cultural safety and access to healthcare for our First Nations patients.

The Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Service offers advocacy and cultural support to First Nations patients and their families as they navigate the health and social services they need.

St Vincent's clinical staff now have a new digital prioritisation pathway tool, which supports referrals to the Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Service by setting out the scope and target timeframes for care.

Nicole Watt, SVHM Team Leader of the Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Service, said the new process meant that Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers could better support patients in immediate need first. "It has given us greater opportunity to provide uninterrupted and inclusive support and cultural companionship to the patients in our care," she said.

## Embedding cultural safety in our processes

SVHM is working with Indigenous organisations, the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and Karabena Consulting, to improve cultural safety. The collaborative project aims to understand what processes could be improved or done differently to integrate cultural safety throughout the hospital.

The work has included reviews of policies and procedures, staff and patient experiences, past complaints, the physical environment, and patient admission data. SVHM has already received some recommendations from both organisations and has started work on implementation.

## Accurate identification matters

The accurate identification of First Nations patients is important to ensure culturally safe and clinically appropriate care can be provided. Feedback showed that many staff didn't understand why identification was important, which led to inconsistent and incorrect practice. To address this, SVHM has led a continuous improvement project to ensure clerical staff ask every patient, every visit, whether they are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

A staff working group amended relevant policy and produced an educational video to address the knowledge gaps identified by our clerical staff. The education resources were piloted in the Emergency Department, Day Procedures Unit, and specialist clinics. Audits in these areas show that staff are now asking the question 100% of the time. The education resources will now be introduced to more clinical areas.

## Self-determination in action

Our First Nations staff are the experts in First Nations healthcare, bringing both professional and personal experiences to the table. This expertise has been recognised through an inaugural planning day, where First Nations staff in identified positions had the opportunity to recommend organisational priorities for improvement. The 2022 planning day was held in a Yarning Circle format so that everyone had an equal chance to contribute and discuss key topics such as leadership, governance, co-design, and consultation with communities.



# FAMILY and COUNTRY connections

Cousins Riley Clarke and Tazarni Clarke are employed at St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne and have always had a shared connection to Country in many parts of Victoria.

Riley is a concierge staff member at SVPHM and is studying to be a teacher. Tazarni is the 2022 SVPHM-ACU Undergraduate Nursing Scholarship recipient and wants to become a Registered Nurse to improve health outcomes for Indigenous people.

Riley grew up in Cairns on Gimuy-walubarra yidi Country, Tazarni in Echuca on Yorta Yorta Country, and their fathers are brothers who are Gunditjmarra people from western Victoria.

Their grandfather was a member of the Stolen Generations and lived in Ballarat, where Tazarni is studying at the Australian Catholic University.

Pictured below  
Riley Clarke (left) and Tazarni Clarke (right)





Girra-maa Giiny by artist, Chris Delamont



## Visual symbol of VALUES

Girra-maa Giiny means ‘the uplifted heart’ in the Wiradjuri language and is the title of this evocative artwork by Chris Delamont, SVHM Indigenous Recruitment Coordinator.

Chris is a descendant of the Wiradjuri and Nari Nari peoples and was commissioned by Education and Learning to paint Girra-maa Giiny to capture their pride and hope. Education and Learning team members suggested the visual themes during a workshop with Chris and the painting now hangs in the entry to Education and Learning at SVHM.

The painting has extensive symbolism about St Vincent’s values and its outreach to First Nations people.

The uplifted heart is a powerful foundation for hope, endurance and positive action.

The hands represent pride, inclusiveness and support. The cross signifies hope and healing; the heart reflects compassion; and the flames offer warmth, light and new horizons.

The rainbow serpent is a creator spirit and protects what the Education & Learning team has created.

The centre circle has five sitting women who represent the five Sisters of Charity – and the sixth person sitting represents team members who carry on the work started by the Sisters.

The seven circles just within the Rainbow Serpent represent current and future Aboriginal staff and patients and acknowledges that wherever you come from and whatever your Country, you will always be welcome at St Vincent’s.

*“The background patterns represent a ripple, because the work we do has such a significant ripple effect for staff and patients as we work together to create greater community engagement, which leads to better health outcomes for First Nations people,” Chris said.*

# Meet our new Clinical Support Nurse, MOLLY KENNEDY

Molly Kennedy is a Trawlwoolway woman from eastern Tasmania and SVHM Clinical Support Nurse for First Nations staff, providing cultural support and education to staff, including nurses, doctors, medical interns and university students.

“I’ve been at St Vincent’s since I started nursing and I embody its values and purpose. This hospital holds a special place in my heart; I’ve grown up here,” Molly said.

“I love making sure I can culturally support people who are new, or people who have been here for 20 years.”

Molly said her family had brought her up to be an advocate for First Nations people and to “always stand up” for self-determination.

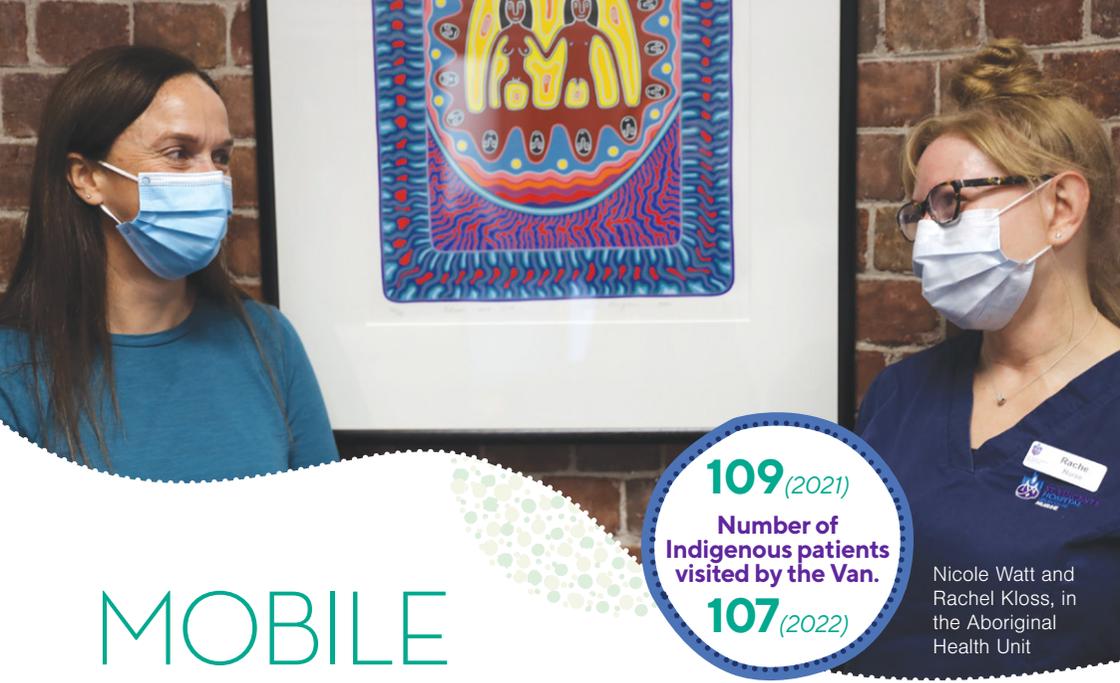
Listening and story-telling is part of her role and these skills date to her childhood listening to her Elders about their stories and lives.

“I’ve been brought up as a strong believer in positivity and hearing people’s stories, which is aligned with my culture. It’s hard as a young Indigenous woman to embody all of the trauma that has been generationally put upon us, but I believe in using our allies to make a change,” she said.

*“It’s been great to be able to speak to junior nurses and doctors about trauma-informed care and to educate them on providing culturally-safe care.”*



Molly Kennedy,  
Clinical Support Nurse



**109** (2021)  
**Number of Indigenous patients visited by the Van.**  
**107** (2022)

Nicole Watt and Rachel Kloss, in the Aboriginal Health Unit

# MOBILE CARE in the community

St Vincent's has a long history of caring for people in the community and the need to make healthcare accessible has been more important than ever over the last two years due to the rapidly changing environment that COVID-19 presented.

Early in the vaccination rollout, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne partnered with the Department of Health and Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) to develop a plan to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through the Mobile Vaccination Service. Each week, St Vincent's staff travelled in a fully equipped and COVID-safe mobile van to deliver healthcare directly to at-risk groups across Melbourne.

Rachel Kloss, Coordinator and Nurse Immuniser, Mobile Immunisation Service, spoke of the impact the Mobile service had on the community, "I find the work I do for our service very rewarding because we are providing vaccines to our most

vulnerable and marginalised members of our community and by doing so, we are actively demonstrating that we value them and that their healthcare is important." Since the service began, the Mobile Vaccination Van has vaccinated at least 200 First Nations patients.

Our service developed a strong partnership with Oonah, an Indigenous Community Service in Healesville.

*"For me, being an Aboriginal woman and nurse with immunisation skills, I felt this was my opportunity to vaccinate my own community", said Nicole Watt, Aboriginal Health Care Coordinator and Nurse Immuniser. "The patients we were vaccinating were those who may not have been vaccinated otherwise. This made me incredibly proud."*

# Procurement TARGETS

St Vincent's Health Australia Group Procurement Service is increasingly sourcing goods and services from First Nations suppliers.

Our procurement strategy includes reviewing Indigenous business opportunities with Supply Nation, Australia's leading database of verified Indigenous businesses so we can engage these suppliers when we have a need.

We have, for example, purchased First Nations paper products from our office supply partner Winc, and furniture from the Schiavello Group – which supports Indigenous youth employment and education – to refurbish maternity suites at the Fitzroy Private campus.

Our contractors are encouraged to support Indigenous businesses in their procurement processes and we promote our Reconciliation Action Plan to potential vendors.



Pictured: furniture from the Schiavello Group at the SVPHM maternity suites

# Yarning Circles to SHARE KNOWLEDGE

SVHM executives were challenged to understand ‘What does it mean to lead a culturally safe organisation?’ using the First Nations immersive knowledge-sharing experience of Yarning Circles.

In the first circle in March 2022, the Executive of St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne were asked to think about having something valuable taken away by reflecting on the trauma of the Stolen Generations’ survivors and their families – and the resulting lack of trust in non-Indigenous healthcare environments and other institutions.

The second circle, held during Reconciliation Week in May, unpacked how an authentic and personal Acknowledgement of Country is an exercise in discovery, as well as a gesture of cultural safety.

The Yarning Circles were facilitated by Chris Delamont, Co-Chair of the Cross Campus RAP Steering Committee, assisted by Nicole Watt, Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Service Team Leader.

The Yarning Circles drew out the significance of the Uluru Statement from the Heart as a roadmap to true reconciliation and a reference point for St Vincent’s services to close the gaps in First Nations disadvantage.



The Uluru Statement offers this invitation to all Australians:

*“We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.”*

# DREAMTIME scrubs



Have you seen the new Indigenous print on St Vincent's hospital scrubs? The design is a modern interpretation of traditional Dreaming stories created by Waripiri artist Theo (Faye) Nangala Hudson.

St Vincent's staff have snapped up the unisex scrub tops, with 60 sold already.

Theo from the remote Northern Territory community of Nyirripi has painted with the Aboriginal-owned art centre, Warlukurlangu Aboriginal Corporation at Yuendumu, since she was 13.

*"I would watch my grandmother paint and listen to her stories," said Theo, now 33 and a mum of three children.*

The scrub design is of Pikilyi Jukurpa (Vaughan Springs Dreaming) and tells the story of two rainbow serpents who live together as man and wife.



Pictured above: Christine Roberts and Rowena Rivera from Medical Imaging Department

# Calendar of national **ABORIGINAL CELEBRATIONS**

There are a number of significant events for Aboriginal people. Some document the Aboriginal community's struggle for rights, land and recognition, while others mark a history of sadness, loss and denial.

**13  
FEBRUARY**

The Anniversary of the **National Apology**

**17  
MARCH**

**National Close the Gap Day**

**26  
MAY**

National Day of Healing (**National Sorry Day**)

**27 MAY  
-3 JUNE**

**National Reconciliation Week**

**3  
JUNE**

**Mabo Day**

**1  
JULY**

**Coming of the Light**

**3 JULY  
-10 JULY**

**Victorian NAIDOC Week**

**4  
AUGUST**

**National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day**

**9  
AUGUST**

**International Day of the World's Indigenous People**

