



# Play Matters Australia Reconciliation Action Plan

April 2022 – July 2023



**play**  
**matters**  
the heart & science of play





# Table of Contents

- 4 About the Artist
- 5 About the Artwork
- 6 Reflect RAP CEO
- 8 Message from our Chair and CEO
- 9 Vision, Mission and Values
- 10 Our Business
- 12 Our RAP
- 13 Our partnerships/current activities
- 14 Relationships
- 15 Respect
- 16 Opportunities & Governance



# About the Artist

## Amanda Franklin

Amanda was born and raised in Port Lincoln and is a descendant of the Kokatha people. After completing her SACE certificate in 1996, she spent the next ten years travelling throughout the Northern Territory and the top end of North Queensland.

Amanda has worked in various positions throughout a variety of industries. Some of these include hospitality, education, travel, office and retail. Returning to Port Lincoln, she joined Kuju Arts & Crafts as an indigenous trainee. Since completing her traineeship, Amanda was employed as the coordinator of Kuju. Amanda has always been interested in art and enjoys drawing, painting, and experimenting with different mediums. Amanda has participated in Naidoc week exhibitions and the 'Our Mob' exhibitions at the Adelaide Festival centre, where her painting was selected to go on tour. Amanda received a Highly Commended Award at the 2010 Pt Lincoln Art Prize for her painting 'Shifting Sands'. Amanda loves experimenting with different art forms, including silk painting, basket weaving and carving and painting emu eggs.

Amanda has coordinated several exhibitions, including the Far West Coast 'Desert to Dunes'. She presented talks and demonstrations at numerous Exhibitions throughout the state of SA, Artist Forums, international visitors, and several schools around the Eyre Peninsula. Through her dedication and efforts, she was awarded the Premier's Award for 'Outstanding Community Achievement' on Australia Day 2012.

Amanda was one of several participating artists selected to exhibit in the 'Tough(er) Love Exhibition at Flinders Uni Gallery in State Library, Adelaide, which then proceeded to travel around the state of SA.

Amanda was on the ATSI Assessment Panel for Country Arts SA and has sold artwork locally, nationally and commissioned to private collectors. Amanda is currently residing in Cairns, FNQ, where she works with Play Matters Australia and loves sharing her passion for arts and crafts with the younger generation.



## About the Artwork

This painting reflects the connections and journeys of a child, parent/caregiver, and educator. The figures in the centre represent a child and adult, walking together on this journey.

The sharing of knowledge between each other. The continual learning, not just as a child or parent, but how as educators/facilitators/administration, we continually learn and further our skills and knowledge. The circle motifs and lines connecting them represent meeting places of families coming together, from all

places/backgrounds and nationalities. The spiral motif represents knowledge, perseverance, growth, and development. It represents Life. The Background acknowledges the people from central Australia, the bush and rainforests of Australia and the surrounding seas and islands.





# Reflect RAP CEO

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Play Matters Australia to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Play Matters Australia joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes. These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

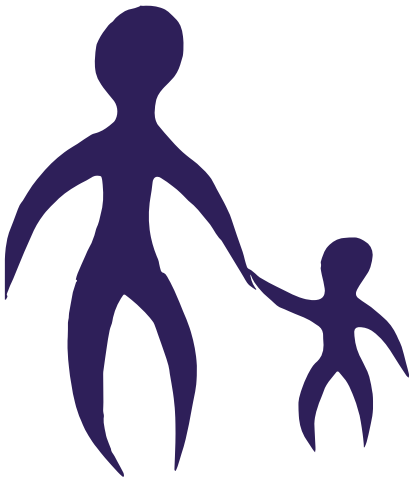
It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Play Matters Australia to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Play Matters Australia, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.



**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia





# Message from our Chair and CEO

Over the past five decades our Queensland-originated company has grown from a volunteer-led, State-based association, to operate as one of the largest community-based charities specialising in play and parent-child attachment in Australia. This year Playgroup Queensland Ltd is transitioning to a new Masterbrand and will operate as Play Matters Australia in line with our vision and mission that play is essential to every Australian child and family no matter where they live.

Our newly renamed National company, Play Matters Australia (formally Playgroup Queensland Ltd) commences its reconciliation journey in presenting its first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2022 – a formal statement of our commitment to reconciliation. This is an important step for our company in joining the national reconciliation movement across Australia. Our team is committed to supporting self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and communities.

Our company's vision and mission recognises the importance of parents and carers as their child's first and most important teacher. We also acknowledge the universal human right for all children to engage in play to support their development, health, and wellbeing. Finally, we acknowledge the vital and positive role of community and sense of place in a child's life. These important elements of our company's operating model respects that parents, carers, and kinship networks are best placed to engage with their children to support their development and cultural identity and acknowledges the importance of children's needs for autonomy, expressed through self-directed play, and a strong sense of identity developed through freely engaging with their own traditions, cultures, and communities.

In commencing our Reconciliation journey, we seek to avoid the mistakes of the past, such as creating models of co-dependency or disempowerment. These approaches are against our Company's fundamental model of operating. We cannot progress as a company, or properly empower all children, families, and communities without this a commitment to reconciliation. If we fail in adequately progressing our reconciliation journey, we will also fail in maintaining the theoretical and practical fidelity to the heart and science of our work.

As we work alongside children and young people who will be the future leaders and custodians of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture, lands, and traditions, we feel a great sense of humility, urgency, and significance in progressing our reconciliation journey. We look forward to the implementation and careful evaluation of our Reflect RAP over the next twelve months. Every staff member, volunteer and partner has a role to play.

We know we will be a more effective and culturally informed organisation by taking this path, and we look forward to listening and learning from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community partners about how we can use our knowledge of the powerful mechanism of play to support their aspirations for their children's growth in community, family life and intergenerational connection.



**Gloria Sherlock**  
Board Chair



**Kirsty Dixon**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Vision, Mission, Values

## Our Vision

Connected children, families  
and communities

## Our Mission

Supporting children and families  
to build relationships, skills  
and confidence through play.

## Our Values



**Creative  
and fun**



**Collaborative**



**Welcoming  
and inclusive**



**Contemporary  
practice**



**Accountable**





# Our Business

## About Play Matters Australia

Operating for almost 50 years, Play Matters Australia (PMA) aims to provide children from birth-to-five years with the best start to life by empowering parents and caregivers with the skills and confidence to guide and support their child through the fundamental act of play. Play Matters Australia's ethos of recognising parents and caregivers as a child's first teacher is embedded in all programs. Play Matters Australia has developed and delivers a range of tailored, early intervention programs that are underpinned by evidenced-based methodologies.

The First 1,000 Days are critical to a child's development. The child's successful attachment to parents, and their responsive interaction in return, lay down the neurological foundations for successful lifelong learning. Parents are children's first teachers.

Socio-economic disadvantage, food security, exposure to trauma, disability and mental illness impact parent-child relationships and brain development, particularly before age five. Early Intervention support with both parents and children has an impact on the development of cognitive, emotional and social skills which in the long-term impact a child's future social and economic participation and health.

### Outcomes we deliver for families

- Improve child development.
- Increase parent/carer awareness of, and engagement with, their children's development.
- Increase connection and access to the right services at the right time for parents/carers and their children.
- Grow parental capabilities.
- Increase confidence in parenting and peer interaction/support.

**To deliver these outcomes, Play Matters Australia creates tools to support parents and carers connect with their children and services in their communities. These tools come in the form of:**

- programs that are targeted and intensive for families experiencing vulnerability and diversity, including working with isolated, regional and remote communities
- access to online and print resources created by early childhood experts such as tip sheets, play activities, resource kits, video content and blogs
- an extensive digital platform including an interactive website and accounts with Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter and LinkedIn
- current research findings on early years' learning and related topics.

We employ 100 people across the country and we have offices/hub spaces in Queensland that support the delivery of our Playgroups and Parenting Programs in Brisbane, Redlands, Sunshine Coast, Rockhampton, Mt Isa, Cairns and Goodna. Our national Music Therapy Program Sing&Grow operates in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania Western Australia, South Australia, ACT and Northern Territory. Four (4) per cent of the employee population (4 employees) at Play Matters Australia identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.



# Our RAP

## Play Matters Australia’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

Play Matters Australia is developing a RAP as the organisation is committed to the journey of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For almost 50 years, PMA has supported Queensland families including many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to walk alongside them in creating the best possible starts in life for their children.

Our company has been working closely with Elders in communities across the State to inform our Reflect RAP. PMA is aware from these conversations that our reconciliation pathway needs to be built on mutual respect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and an Acknowledgement of the past.

Our organisation needs to articulate and lay the foundation for the importance of reconciliation practice for all our member and employees in all areas of our work. It is important for our members and employees to understand the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning and how this can influence our work with families.

Play Matters Australia has supported many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over its history. While we need all members and employees to play their part in reconciliation, it is important for our organisation to have a RAP creating a single voice of how we are going to approach reconciliation, and actions that need to occur to make our organisation accountable.

Play Matters Australia has supported many families over the years including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Some of these communities include Yarrabah, Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Cooktown, Laura and Cunnamulla. All of these programs delivered strengths-based practices empowering families to contribute to the growth of their children and their communities. To deliver these playgroup sessions Play Matters Australia employs local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are respected and connected with the local community. Play Matters Australia provides training, mentoring and ongoing connection for First Nations

people in their community. We aim to create communities of upskilled champions who advocate for the importance of families being involved in the development of their children in the early years.

**Play Matters Australia intends to implement our RAP by proposing to:**

- create a greater understanding across internal staff of First Nations cultures and histories
- create inclusive environments that contribute to reconciliation with First Nations people
- strengthen children and family’s understanding and Acknowledgement of First Nations people
- continue to build strong trusted relationships with First Nations organisations.

To support the above outcomes, Play Matters Australia will implement several practical initiatives to support reconciliation. These initiatives are firstly to improve cultural awareness within the workplace by including Acknowledgement of Country at the start of meetings, appointing a RAP strategic leader within all Play Matters Australia Hubs, and redesigning staff induction to include cultural training and understanding of Australian First Nations history. Playgroup sessions will be supported to create an inclusive and supportive environment to include First Nations culture into their routine. By seeking opportunities to celebrate cultural events with the First Nations community and connecting with state and local government leadership, Play Matters Australia will actively seek opportunities to walk side by side with First Nations people.

# Our partnerships/ current activities

Play Matters Australia members and staff engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our programs that we are contracted to deliver by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Department of Social Services, Queensland Department of Education and Queensland Department of Communities. Through these daily interactions, members and employees listen, learn and actively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our reconciliation journey to date has been that of an active listener having the ability to create programs based on families and community’s needs. Play Matters Australia engages in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s day each year, along with supporting local and regional NAIDOC events.

## We work in collaboration with the following communities:

### Woorabinda

Play Matters Australia works closely with the Woorabinda State School to deliver playgroup sessions that engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to support school readiness and empower parents to understand their role as their child’s first teacher. We have been working with the Woorabinda community for the past 12 years and employ local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to deliver these programs. This approach has supported the development of many champions in the early childhood sector and empowered the community to contribute to the development of the next generation of community leaders.

### Yarrabah

Play Matters Australia has been working closely with the Yarrabah community and its community stakeholders for almost four years to deliver evidence-based playgroup programs with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. We employ local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to deliver this program, walking with the community to listen to its needs for children under five years old. Through this process, we have been able to support the creation of programs that address the local and current need of families and their children in a culturally safe and sensitive setting.



## Relationship

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	March 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	• Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	March 2022	Chief Executive Officer
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	• RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May 2022	<b>Executive Program Manager</b> , Community & Place Based programs.
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	• Communicate culturally appropriate opportunities for our members (Playgroups) to celebrate NRW	May 2022	<b>Executive Program Manager</b> , Community & Place Based programs.
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	March 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	• Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2022	<b>Program Manager</b> , Community and Place-based Programs
	• Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2022	<b>Executive Program Manager</b> , Community & Place-based programs.
	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all members.	March 2022	Chief Executive Officer
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	• Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	August 2022	Manager, People and Culture
	• Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	August 2022	Manager, People and Culture



## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Celebrate/recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance.	• Create and circulate calendar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance to all staff and members	March 2022	Manager, People and Culture
	• Ensure RAP Working Group members participate in at least one event per year to recognise an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander date of significance.	March 2022	Manager, People and Culture
6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	• Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	May 2023	Executive Program Manager, Community & Place-based programs.
	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	May 2023	Manager People and Culture
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	May 2022	Executive Program Manager, Community & Place-based programs.
	• Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	May 2022	Manager People and Culture
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2022	Manager People and Culture
	• Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2022	Manager People and Culture
	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2022	Executive Program Manager, Community & Place-based programs.





## Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	• Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	May 2023	Manager People and Culture
	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	May 2023	Manager People and Culture
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	May 2023	Business Partner Finance and Operations
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	May 2022	Business Partner Finance and Operations



## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Form an RWG to govern RAP implementation.	February 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	• Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	February 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	• Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	February 2022	Chief Executive Officer
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	February 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	February 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	February 2022	Chief Executive Officer
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia	September 2023	Chief Executive Officer
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	April 2023	Chief Executive Officer





## The Heart and Science of Play





**play**  
**matters**  
the heart & science of play

[playmatters.org.au](http://playmatters.org.au)

1800 00 PLAY  
PO Box 339, Alderley QLD 4051  
ABN: 80 180 917 496