



**RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN**

**REFLECT**

**SOUTHERN CROSS HOUSING**  
**July 2023 – August 2024**



# CONTENTS

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Acknowledgement of Country.....3

Message From Our CEO.....4

Message from Reconciliation Australia ..... 5

Our Business.....6

Our Vision for Reconciliation.....7

Our Reconciliation Action Plan.....8

Relationships.....10

Respect.....12

Opportunities.....14

Governance.....15



## Acknowledgement Of Country

Southern Cross Housing would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, the future generations, and to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We celebrate and promote the strengths and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and acknowledge the history of dispossession and the impact that this has had today.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will always hold a spiritual belonging and connection with Country and remain the Traditional Owners and First Peoples of this land.





## Message From Our CEO



Southern Cross Housing's (SCH) commitment to implement its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) lays the foundation to strengthen our relationships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander residents and support services. The actions in our RAP will enable SCH to contribute to reconciliation in a structured and respectful way.

SCH has established a RAP working group that is comprised of SCH staff and this group will monitor and report regularly on the implementation of strategies and actions that are contained in our RAP.

We will engage with First Nations stakeholders and seek guidance and advice regarding the implementation of actions.

An external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tenants Advisory Committee (ATAC) has been formed and the RAP working group will seek advice from the committee during the implementation phase of our RAP.

As a key organisation in the South Coast and Snowy Monaro regions we want to strengthen and build genuine relationships with our First Nations communities.

Southern Cross Housing will ensure a top-down approach when delivering its first RAP. Our Senior Managers will be assigned deliverables and consulted in all targeted actions to promote reconciliation.

We want to promote trust and build rapport through strengthening respectful and mutually beneficial relationships by championing diversity and by promoting inclusion in our workplace.

**- Chief Executive Officer Alex Pontello**

## Message From Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Southern Cross Community Housing to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Southern Cross Community Housing joins a network of more than 2,200 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 Southern Cross Housing 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.

**- RA Chief Executive Officer Karen Mundine**



## Our Business

Southern Cross Housing (SCH) is a Tier 1 registered Community Housing Provider under the National Regulation System for Community Housing.

We are the largest Community Housing Provider covering South East NSW with a service delivery area spanning across the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley & Snowy Monaro. We are a highly regulated Not-For-Profit Registered Charity owning and managing approximately 2,400 dwellings.

Most of our dwellings are social housing properties; however, we provide a whole range of affordable housing solutions to support individuals & families in our community.



With offices situated in Nowra, Bomaderry, Ulladulla, Batemans Bay, Cooma and Bega, SCH provides housing to people that are located across these all of these areas. Of the 4250 residents housed by SCH, 818 residents identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, making SCH one of the largest providers of social and community housing to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples in NSW.

In recent years, we have continued to diversify our service delivery model, working to redress the disadvantages in health, education, employment and social inclusion experienced by many of our residents and community members. As a result, we have created new business activities, some of which have provided direct employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Southern Cross Housing (SCH) employs 75 people with 5 of these employees identifying as Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander. These team members occupy various positions across the organisation including management, tenancy, and asset maintenance.



## SCH Vision for Reconciliation

Southern Cross Housing (SCH) seeks to strengthen relationships between Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians in the broader communities in which we work. Our inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan provides the framework for future actions and priorities that target improved health, social and economic outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and the communities that we share.

Our vision for reconciliation is to work together with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities to create homes, places and spaces that are welcoming, safe and appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families.

SCH is dedicated to building stronger communities and broadening our services for all First Nations stakeholders to strengthen cultural connections and positively affect change for our Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander residents and communities.

SCH will continue to strive for positive cultural outcomes by working collaboratively and inclusively with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander service users and service providers. We will seek to raise awareness of rights and responsibilities for our tenants, commit to supporting First Nations programs, expand pathways to employment and education both internally and in the broader community, enhance our employee's skills and knowledges in working in a culturally responsive & inclusive way. Our organisational activities are structured on achieving outcomes under 4 pillars and they set out our collective vision, purpose, strategic objectives and values.

These pillars focus and inform our business on what we know will make a difference to the people and communities we serve.

<b>OUR TENANTS</b>	<b>OUR HOMES</b>	<b>OUR ORGANISATION</b>	<b>OUR PARTNERSHIPS</b>
<b>Enabling Our Residents</b>	<b>Building Stronger Communities</b>	<b>Broadening Our Services</b>	<b>Nurture Our Partnerships</b>
Helping and encouraging people to lead more fulfilling independent	Creating Neighbourhood Cohesion with strong community leadership.	Providing wider range of innovative products and services for residents.	Build and cultivate relationships that create scale and operating efficiencies.



## Our Reconciliation Action Plan

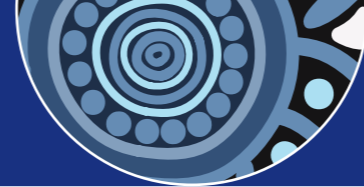
SCH is committed to providing opportunities for collaboration and self-determination with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples and their families. We will provide people platforms that enable First Nations tenants to have a say in how we do things, communicate openly, respectfully & transparently with our tenants and service users and strive to strengthen our community connections so as to support Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples to live safely and happily in their homes.

SCH is focused on increasing positive socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander residents and will achieve this by specifying priorities, goals, targets and timeframes against key priority areas, as set out within our RAP. These priority areas will be inclusive of, but not limited to actions that aim to cultivate respect between our local Aboriginal communities and SCH staff. We will also work to increase access to early intervention services and supports for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander residents.

Implementation of the RAP will be overseen by the RAP Working Group and our RAP Champion SCH's Chief Operations Officer (COO). The COO will be responsible for internal engagement and awareness within SCH of the RAP and its implementation and delivery across the organisation. As an organisation, we will ensure that SCH Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees, residents and stakeholders collaborate in an environment that sets the standard for local and regional Community Housing Providers in relation to work practices and service delivery that are culturally responsive and embedded with Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.



Art work created for Southern Cross Housing by local Shoalhaven Aboriginal Artist Noel Wellington.

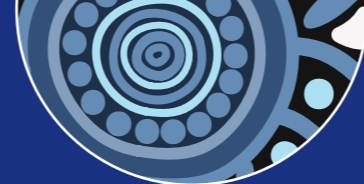


# Relationships

Southern Cross Housing will build strong relationships with first nation peoples and organisations to further understand the needs of our tenants, partners and community.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1 Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Stakeholders.</b>	1.1 Establish and maintain an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Tenant Advisory Committee (ATAC) in Nowra.	<b>1st Quarter</b> (July, August & September 2023)	Lead: CA Manager
	1.2 Develop and maintain Service Level Agreements with key Aboriginal not-for-profit organisations that are located throughout the regions that SCH provides service.	<b>3rd Quarter</b> (January, February & March 2024)	Team: Communities Assist
	1.3 Support the Shoalhaven Aboriginal Community Alliance Interagency (SACAI) by attending committee meetings and ensure that the information gathered is shared with both staff and residents.	<b>1st Quarter – 4th Quarter</b> (July 2023 – June 2024)	
	1.4 Have a clear and concise database of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander tenants for targeted communication about support services, important activities and events.	<b>1st &amp; 2nd Quarter</b> (July 2023 – December 2023)	
	1.5 Develop a SCH Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander directory of contacts, services, events, and artists to be available on the SCH website and develop a directory for support services in regional areas.	<b>1st &amp; 2nd Quarter</b> (July 2023 – December 2023)	
<b>2 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	2.1 Invite a Traditional Owner and/or Elder to speak at a significant event or meeting such as National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	<b>4th Quarter</b> (April, May & June 2024)	Lead: CA Manager  Team: Communities Assist
	2.2 Encourage and support staff and residents to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	<b>4th Quarter</b> (April, May & June 2024)	Lead: HR Manager  Team: Human Resources

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3 Promote reconciliation through sphere of influence.</b>	3.1 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff by circulating Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to SCH staff.	<b>4th Quarter</b> (April, May & June 2024)	Lead: CA Manager  Team: Communities Assist
	3.2 Identify like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey and develop a collaborative approach towards the promotion of the importance and value of reconciliation.	<b>3rd Quarter</b> (January, February & March 2024)	Lead: CA Manager  Team: RWG
<b>4 Practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	4.1 Identify potential Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander partners, stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence and develop a referral data base that can be accessed by Housing Officers to facilitate efficient referrals of tenants to appropriate programs and support services.	<b>1st &amp; 2nd Quarter</b> (July 2023 – December 2023)	Lead: CA Manager  Team: Communities Assist
	4.2 Develop relationships with NSW Police and the Shoalhaven Aboriginal Community Alliance Interagency (SACAI) for information sharing around Aboriginal services in the area for the purpose of improved service delivery and wrap around supports for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander residents.	<b>1st to 4th Quarter</b> (July 2023 – June 2024)	
<b>5 Promote positive relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	5.1 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	<b>2nd Quarter</b> (October, November & December 2023)	Lead: HR Manager  Team: Human Resources
	5.2 Develop an internal fact sheet around discrimination and communicate to staff.	<b>2nd Quarter</b> (October, November & December 2023)	



# Respect

Southern Cross Housing acknowledges and respects the strengths of first nation peoples, culture and heritage. By building on, celebrating and promoting these strengths, we inform and adapt our practices to build culturally safe and appropriate services for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>6 Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	6.1 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	<b>3rd Quarter</b> (January, February & March 2024)	Lead: Human Resources Manager
	6.2 Implement a cultural awareness training program within SCH.	<b>4th Quarter</b> (April, May & June 2024)	Team: Human Resources
	6.3 Invite First Nations tenants and/or members of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Tenants Advisory Committee (ATAC) to consult on the design and delivery of cultural awareness training. Introduce a pre-developed cultural responsiveness course that has consistent messaging (and information deriving from resident’s skills and knowledge) to be delivered through internal staff education system (ELMO) and promote to all SCH Staff.	<b>2nd &amp; 3rd Quarter</b> (October 2023 – March 2024)	
<b>7 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols</b>	7.1 Increase SCH staff understanding through education on the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	<b>1st Quarter</b> (July, August September 2023)	Lead: Human Resources Manager  Team: Human Resources
	7.2 Develop an Internal fact sheet about the significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country, Welcome to Country and traditional land & water ownership within the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla & Snowy Monaro regions.	<b>1st Quarter</b> (July, August & September 2023)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Communities Assist

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>8 Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	8.1 Review HR policies and procedures to ensure that there are no barriers to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander SCH staff participating in NAIDOC Week Activities.	<b>2nd &amp; 3rd Quarter</b> (October 2023 – March 2024)	Lead: Human Resources Manager  Team: Human Resources
	8.2 Encourage members of our local ATAC to participate in NAIDOC Week activities.	<b>4th Quarter</b> (April, May & June 2024)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Communities Assist
	8.3 Develop a NAIDOC Week working group to provide advice and support for regional and Nowra based NAIDOC Celebrations through the ATAC in Nowra/Bega	<b>3rd &amp; 4th Quarter</b> (January 2024 – June 2024)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Communities Assist
	8.4 Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	<b>4th Quarter</b> (April, May & June 2024)	Lead: Human Resources Manager  Team: Human Resources



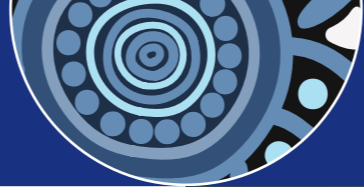
# Opportunities

Southern Cross Housing works with first nation peoples, organisations and communities to provide access to opportunities in business, work, training and development. Southern Cross Housing acknowledges that social inclusion for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples enriches us all and creates opportunity for new ways of thinking, learning and innovation.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>9</b> Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	9.1 Update HR policy to ensure all job advertisements include a statement to encourage Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples to apply for positions.	<b>1st Quarter</b> (July, August & September 2023)	Lead: Human Resources Manager
	9.2 Develop an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employment and retention plan to inform future employment.	<b>1st &amp; 2nd Quarter</b> (July 2023 – December 2023)	Team: Human Resources
<b>10</b> Increase Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	10.1 Develop an understanding of the current market that could be accessed by SCH to procure goods & services from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander specific companies. Explore opportunities to join an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander business collective such as Supply Nation.	<b>2nd Quarter</b> (October, November & December 2023)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Assets & Finance
<b>11</b> Decrease the proportion of exits from Southern Cross Housing associated with eviction, overcrowding and/or NCAT proceedings by 5%	11.1 Build business case for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander specialist role within Southern Cross Housing.	<b>1st Quarter</b> (July, August & September 2023)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Communities Assist & Human Resources
	11.2 Strengthen SCH’s lease sign up process to facilitate early intervention and active referrals to support services for at risk tenancies	<b>3rd &amp; 4th Quarter</b> (January 2024 – June 2024)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Corporate Services
	11.3 Conduct an analysis of overcrowding in SCH properties and produce a report that evaluates the factors, identify strategies & proposes interventions to reduce exits that are caused by overcrowding. The report will also seek to establish what cultural factors are associated with suitable housing size needs in SCH properties.	<b>2nd Quarter</b> (October, November & December 2023)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Communities Assist

# Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>12</b> Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive implementation and evaluation of this RAP.	12.1 Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	<b>1st Quarter</b> (July, August & September 2023)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Communities Assist
	12.2 Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	<b>1st Quarter</b> (July, August & September 2023)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: RWG
	12.3 Establish Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	<b>1st Quarter</b> (July, August & September 2023)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Communities Assist
<b>13</b> Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	13.1 Define resource needs for RAP implementation	<b>1st Quarter</b> (July, August & September 2023)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: RWG
	13.2 Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	<b>1st to 3rd Quarters</b> (July 2023 -March 2024)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager
	13.3 Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	<b>1st Quarter</b> (July, August & September 2023)	Team: Communities Assist
	13.4 Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	<b>1st to 3rd Quarters</b> (July 2023 – March 2024)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Teams: RWG & Communities Assist



Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>14</b> Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	14.1 Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	<b>1st Quarter &amp; 4th Quarter</b> (July 2023 & July 2024)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: RWG
	14.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	<b>4th Quarter</b> (August 2024)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Communities Assist
	14.3 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	<b>4th Quarter</b> (August 2024)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: Communities Assist
<b>15</b> Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	15.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP.	<b>4th Quarter</b> (July, August, September 2024)	Lead: Communities Assist Manager  Team: RWG & Communities Assist





# Southern Cross Housing

## Southern Cross Housing

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**ABN:** 50 307 328 813



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Acknowledgement of country  
[www.buruminart.com](http://www.buruminart.com)