



**Reconciliation**  
**ACTION PLAN**  

---

**STRETCH RAP**

# Reconciliation Action Plan for the Years 2014 – 2016

## Stretch RAP



*In the spirit of respect,  
Menzies School of Health Research acknowledges the people and the  
Elders of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations who are  
the Traditional Owners of the land and seas of Australia*





*We have endeavoured to use the term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander throughout the document out of respect for all Indigenous populations. However, at times the term Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is used separately when the content is specific to the respective population. On occasions, the term Indigenous is used when the term has been referenced from another source.*

## Contents

Foreword .....	4
Menzies history .....	5
Menzies vision for reconciliation .....	5
Menzies business .....	5
Menzies ways of working .....	6
Our Reconciliation Action Plan .....	7
Steps in Developing Menzies Reconciliation Action Plan .....	9
Relationships .....	10
Respect .....	12
Opportunities .....	15
Tracking progress and reporting.....	16



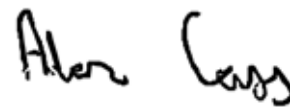
## Foreword

It has been a real pleasure to co-chair the working group that supported the development of the first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for the Menzies School of Health Research. Throughout this process we sought to engage research, education and administrative staff across Menzies. We also consulted with the Child Health Division Indigenous Reference Group, key community partner organisations and external agencies. We are confident that the input from these extensive consultations has been captured in this document. We believe the actions we have committed to undertake are real, meaningful and will make a difference.

Menzies existing commitment to providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is demonstrated in our current strategies; the Strategic Plan, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and the Youth Engagement Strategy. The RAP will enable Menzies to enhance and expand their commitment to these strategies. In developing this plan, we wanted to create a document that will be relevant to how we work at Menzies, not one that will gather dust on a shelf.

We extend our gratitude to the members of the working group who guided, advised and assisted with the process to develop the RAP. Through this plan, we commit to strengthening Menzies' relationships with key community stakeholders; ensuring that genuine respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their organisations and communities underpins all our activities; and building opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We believe that we must engage all our staff, that this document must be seen as relevant to our work and its goals attainable, if we are to contribute to achieving reconciliation.

We look forward to reporting on our progress in achieving the aims and targets set out in the RAP.



Professor Alan Cass  
Director  
Menzies School of Health Research



Heather D'Antoine  
Associate Director, Aboriginal Programs  
Menzies School of Health Research

## Menzies history

Conceived in the late 1970s the Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) was a joint venture between the Menzies Foundation, the Northern Territory Government and the University of Sydney. From inception to operation took several years, with the Northern Territory Government passing the Menzies School of Health Research Act in 1985. Menzies early vision was a commitment to examining, understanding and improving Aboriginal health as well as the health of those living in Northern Australia and the tropics.

## Menzies vision for reconciliation

Menzies aspires to advance the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by working with them to conduct research that is of the highest quality, meaningful and beneficial and to provide excellent education that is relevant and accessible. Menzies will continue to develop its relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their organisations in a manner that is respectful and creates opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Menzies business

Menzies is headquartered in Darwin, with a number of regional offices across Australia. Through excellence and leadership in research, education and capacity building, its vision is to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequity for populations in Australia and the Asia–Pacific region, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It currently employs more than 220 staff, of whom 10 per cent identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. Increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and providing them with opportunities to advance their careers are key goals for Menzies.

Menzies has established partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their organisations, Charles Darwin University and the Northern Territory Government.



# Menzies ways of working

**Collaboration:** We seek to partner with communities, health and other service providers, policy-makers and other researchers.

**Responsiveness:** Our work is informed by health needs and shared priorities of the people and communities with whom we work.

**Innovation:** We embrace and develop new approaches and technologies.

**Taking a chance:** We ensure that high risk/high reward projects are part of our research portfolio.

**Building research capacity:** We foster and develop the researchers of the future, with a particular emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and researchers from developing countries.

**Communication:** We maintain an ongoing dialogue with partners, stakeholders and the local and national community during the research process, from conception through to completion and translation of the results. We enhance our communication and marketing expertise to increase our public profile and raise awareness of Menzies within the community.

**Integrity:** We are open, honest and transparent and maintain the highest standards of governance, accountability and ethics. We continue to acknowledge and value the cultural diversity of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, our partners, stakeholders and the local communities with whom we work.

**Quality:** We strive for excellence and rigour in everything we do.

**Integration:** We build on and share the skills, knowledge, information, systems and learnings that we and our stakeholders already have.

With this in mind, the Reconciliation Action Plan will enable Menzies to consolidate and enhance our approach to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



# Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Menzies established a working group in October 2012 to lead the development of the RAP. The working group included representation from all the Divisions within Menzies and was comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and non-Indigenous staff. The working group was jointly chaired by Professor Alan Cass, Director of Menzies and Heather D'Antoine, Associate Director for Aboriginal Programs, with secretariat support provided by the Indigenous Capacity Building Unit.

In developing the plan, the working group sought input from staff through a series of workshops; nine in Darwin and one in Brisbane. The results from the workshops were then collated and staff were invited to prioritise the topics that came up at the workshops. Although a number of topics came up that could be included in the RAP, the themes of **community engagement**, **community-led research** and **addressing the research burden** in communities were identified by staff as important areas of focus for the RAP.

Other important areas of focus included adopting measures to recognise the skills and knowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people bring to Menzies' program of research and symbolic measures including flying their respective flags.

Consultation with FORWAARD Aboriginal Corporation and Darwin Aboriginal Womens Shelter provided an external perspective which highlighted the importance of considering research with **vulnerable groups within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** population, such as those with mental illnesses and those in custody. It also highlighted the **importance of knowledge exchange** (referred to as knowledge translation from here on) so that community organisations and Menzies might better improve their business activity services through shared knowledge gained from mutual participation.

Reconciliation Australia advised that this should be a Stretch RAP. A Stretch RAP will allow Menzies, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their organisations, to expand and embed our proven strategies to meet the targets in our RAP.

Both staff and the Child Health Division Indigenous Reference Group were invited to comment on the draft RAP prior to being presented to the Menzies Executive for comment. The final draft was submitted to the Menzies Board in May 2014 for approval.





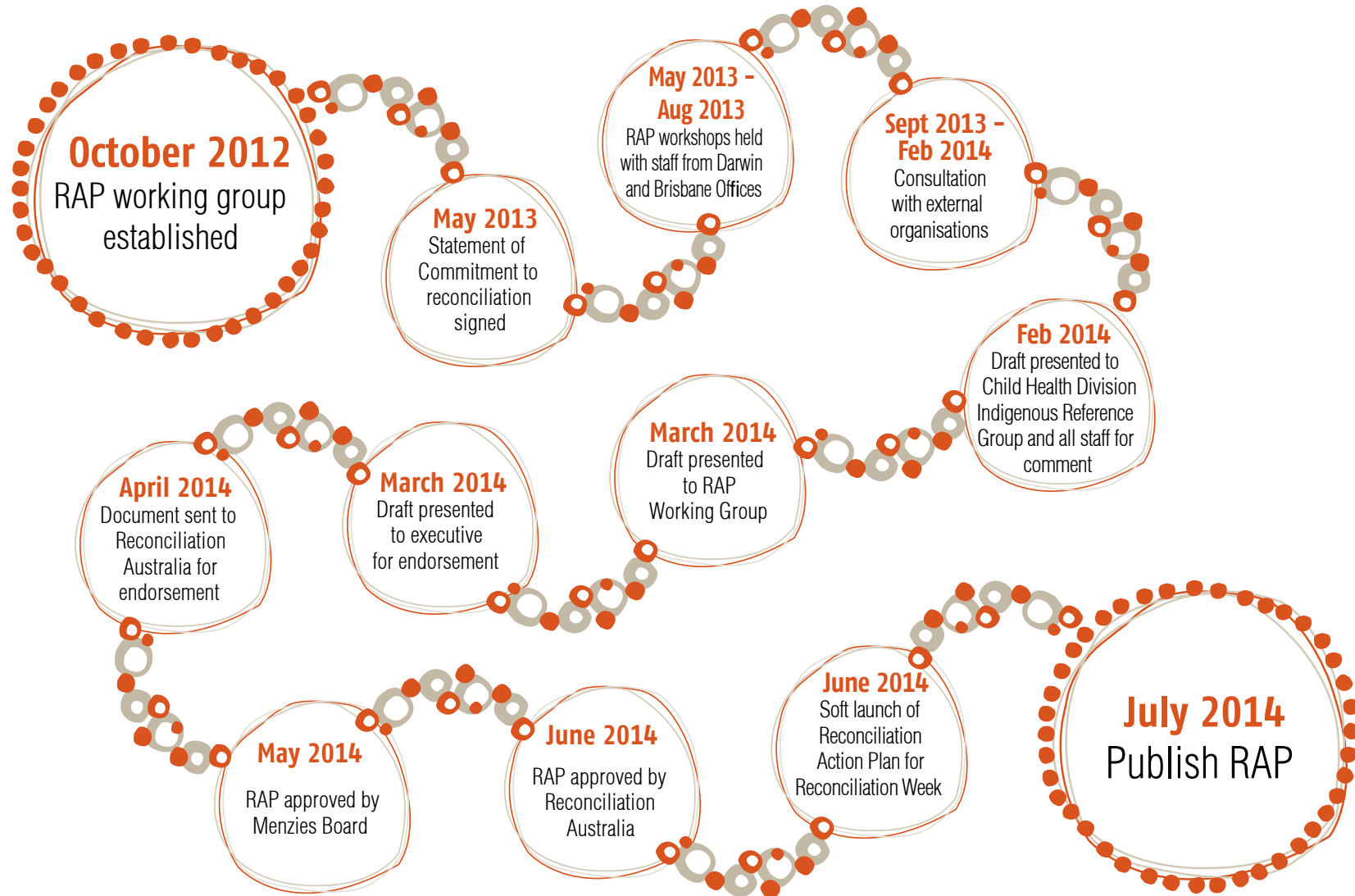
The Menzies RAP provides a platform to advance Menzies commitment in developing meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

*Photos from Darwin and Brisbane workshops*





# Steps in Developing Menzies Reconciliation Action Plan



# Relationships

Meaningful, long lasting relationships enable Menzies to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in doing research that is relevant and of benefit

FOCUS AREA 1: STRENGTHENING THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VOICE WITHIN MENZIES			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
1. The RAP Working Group continues to actively monitor RAP development, including implementation of actions and tracking progress	Associate Director Aboriginal Programs	December, annually	The RAP working group will meet twice yearly in line with the terms of reference
2. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee is established to ensure expert advice is provided to Menzies at an Executive level	Associate Director Aboriginal Programs and Director	December 2014	Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory committee that meets at least twice a year with the Director and Associate Director of Aboriginal programs.
3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Menzies Board is continuous to ensure involvement in high level decision making	Director	January 2015	Continuous presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members on the Menzies Board. The selection process will recognise the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
4. Strengthen channels for discussion and development of community-led research ideas to ensure communities have the opportunity to identify future research priorities according to their needs	Division Leader, Child Health Division	December, annually	Hold Child Health Division: Indigenous Reference Group meetings 3 times/year  Hold Child Health Division Stakeholder meetings once per year
	Deputy Director	December, annually	Hold Menzies wide Stakeholder meetings are twice per year
		December, annually	Increase attendance from a greater number and diversity of key Aboriginal organisations at Menzies Research Ideas Forums



FOCUS AREA 2: STRENGTHENING EXTERNAL LINKS WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE			
5. Establish Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to ensure a mutual understanding of agreed research processes and outputs	Director and Associate Director Aboriginal Programs	June 2015	Signed MOU with at least two key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that have either a local, regional, state or national responsibility
6. Celebrate National Reconciliation Week to publicly show Menzies commitment to reconciliation	Indigenous Capacity Building Unit	May 27 to June 3, annually	Host at least one internal event each year
7. Establish a coordinated approach to community engagement across the whole of Menzies so that communities benefit from research	Associate Director for Aboriginal Programs and the Manager for Research Quality	June 2015	Establish, implement and evaluate a register of Menzies projects that are occurring in each community and relevant health services
		August, annually	Provide annual training for researchers on models of community engagement
	Associate Director for Aboriginal Programs	December 2015	Work with Menzies staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to develop a set of guidelines for engagement and implementation for community based research



# Respect

Respect is fundamental to working in true partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their organisations. Respect underpins Menzies approach to the research process; from the very beginning to the very end.



FOCUS AREA 3: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AWARENESS			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
1. Ensure staff at Menzies follow the Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country Protocols as a show of respect to the Traditional Owners of the land wherever Menzies staff and collaborators gather	Manager, Indigenous Capacity Building Unit	June 2014	Develop Cultural Protocols with staff to ensure staff understand when to make an Acknowledgement of Country and when to organize a Welcome to Country, both locally and interstate.
	Manager, Communications Unit	December 2014	Embed the Acknowledgement of Country in official Menzies documents
	Chief Operating Officer	December 2014	Display plaques and / or art works acknowledging the Traditional Owners in appropriate sites within all Menzies buildings
	Manager Communications Unit and Manager, Indigenous Capacity Building Unit	June 2014	Provide staff with access to email signatures that acknowledge the Traditional Owners
2. Acknowledge the contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to Menzies research to ensure their unique knowledge and skills are respected and valued	Associate Director for Aboriginal Programs and Manager, Indigenous Capacity Building Unit	March 2015	Develop guidelines with researchers so that they understand when to acknowledge the research contribution made by communities, study participants, and key individuals and agencies in all communications and outputs of research
3. Implement a cultural awareness training strategy to increase Menzies staff awareness and understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their history in their region	Manager, Indigenous Capacity Building Unit and Human Resources	September 2014	Develop a fully integrated cultural awareness training strategy that is available to all staff
		December, annually	All new staff to Menzies will complete a cultural awareness training program within three months of starting at Menzies
		December, annually	A standard evaluation conducted for each program
4. Menzies will celebrate and host events to provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their cultures, communities and success including NAIDOC Week	Manager, Indigenous Capacity Building Unit & Manager, Communications Unit	July, annually	Host or provide support to another group to host at least one NAIDOC Week event  Opportunities are provided for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to attend NAIDOC Week events and activities
5. Provide access to relevant training both at Menzies and external to Menzies to ensure staff have the skill to ensure their work practices are culturally secure	Associate Director for Aboriginal Programs	June, annually	All staff receive a minimum set of training, relevant to their role, on working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

**FOCUS AREA 4: KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION**

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
5. Improve the reach of two-way knowledge translation to include relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to ensure that these organisations benefit from the discovery of new knowledge from research projects	Manager, Indigenous Capacity Building Unit & Manager, Knowledge Translation	December 2015	Design a template that includes a range of possible knowledge translation strategies and evaluate their effectiveness and reach with participating communities and relevant organisations



# Opportunities

Menzies will explore and implement strategies to create employment and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to prosper.

FOCUS AREA 5: INCREASE THE EMPLOYMENT OF AND CREATE CAREER PATHWAYS FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
1. Commitment to the implementation of Menzies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Employment Strategy to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at Menzies	Manager, Indigenous Capacity Building Unit	December 2016	Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander full-time equivalent staff employed at Menzies from 10 per cent to 15 per cent  Evaluate the impact of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy
2. Commitment to engaging with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to showcase research as a possible career and demonstrate pathways into a career in research	Manager, Indigenous Capacity Building Unit	Nov, 2014	Host at least one event annually that provides high school students with the opportunity to explore careers at Menzies  Report on the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who attended and undertake and report on an evaluation by students
FOCUS AREA 6: PROVIDE COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ORGANISATIONS AND BUSINESSES			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
3. Explore opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to supply goods and services to Menzies	Chief Operating Officer	June 2015	Conduct a report on the scope of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, annually  Engage the services or purchase products of at least one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander business



## Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
1. Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the Annual Impact Measurement Report	Associate Director, Aboriginal Programs	September 30th, annually	Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia, annually
2. Refresh Menzies' RAP to build on key learnings and remain engaged in the reconciliation process	Associate Director, Aboriginal Programs	December, 2016	Evaluate the achievements of the RAP against the measurable targets and report to the Menzies Executive and Board  Review, consult and update Menzies RAP for 2017 onwards

Heather D'Antoine  
 Associate Director, Aboriginal Programs  
 Menzies School of Health Research  
 Email: [heather.dantoine@menzies.edu.au](mailto:heather.dantoine@menzies.edu.au)  
 Phone: 08 8922 8196

Coralie Achterberg  
 Manager, Indigenous Capacity Building Unit  
 Menzies School of Health Research  
 Email: [coralie.achterberg@menzies.edu.au](mailto:coralie.achterberg@menzies.edu.au)  
 Phone: 08 8922 8196





## Working Group

Alan Cass	Director (co-chair)
Heather D'Antoine	Associate Director Aboriginal Programs (co-chair)
David Blair	Corporate and Research Administration
Jason Chin	Corporate and Research Administration
Amanda Leach	Child Health Division
Elizabeth McDonald	Child Health Division
Mark Mayo	Global and Tropical Health Division
Anna Nicholson	Preventative Chronic Disease and Wellbeing Division
Rahni Cassidy	Health Systems and Epidemiology Division
Cynthia Croft	Health Systems and Epidemiology Division
Brian Arley	Health Systems and Epidemiology Division

## Secretariat Support

Coralie Achterberg	Manager, Indigenous Programs
Kelly McCann	Indigenous Project Support Officer
Linda Quall	Project Officer Indigenous Programs



Mark Mayo, Kelly McCann, David Blair, Anna Nicholson, Linda Quall, Coralie Achterberg, Heather D'Antoine and Alan Cass



Cynthia Croft, Brian Arley and Rahni Cassidy



Elizabeth McDonald



Jason Chin



Amanda Leach



[www.menzies.edu.au](http://www.menzies.edu.au)

Postal: PO Box 41096, Casuarina NT 0811, Australia  
Location: John Mathews Building (Bldg 58),  
Royal Darwin Hospital Campus, Rocklands Drv, Casuarina NT 0810  
Ph: 08 8922 8196 Fax: 08 8927 5187



[www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au)

Reconciliation Australia  
Old Parliament House, King George Terrace, Parkes ACT  
PO Box 4773, Kingston ACT 2604  
Ph: 02 6273 9200 Fax: 02 6273 9201  
E [enquiries@reconciliation.org.au](mailto:enquiries@reconciliation.org.au)