

Intereach Reconciliation Action Plan  
2015 - 2017

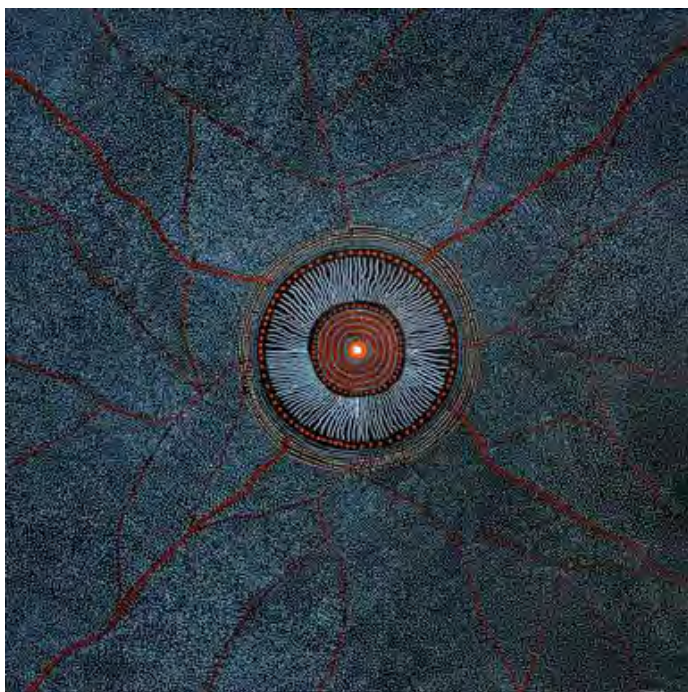
## Contact Details:

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## Cover Artwork by Alison Stewart ~ Title: Communities of the Riverina II



Alison is a Gulidjan woman who was born in the Riverina and spent most of her childhood there. She began painting around ten years ago on emu eggs, but now enjoys working on paper and canvas. She started painting significant Aboriginal Sites around the Riverina area after visiting many sites and learning about their importance to the Nari Nari and Wiradjuri Tribes. Through her paintings she hopes to preserve the importance and meaning of Aboriginal sites and the importance the land played and still does play for Aboriginal culture. She has visited each site and found that painting them was a meaningful way of remembering them and a way of sharing them with others. She has moved away from using the earth colours and tones that you usually see in traditional Aboriginal paintings to using bright colours. She has done this as she feels that the bright colours reflect the sites as they can be seen today rather than the way they were 20,000 years ago. Allison has been commissioned to paint a number of pieces for private collections in Australia and overseas, and exhibits in the local Riverina region.

During 2014, Intereach commissioned Alison and five other regional artists to create artwork that reflects local Aboriginal culture and communities. These artworks are now displayed in all nine Intereach offices. This work was commissioned for use on Intereach marketing material, including the DVD cover artwork of the short film *Maradhal-bu Yandhul-bu Giilang-galang Yalbilingidhi - Past and Present Stories of Learning*.



## INTEREACH RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2017

*We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land. We pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present, and to those of the future, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the cultures and hopes of Aboriginal Australia. We must always remember that despite major physical changes, this land is, was, and will always be, traditional Aboriginal land. We stand in the light of their presence and seek to move forward together.*

### **Our Vision for Reconciliation**

As an organisation, we are committed to reconciliation and our vision is one where we will walk alongside and work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and stakeholders through building meaningful and strong relationships. Intereach acknowledges, respects and has a strong sense of pride in knowing that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is the oldest, continuing, living culture in the world. As our nation focuses on building a reconciled Australia, Intereach aims to create improved life opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples so we can create resilient communities and help build better services that are culturally appropriate.

### **Our Business**

Established in 1973, the organisation commenced its operations under the name of the Deniliquin Council for Social Development. This came about when several organisations with similar aspirations, operating out of various venues, joined forces in an attempt to fulfil the diverse needs of the local Deniliquin community. Their efforts resulted in a one stop shop from where the needs of the community and various service delivery programs could be organised.

Today, Intereach has grown into a leading community based organisation in southern NSW, focusing on delivering services right across the Riverina Murray to support and develop the well-being of young people, families and communities. Our aim is to support and strengthen communities by providing quality services, establishing networks and building capacity. We deliver over 25 different programs and services including those that focus on:

- Strong Families (Early Childhood Intervention, OOSH Childcare, Family Day Care, Family Support and Parenting, Intensive Family Support/Preservation),
- Supporting Carers (Commonwealth Respite Centre, Dementia Education and Training, Consumer Directed Respite Care, Young Carers),
- Resilient Individuals (Respite Care, Community Transport, Home Maintenance and Modification, Meals, Case Management) and
- Building Community (Community Hubs, Tenants Participation Resource Service, No Interest Loans Scheme, Ability Links).

Intereach delivers services to all community members including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Over the past 40 years of working with communities across the Riverina Murray Region of New South Wales, Intereach has taken the lead on a range of services, projects and activities that specifically aim to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These have been through specifically funded programs or one-off projects, through formal and informal relationships with Aboriginal organisations and through connections with Aboriginal people and communities. They include:

- The Aboriginal Family Support program in Deniliquin and surrounding areas. This service aims to help strengthen families and to ensure a safe and culturally strong future for children and young people in Aboriginal families. As part of this service Intereach facilitates Jyldamenk, the Aboriginal Family and Carer Support Group and Koori Playtime.
- The Aboriginal Community Transport Project. Intereach works with members of the Aboriginal community to increase their use and access to transport options in the Riverina Murray region.
- Aboriginal Ability Links. Intereach is part of the consortium with Deniliquin, Orange and Broken Hill Local Aboriginal Lands Councils that is responsible for delivering the service in Western NSW. Ability Links is a new service that links Aboriginal people with disability, their families and carers with a locally based first point of contact to access resources and opportunities in their local communities.
- Parental and Community Engagement project. This project aimed at promoting the positive role of education in Aboriginal communities in Hay and surrounding areas. A short film was produced called *Maradhal-bu Yandhul-bu Giilang-Galang Yalbilingidhi - Past and Present Stories of Learning* and can be viewed on the Intereach website, [www.intereach.com.au](http://www.intereach.com.au), and YouTube.

## **Our Vision, Purpose and Values**

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is Strong Supported Communities.

### **Our Purpose**

We work toward this through our purpose, which is to:

- Strengthen and improve social and personal well-being for individuals, families and communities;
- Promote and facilitate access, equality and social justice; and
- Deliver services locally that are of quality and have value.

### **Our Values**

This is supported by our values of Leadership, Partnerships and Social Justice, which guide the way we work, make decisions and provide services. We define these values as:

- Leadership - We use our social influence to motivate others to reach their full potential.
- Partnerships - We work collectively with others toward a common goal of positive social and cultural change.
- Social Justice - We protect and promote human rights by recognising that all people are free and equal in dignity and rights.

Intereach has built a range of partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities across 40 years. These include formal joint working arrangements such as with the Deniliquin, Orange and Broken Hill Local Aboriginal Land Councils, informal such as with local Elders to deliver family support services and with other Aboriginal organisations such as Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre to deliver community transport services. Intereach also works in partnership with government organisations such as Aboriginal Affairs and the Indigenous Coordination Council. Our work is based on the belief that people are all entitled to the same rights, opportunities and choices regardless of their abilities. Intereach works in partnership with Aboriginal people to support and facilitate the person being listened to and placed in the centre of services.

Reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is essential for us to meet our vision.

## **Our History**

In 1973 Intereach commenced its operations under the name of the Deniliquin Council for Social Development. This came about when several organisations with similar aspirations, operating out of various venues, joined forces in an attempt to fulfill the diverse needs of our community. Their efforts resulted in a one-stop-shop from where the needs of the community and various service delivery programs could be organised.

Over 40 years the organisation has grown with a focus on developing community infrastructure and supporting rural and regional communities. In 1976 the organisation benefited from the Whitlam era and became the Deniliquin Council for Social Development (DCSD). Managed by a volunteer Management Committee, the Community Development Officer was able to develop and provide services in response to community needs with the centre providing a central focus in the community.

In 2000 having grown its funding base and services enormously in the previous 20-odd years, the organisation moved their Management Committee to a Board of Governance and employed its first CEO. Throughout the 2000s Intereach continued to grow and opened offices across the Riverina Murray region as recognition that investment and providing jobs in communities was an important part of the organisation's purpose.

In 2008 the organisation reviewed its relevance and profile, changing the name of the organisation to Intereach and adopting a new logo and profile. Intereach established a Volunteer Program to assist in the professionalisation of its 150 volunteers, and established a free internet kiosk in the centre.

Today Intereach has shop fronts in nine locations across the region has over 150 partnership agreements with other organisations across the Riverina Murray, an indication of the strong network that underpins Intereach's activities.

## **Our People**

We employ approximately 190 employees and 5 current staff members identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

## **Where We Are**

For 40 years, Intereach has provided services to communities that are based on our values of leadership, partnership and social justice.

We have nine offices, which are located in Albury, Buronga, Cootamundra, Corowa, Deniliquin, Griffith, Hay, Finley and Wagga Wagga.



## Our RAP

Intereach has a long experience of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and families across the Riverina Murray region. We work in partnership with other organisations such as Local Aboriginal Land Councils, peak bodies, Councils and other Aboriginal organisations to celebrate significant cultural events such as NAIDOC week and Wamba Wamba Perrepa Perrepa week.

In 2012 we developed an Indigenous Cultural Recognition Guide for meetings and community events that was based on feedback from local custodians of the land and local Aboriginal Community Working Groups, where we were able to make contact. We use the following acknowledgment to open our meetings:

*We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land.*

*We pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present, and to those of the future, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the cultures and hopes of Aboriginal Australia.*

*We must always remember that despite major physical changes, this land is, was, and will always be, traditional Aboriginal land.*

*We stand in the light of their presence and seek to move forward together.*

*Where appropriate for significant events we engage Traditional Owners to provide a Welcome to Country.*

### **Family connection to community**

The Aboriginal community of Hay is actively working to build strong community connections with local education providers and in 2013 we were able to work with them on a multi-media project: *Maradhal-bu Yandhul-bu Giilang-Galang Yalbilingidhi - Past and Present Stories of Learning*.

Over a nine month period, locally based staff and a professional filmmaker worked alongside 16 members of the Hay community to capture historical experiences of the education system and how it has changed to better meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and families. Local artist Allison Stewart provided original artwork that was used throughout the film and on the DVD cover (and can be seen on the front page of this RAP). View the film at [www.intereach.com.au/latest/publications.html](http://www.intereach.com.au/latest/publications.html)

The resulting documentary was premiered in an outdoor screening on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, projected onto a pylon of the Hay bridge, and was then shown to nearly 300 students. It has since been distributed state-wide to Aboriginal Education Officers for use as a resource. While the documentary serves as an important cultural record of local Aboriginal history, it ultimately works towards the longer-term development of resilient children and families with strong community connections.

Through experiences such as the one above in Hay we came to a realisation that it was important to formalise our commitment to the process of reconciliation across the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in the region.

The Intereach Board champions reconciliation within Intereach and more broadly with the communities of the Riverina Murray region of New South Wales. The staff team have been led by those Aboriginal staff who have shared honestly and generously.

Intereach has experienced that strength comes from honestly sharing stories and respectfully listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Intereach RAP Working Group is made up of staff from across our offices and business streams including Family Support Worker; Aboriginal Community Transport Worker; Children and Family, Carer Support and Community Development Managers; Executive Officer and CEO as well as five Aboriginal people from the community and from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations who have generously provided their advice and guidance.

Our RAP Working Group met on two occasions with the community members above and then as an internal group with representatives from Reconciliation Australia who helped us clarify our commitment to Reconciliation.

What has been made clear to us that Reconciliation is not always an easy journey but that it is one that is fundamental in order to build a strong, resilient, and just society.

Intereach takes our responsibilities as a member of our communities very seriously and we are proud to walk beside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities across the region.



## RELATIONSHIPS



Strong and respectful relationships are important for all communities and the rural and regional communities that we serve rely on relationships to survive. There is strength that is not recognised as well as unfair disadvantage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that undermines the resilience of the whole community. For Intereach, we seek in continuing to build upon meaningful relationships and strong partnerships based on trust and mutual respect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations that reflect our commitment to human rights for all.

**Focus area:** Maintain and build upon our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable	Status
1.1	RAP Working Group actively monitors RAP development, including implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	Executive Officer	December 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RWG oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.</li> <li>▪ Meet at least twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.</li> </ul>	
1.2	Celebrate National Reconciliation Week by providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and other employees to build relationships.	CEO/Executive Officer	27th May- 3rd June, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with other Aboriginal organisations in celebrating National Reconciliation Week.</li> <li>• Download Reconciliation Australia's NRW Toolkit.</li> <li>• Organise 4 internal events to celebrate NRW.</li> <li>▪ Register all Intereach NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's website to capture participation and support.</li> </ul>	
1.3	Establish and maintain a RAP Advisory Group for Intereach	Executive Officer	March and October 2015, 2016, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise to meet at least two times per year.</li> <li>• Develop a Terms of Reference for Intereach RAP Advisory Group.</li> </ul>	
1.4	Intereach will continue to develop stronger relationships with Aboriginal	Intereach CEO and Executive	30 June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and lodge joint tenders in order to build better services for the communities in</li> </ul>	

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable	Status
	and Torres Strait Islander communities, families, Elders and children	Officer		<p>which Intereach operates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop marketing material about Intereach for delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in the Riverina Murray region.</li> </ul>	
1.5	Identify opportunities to build stronger relationships with communities situated within the local government areas.	Executive Officer	December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create and commence an audit process for identifying the communities in the LGA's for the CWP Meetings in order to build better relationships (For example, understanding adopting characteristics of the CWP Meetings in Deniliquin, Albury, Narrandera and Griffith as they are working effectively).</li> </ul>	

## RESPECT



Intereach recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are the longest, continuous, surviving cultures in the world. We also recognise the diversity of First Nations Peoples and we aim to increase respect, knowledge and understanding of each other in order to strengthen our relationship, create stronger communities that are resilient in order for Intereach to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Intereach seeks to walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, recognising the diversity in order to respect and understand each other to strengthen relationships and build stronger community.

**Focus area:** Participation and shared understanding of our stories.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable	Status
2.1	Intereach will engage employees in understanding the cultural protocols around Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind these important ceremonies.	CEO	March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise, implement and communicate the Intereach Indigenous Cultural Recognition Guide for meetings and community events.</li> </ul>	
		CEO	December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an Acknowledgment of Country plaque/signage at each Intereach office that includes land, language and that acknowledges any significant events and locations and display in a prominent position.</li> </ul>	
		CEO	December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to provide an Acknowledgement of Country at the opening of significant events.</li> </ul>	
		Senior Manager, Children and Families	December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a significant event for which a Traditional Owner will be invited to provide a Welcome to Country.</li> </ul>	
		CEO	June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to appropriately display and acknowledge Aboriginal artwork within Intereach offices.</li> </ul>	
		CEO, Project Officer	February 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Display an Acknowledgement of Country in all employees signature block (to be written in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees).</li> </ul>	

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable	Status
2.2	Intereach will engage employees in cultural learning to increase understanding and appreciation of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural backgrounds in order to lay the foundation for other RAP actions to be achieved.	HR Senior Manager	June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and pilot a localised cultural competency training strategy. In particular, provide opportunities for RWG members, Board members and the leadership team to participate in training.</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all new and existing employees complete Reconciliation Australia's "Share Our Pride" <a href="http://www.shareourpride.org.au">www.shareourpride.org.au</a> cultural learning module.</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include "Share Our Pride" as a part of Intereach Induction process and display on internal intranet.</li> </ul>	
2.3	Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to engage with their cultures and communities through celebrating NAIDOC Week events.	HR Senior Manager	July 2015, 2016, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to utilise cultural leave for cultural obligations.</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for all employees to participate in local NAIDOC Week events.</li> </ul>	
		CEO, Communications Group	July 2015, 2016, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intereach to host and/or actively participate in NAIDOC Week activities in at least 3 offices as directed by a NAIDOC Committee (made up of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff).</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote NAIDOC Week in Intereach offices and through media channels such as via the intranet and external website.</li> </ul>	

## OPPORTUNITIES



Strengthening and improving social and personal well-being for individuals, families and communities is a key part of our business and in order to do this it is important to Intereach that we create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities.

**Focus area:** Building capacity to create sustainable employment opportunities.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable	Status
3.1	Investigate opportunities within Intereach to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities.	HR Senior Manager	December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review HR policies to ensure barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are able to be addressed.</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review, refresh and update the Intereach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention strategy.</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertise employment opportunities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and maintain a Support Group for Aboriginal employees at Intereach.</li> </ul>	
3.2	Investigate opportunities to increase supplier diversity within your organisation.	Finance Senior Manager	June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review procurement policies and address barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and reform procurement strategy, policy and processes so that supplier diversity principles can be incorporated into our procurement strategy.</li> </ul>	

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable	Status
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the opportunity to become a member of Supply Nation or partnering with the local Indigenous Chamber of Commerce.</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier list and distribute to employees.</li> </ul>	

### Tracking Progress and Reporting

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target	Status
4.1	Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the Annual Impact Measurement Report.	CEO	September 2015, 2016, 2017	Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.	
4.2	Report progress against the RAP to the RAP Working Group	Family Support Worker	Sept, March 2015, 2016, 2017	Review and Report on RAP implementation progress twice per year.	
4.3	Report progress against RAP progress to the Intereach Board	CEO	March, June, Sept, December 2015, 2016	Review and report on RAP implementation progress to the Board on a quarterly basis.	
4.4	Update and refresh a new RAP for Intereach	CEO	June 2017	Review and refresh a new RAP for Intereach based on previous learnings, achievements and challenges from our previous RAP.	
				Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal review and endorsement.	