



Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

February 2024 – February 2026

Pictured: Mater Mother Jamie-Lee
with newborn Kayden

Cover: Dr Jon Farrah with patient Ian
Delaney who has had the gift of sight
returned to them thanks to a partnership
between the Institute of Urban Indigenous
Health (IUIH) and Mater



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Cultural Disclaimer: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document may contain images or content referring to deceased persons. It may also contain words or descriptions that may be deemed culturally insensitive. Whilst we take every effort to ensure we use the term Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, there may be instances where we use the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, for example, in reference to a specific program or organisation.

The Heart to Heal, The Strength to Grow.

Our spirit is strong, it thrives
as we embrace those whom
we must always care for.

Our journey has been long
and we will continue to flourish
as we open our hearts to those
who walk with us. **Always.**

This artwork concept and narrative was
developed by David Williams. David is a
proud Wakka Wakka artist at Gilimbaa.

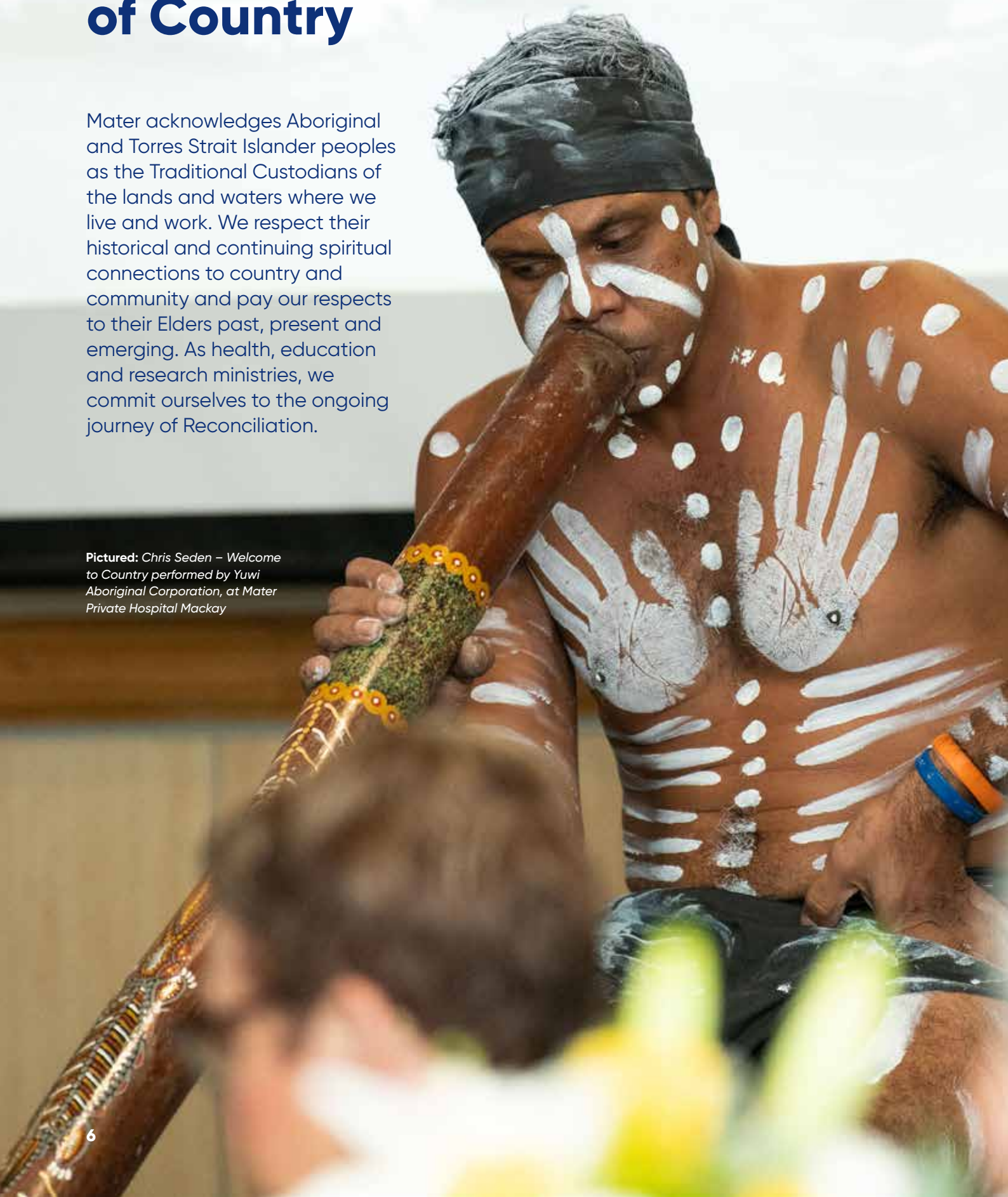




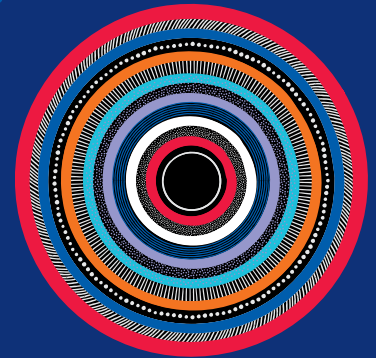
Acknowledgement of Country

Mater acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work. We respect their historical and continuing spiritual connections to country and community and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. As health, education and research ministries, we commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

Pictured: Chris Seden – Welcome to Country performed by Yuwi Aboriginal Corporation, at Mater Private Hospital Mackay



Reflection



Reconciliation is about bringing people together. It focuses on all people striving for a society of right relationships.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander understanding of the sacredness of all creation, partnered with the divine spirit of a creator, resonates with the Mercy charism which inspires Mater.

Relationships that foster health improvements are vital if we are to create better pathways to a more promising future. A true partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples enhances the lives of all Australians.

Prayer of Aboriginal People

Father of all, you gave us the Dreaming.
You have spoken to us through our beliefs.
You then made your love clear to us
in the person of Jesus.

We thank you for your care. You own us.
You are our hope. Make us strong
as we face the problems of change.

We ask you to help the people of Australia
to listen to us and respect our culture.

Make the knowledge of you grow strong in all
people, so that you can be at home in us and
we can make a home for everyone in our land.

Amen.

Aboriginal people composed this prayer for St Pope John Paul II's visit to Australia in 1986. This prayer is now prayed in many Catholic Aboriginal groups around the country.

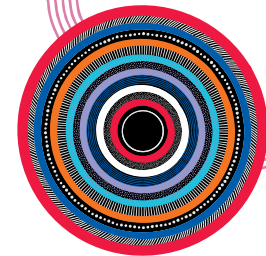
"The God who creates the world also invites people into becoming fully human in their togetherness, embodying right relationships with God and neighbour and thus creating a truly human community."

Mercy Partners Theological Framework



Pictured: Mater Early Learning's kindergarten cohort performing for National Reconciliation Week

Message from Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia commends Mater on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Mater to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Mater will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Mater is part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and

not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Mater's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Mater on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.



Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Message from Mater's RAP Co-Chairs

As Mater's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is presented, I extend my appreciation to Reconciliation Australia for providing a framework for Mater to undertake this important journey.

Mater has been practising the principles of reconciliation for many years through our Mission to respond to unmet community need, however, this further development of the RAP enables us to articulate our goals and to create a clear pathway to the future.

We are committed to achieving meaningful progress in all five of Reconciliation Australia's priority dimensions: Race Relations; Equality and Equity; Institutional Integrity; Unity, and Historical Acceptance.

Since embarking on our RAP journey, we have implemented several initiatives to drive positive and meaningful change across our state-wide network. While we are proud of what we have achieved, we acknowledge there is much more to do.

Mater's Innovate RAP will build on our existing initiatives and will inspire Mater People to be a catalyst for further change.

At the heart of our RAP is a willingness to embrace diversity, foster opportunity, strengthen relationships, and encourage self-determination.

Mater's commitment to reconciliation is sustained by the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy and their tireless endeavours to bring hope, compassion, respect and justice in our world.

By fostering a culturally safe and inclusive workplace that embraces diversity and celebrates our national

heritage, Mater can provide an environment for the growth of authentic and genuine reconciliation amongst all Mater People—our staff, students and volunteers—as well as our patients and the communities we serve.

We will continue to promote and enact reconciliation through the provision of education and employment opportunities that empower First Nations people to pursue careers in healthcare.

Genuine, enduring relationships and partnerships with Traditional Custodians, Elders and communities are fundamental to understanding the issues impacting the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the health inequities they face.

The path to reconciliation is a long one. Every step along the way is important. Mater is committed to action and to playing our part in writing a new chapter in the story of Australia – a modern nation proud of its diverse, rich cultural heritage and identity.



Dr Peter Steer
Group Chief Executive, Mater
Co-Chair, Reconciliation Action Plan
Steering Committee, Mater



I am honoured to co-chair the Steering Committee for Mater's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2026.

Reconciliation is a continuous and evolving process that requires the active participation of all. To advance reconciliation, we must foster mutual respect, understanding, and dialogue, acknowledging past and ongoing inequalities and racism.

As a key healthcare provider operating across the State, Mater has a significant role to play in our reconciliation journey. Reconciliation demands our collective effort, and I am proud of the partnership between Mater and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) and the real and positive impacts we are making for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in South East Queensland (SEQ).

IUIH is the regional 'backbone' organisation in a network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) in SEQ. The IUIH Network operates an integrated health service model, which is aligned with our communities' aspirations for holistic care, that places Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the centre.

Working with key healthcare providers like Mater is integral to improving our people's health outcomes.

Mater's commendable and ongoing commitment to advancing First Nations health outcomes is reflected in collaborations including, but not limited to, the SEQ First Nations Health Equity Strategy, Cataract Surgery Project and Birthing in Our Communities (BiOC) – a joint initiative that has seen unprecedented outcomes for Indigenous babies born through the program, including a 50% reduction in

preterm birth rates, and reduced need for subsequent interventions, procedures and neonatal admissions. Not only has this seen a cost savings of \$4,810 per mother and baby and improved health outcomes; newly published research demonstrates BiOC mothers are also three times less likely to have their child removed at birth by Child Safety.

These initiatives are making a difference.

The Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, a pivotal initiative in Mater's ongoing engagement with the First Nations peoples of Queensland, is a testament to Mater's pledge to work with First Nations communities and the ACCHO sector in Queensland to close the gap in health outcomes. I am privileged to be part of this work and urge you to maintain your commitment to this crucial endeavour



Adrian Carson

Chief Executive Officer,
Institute for Urban Indigenous Health
Co-Chair, Mater Reconciliation
Action Plan Steering Committee



Our vision for reconciliation

Mater is committed to working towards genuine and sustainable reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our wider communities, to deepen our understanding and genuine appreciation of First Nations peoples.

Our vision for a reconciled Australia is culturally rich and inclusive, acknowledges and understands our shared history, and aims to heal and remove barriers for the future. We are working to embed this perspective into Mater's strategic operations through meaningful and ongoing actions that have a practical and lasting impact.

We believe we all have a role to play when it comes to reconciliation.

By living out Mater's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, our goal is that all Mater People – our staff, students, and volunteers – become culturally aware and conscious of the efforts we can make individually to close the gap.

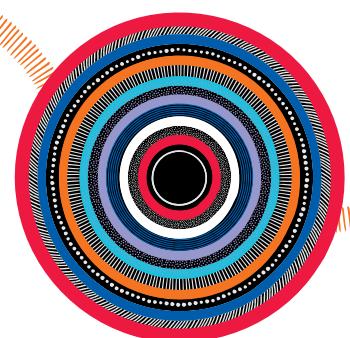
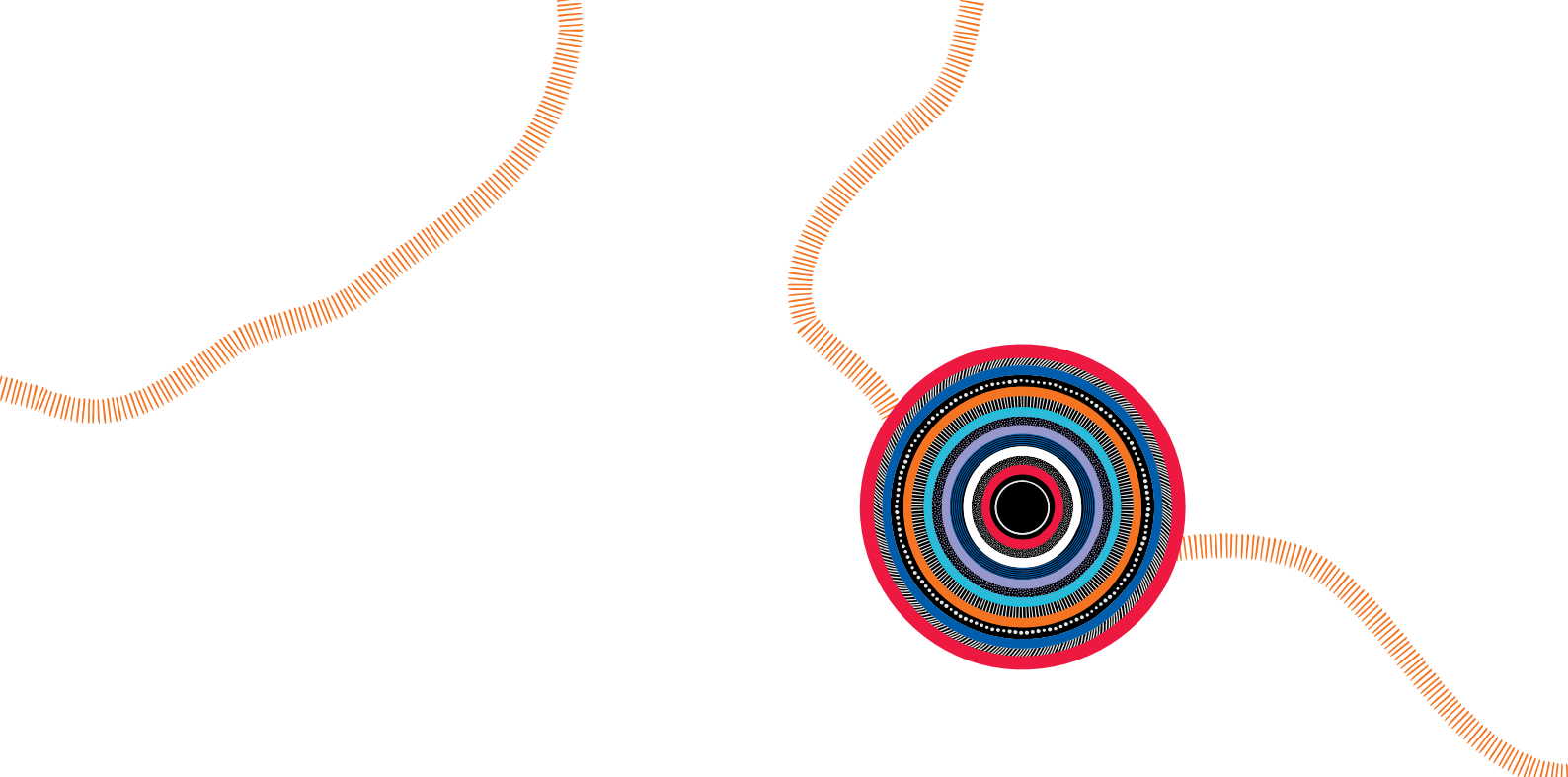
As an organisation, we will realise this goal by building on relations with community stakeholders, while striving to improve accessibility to culturally safe healthcare services, education and employment opportunities, and self-determined health research.

Pictured: Lactation Consultant Kate Maynard, Manager Mandy Carr and Physiotherapist Karyn Devlin, Mater Health Hub Springfield



Our Mission – Our Business





Mater is Queensland's largest not-for-profit healthcare provider, operating a network of public and private hospitals and healthcare services across the state. Bringing together our collective expertise across health, education, and research, we are dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve.



Our Mission:

We serve together to bring God's mercy to our communities through compassionate, transforming, healing ministries.



Our Vision:

Empowering people to live better lives through improved health and wellbeing.



Our Values:

- We honour and promote the dignity of human life and of all creation
- We act with compassion and integrity
- We strive for excellence.

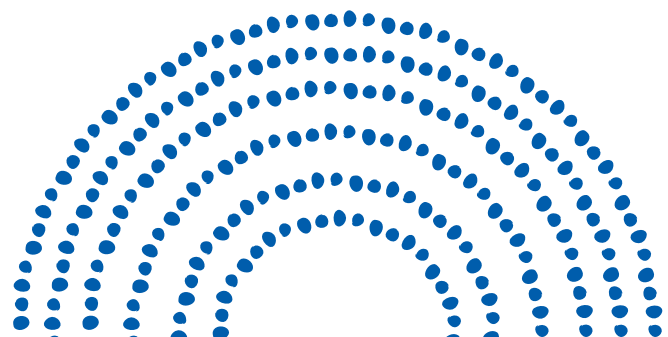
For more than a century, Mater's Mission has been to respond to unmet community need and provide care to those who need it most. Delivering on this Mission, Mater operates 15 hospitals across seven hubs in Queensland and responds to the needs of more than 700,000 people each year, including many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Our geographic reach spans:

- Townsville - Bindal and Wulgurukaba Nations
- Mackay - Yuwi Nation
- Rockhampton - Darumbal Nation
- Bundaberg - Taribelang Nation
- Redlands - Qandamooka Nation
- South Brisbane - Yuggera and Turrbul Nations
- Springfield - Jagera, Yuggera and Ugargpul People

We employ more than 10,000 staff, students and volunteers. In recent years, we have captured more information about our workforce as part of our new onboarding process to allow us to better understand our employees – including whether they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Although not representative of our entire workforce, the current data suggests this population represents approximately 0.4% of our workforce.

In light of this, we are implementing a Cultural Awareness and Identification Campaign with the aim of capturing data across our entire workforce, while continuing to ensure this information is obtained for all new starters upon commencement.



Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) allows us to view the Mater landscape through the lens of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We are working to embed this perspective into Mater's strategic operations in meaningful and ongoing ways.

This approach allows all Mater People to engage in open dialogue, develop cohesive strategies underpinned by cultural safety, and help close the gap across our sphere of influence.

We are establishing collaborative partnerships with all Mater People and the wider community through sustained engagement and action. We aim to share responsibilities and facilitate activities to transform our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Mater is seeking to embed holistic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance into its usual business practices to facilitate self-determination.

Our RAP Steering Committee comprises a mix of internal and external stakeholders, including Mater's Executive Leadership team and representatives from peak bodies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

The committee meets quarterly and is championed by Mater Group Chief Executive, Dr Peter Steer, who co-chairs Institute of Urban Indigenous Health CEO Adrian Carson. This committee is responsible for ensuring reconciliation is embedded in Mater's decision-making framework.

Mater's RAP Steering Committee comprises 13 members, including four who identify as Aboriginal people.

Mater representatives:

- Group Chief Executive
- Chief of Mission
- Executive Director, Health Integration and Community Care
- Executive Director, Corporate Affairs
- Executive Director, People and Learning
- Director of Philanthropy, Mater Foundation
- Principal Research Fellow, Mater Research
- Executive Director/s, Mater Health
- Reconciliation Action Plan Manager

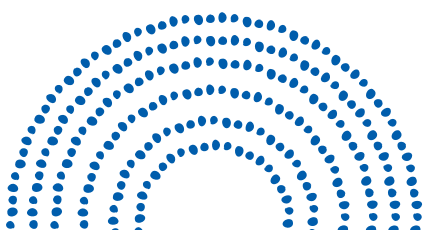
External representatives

- CEO, Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH)
- CEO, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC)
- Operations Director – Inala Indigenous Health Service, Queensland Health
- AM Deputy Vice Chancellor (Indigenous, Diversity and Inclusion), Griffith University

Additionally, we have a RAP Reference Group comprising of 30 representatives from across each of Mater's ministries and facilities, and including five who identify as being Aboriginal people. Meeting monthly, the reference group provides a whole-of-organisation approach to implementing the RAP. The group reports up to the Steering Committee via the RAP Program Manager and is responsible for activating organisation-wide reconciliation initiatives and activities, championing cultural change through grassroots initiatives.

Jo Jones, Mater's RAP Program Manager, said: "We are delivering this RAP to make changes both within and outside the workplace, by providing all Mater staff with the opportunity to make a difference and to take personal responsibility to help achieve reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians."

The following case studies demonstrate recent initiatives and milestones in our ongoing commitment to reconciliation.





Pictured: Wulgurukaba Walkabouts
at Mater Private Hospital Townsville



Relationships

Mater has a strategic vision to empower people to live better lives through improved health and wellbeing. Mater's commitment to spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, and social wellbeing will become a reality through developing relationships that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations across Mater's statewide facilities to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	June 2024	RAP Program Manager
	• Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	June 2024	RAP Program Manager
	• Implement a register to identify current partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.	June 2024	RAP Program Manager
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024, 2025	Manager, Communication and Engagement
	• RAP Steering Committee members to champion and participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2024 and 2025	RAP Steering Committee Co-chairs
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders across all facilities to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2024 and 2025	RAP Program Manager
	• Organise at least one NRW event each year per facility.	27 May – 3 June 2024 and 2025	Manager, Communication and Engagement
	• Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2024 and 2025	Manager, Communication and Engagement
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	September 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation and develop an engagement plan for publicity.	April 2024	Manager, Communication and Engagement
	• Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	January 2025	RAP Program Manager
	• Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	October 2025	RAP Program Manager
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	• Conduct a review of HR (Human Resources) policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	September 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	September 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	November 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	December 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning

Mater Researcher Loretta Weatherall is using her voice to help future generations



Loretta Weatherall is a proud Gamilaraay woman, who has spent over 10 years delivering and promoting education and health programs in First Peoples communities. She has brought her passion for helping her fellow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to Mater Research in her role as Indigenous Research Assistant for the Indigenous Queensland Family Cohort program (IQFC).

The IQFC is a longitudinal study, launched at Mater's South Brisbane health campus in 2022, which aims to examine and enhance understanding of the serious health issues faced by First Peoples, and improve perinatal and early childhood outcomes. The study identifies First Peoples families during pregnancy and will monitor health and wellbeing of participating mothers, babies, and fathers over five years.

"In my job, I recruit participants into the IQFC, and I follow them on their journey within the study by staying in touch with participants and building their trust. I also collect their biological samples for our biobank, which is an enormous collection of human samples.

"I'm really passionate about improving health outcomes in Queensland for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families," Loretta said.

Loretta said that she never thought she would work in health, however her goal is to use her skills to become a role model for Indigenous women.

"I worked in the local court system in my hometown of Walgett before moving into health. I am the kind of person who can work anywhere and like it, if I

am helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people," Loretta said.

Loretta's first foray into research came when she was living in Tamworth and working at a university in a role supporting academics. It was here that she met Associate Professor Kym Rae, who now leads the IQFC program at Mater Research.

"Kym came to me and asked me to design a book for the participants of a study she was running. I asked her about her research, and she told me about how what we do as a mum affects our babies. I was really interested in learning more, and from there I joined the research team," Loretta said.

"At first, I found research challenging, and it took a long time to recruit participants as I was not a Tamworth local, so had to build trust with the community. I engaged with the young mums I was recruiting, and I am still in touch with a lot of them today. My first ever participant has become a friend and her 'baby' is now in Year 7!"

"I am so passionate about my culture and about closing the gap, not just in health, in everything.

"So many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids fear the academic world. I want to be a mentor and teach them that they can do whatever they want to do if they put their mind to it. I want them to remember to keep trying, and that if people tell them they cannot do something, to say 'I can and I will!'".

The 2023 theme for National Reconciliation Week was "Be a voice for generations", and for Loretta, being a voice for generations means speaking up and remembering and respecting everything her ancestors went through.

"Always speak up, and always know about and be proud of where you come from and what your ancestors did. We are one of the strongest living cultures because we have been through so much. For our people to be able to keep voicing our opinions and being heard shows that we are strong, and we are still here.

"I have two daughters who are now in their 20s. I have always taught them about their culture and not to forget where they came from. It is important to me that they are involved with NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee) events and understand things like the intergenerational trauma of the stolen generation. I did not want them growing up and not knowing our culture. You just cannot take things for granted.

"The work of the IQFC and our focus on First Peoples Communities is just another way we are giving our voice for our generation. I am proud that our research will drive greater understanding into health issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and provide interventions to improve outcomes for our communities."

Pictured: Indigenous Research Assistant Loretta Weatherall and Principal Research Fellow in Indigenous Health, Associate Professor Kym Rae, Mater Research



Respect

Through compassion, Mater promotes mutual respect. Being authentic and respectful in our engagement ensures knowledge is shared comprehensively and inclusively. Mater is committed to increasing its understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and practices, to ensure mutual respect, and the delivery of compassionate and culturally safe care.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	May 2024	Director, Learning and Development
	• Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	May 2024	Director, Learning and Development
	• Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	September 2024	Director, Learning and Development
	• Provide opportunities for RAP Steering Committee, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	May 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Implement education and development programs to increase cultural awareness amongst staff.	May 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance of cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	May 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural protocol document, including Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols.	May 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	January 2024	Manager, Communication and Engagement
	• Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	October 2025	Executive Director, People and Learning
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• RAP Steering Committee and Reference Group members to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024 and 2025	RAP Steering Committee Co-chairs RAP Program Manager
	• Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	June 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July 2024 and 2025	RAP Program Manager
8. Establish culturally sensitive processes and protocols for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	• Enhance capacity of Mater's dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Team to deliver culturally sensitive services to Indigenous patients.	April 2024	Team Lead, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Services
	• Establish culturally relevant leadership and mentorship roles to help nurture trust and respect amongst research participants and students.	September 2024	Principal Research Fellow, Mater Research

Mater's next generation wrapped in love for National Reconciliation Week

For the first time hundreds of newborns born at Mater hospitals across Queensland, like tiny identical twin sisters Emma and Sophia, were gifted specially designed swaddles featuring Aboriginal artwork during 2023's National Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June).

The soft cotton symbolic swaddles were gifted to families to further strengthen Mater's relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and continue to build respect for their culture, history, and knowledge.

Queensland artist and Wakka Wakka man David Williams created the artwork for Mater to tell the story of the healthcare organisation's history and commitment to reconciliation.

Now the artwork, entitled *The Heart to Heal, the Strength to Grow*, has been used to create a keepsake for the next generation.

Brighton parents Bevan and Mary welcomed their identical twin girls Emma and Sophia seven weeks early at Mater Mothers' Hospital in South Brisbane and

said the swaddles were a beautiful gift that would be cherished forever.

"The designs are really great," Bevan said.

Forest Lake's parents Skye, 27, and Daniel, 26, also welcomed their identical twin girls Amethyst (2.06kg) and Luna (2.1kg) seven weeks early and described the swaddles as a "celebration" of their newborn baby girls.

First-time dad Daniel, who identifies as Torres Strait Islander, said the swaddles were vibrant and meaningful.

"Fatherhood so far has been unreal and to be given a gift for both the girls that is so rich in history is really special," he said.

Mater Reconciliation Action Plan Program Manager Jo Jones said: "Elders within the community have said the gift of the swaddles is Mater showing reconciliation to our First Nations people, closing the gap for us with all nationalities."

Ms Jones said the unique swaddles signified Mater's culturally safe environment.

"The swaddle is another element of visual artwork sharing Mater's history and expressing to the community that our door is open, everyone is welcome, and no one gets left behind," she said.

Ms Jones said Mater's spirit was strong and "continues to thrive as we embrace those who we must always care for."

"Wrap your beloved babies, let them feel safe and secure."

Pictured: *Identical twins Emma and Sophie Hall born at Mater Mothers' Hospital during National Reconciliation Week*





Opportunities

Mater creates culturally immersive environments that nurture the career aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We respond to and meet the needs of individuals, families and communities through employment, contracts, and partnerships.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	April 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	May 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	June 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	July 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
	• Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	June 2024	Executive Director, People and Learning
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	September 2024	Director, Procurement and Supply Chain
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	February 2024	Director, Procurement and Supply Chain
	• Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	June 2024	Director, Procurement and Supply Chain
	• Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2025	Director, Procurement and Supply Chain
	• Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	October 2024	Director, Procurement and Supply Chain
11. Nurture career pathways and skills for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	• Expand delivery of dedicated health career information days for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students to learn about career options and opportunities in healthcare.	June 2024 and 2025	Executive Director, Education
	• Continue to provide scholarship opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to pursue a healthcare career, through Mater Education's Diploma of Nursing qualification.	January, April, July, October 2024 and 2025	Executive Director, Education

First Nations students inspired to pursue career in healthcare

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from across Southeast Queensland have experienced a day in the life of a physiotherapist thanks to a new pilot program at Mater Hospital Brisbane.

The school-based trainees from the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, Pathways Our Way Academy (POWA) were part of The High School Health Adventure program for First Nations students, run by Mater Education, in conjunction with Mater Physiotherapy.

Mater physiotherapist Felicity Prebble facilitated the program and said that, according to the Australian Physiotherapy Association, only 0.7% of physiotherapists are recognised as a First Nations person.

"Increasing the representation of this population in healthcare is vital to ensure we are delivering considered and specific healthcare," Mrs Prebble said.

"Research has shown that increasing the involvement of First Nations people within healthcare delivers positive outcomes, helping to close the gap and leading to increased cultural awareness, understanding and exposure."

Mater Foundation has provided \$10,000 to fund the program for First Nations high school students, with the aim of increasing representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the healthcare workforce.

Mater Reconciliation Action Plan Manager Jo Jones said it was important to provide opportunities to First Nations students to learn and understand the day-to-day role of a healthcare practitioner, and to explore career pathways and opportunities.

Director of Mater Physiotherapy Michelle Grant said it was important to open the door to career pathways which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may not have had exposure to.

"The program is a great way for students to experience first-hand what working in the healthcare field may look like," Ms Grant said.

Pictured: Mater physiotherapist Felicity Prebble with school-based trainees from the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health's Pathways Our Way Academy (POWA) program





Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Establish and maintain an effective Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group to drive governance of the Reconciliation Action Plan.	• Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Reference Group	April 2024	RAP Reference Group Chair
	• Review and apply a Terms of Reference for the RAP Reference Group.	February 2024	RAP Reference Group Chair
	• Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	February, June, October, December 2024 and 2025	RAP Reference Group Chair
13. Establish ongoing engagement with local Elders and Traditional Custodians.	• Establish and implement engagement strategies with local Elders and Traditional Owners as key stakeholders to increase cultural sensitivity amongst leaders and strengthen ongoing relationships with community.	September 2024	RAP Program Manager
14. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP Innovate implementation.	January 2024	RAP Program Manager
	• Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	February 2024	RAP Program Manager
	• Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March 2024	RAP Program Manager
	• Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	March 2024	RAP Reference Group Chair
15. Build accountability and transparency through reporting Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss important <i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i> correspondence.	June 2024 and 2025	RAP Program Manager
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August 2024 and 2025	RAP Program Manager
	• Complete and submit the annual <i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i> Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	RAP Program Manager
	• Report <i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i> progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	March, June, September, December 2024 and 2025	RAP Program Manager
	• Publicly report our <i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i> achievements, challenges, and learnings, annually.	October 2024 and 2025	RAP Program Manager
	• Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace <i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i> Barometer.	May 2024	RAP Program Manager
	• Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this <i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i> .	February 2026	RAP Program Manager
	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next <i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i> .	April 2025	RAP Program Manager

Unique birthing program closes the gap for First Nations families



A unique Southeast Queensland birthing initiative has made significant inroads in closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and their babies, dramatically improving maternal and infant health outcomes.

Birthing in Our Community (BiOC) is a multi-agency partnership program between Brisbane's Mater Mothers' Hospital and two local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health services – the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane (ATSICHS Brisbane).

The program provides comprehensive and culturally safe maternal and infant health services, which contribute to 'closing the gap' in maternal and infant health outcomes in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The BiOC model has demonstrated a reduction in preterm births, nursery admissions and low birthweight, helping to close the gap in outcomes for First Nations babies.

Mater Chief Medical Officer Associate Professor Mike Beckmann says it reflects Mater's commitment to meeting the unmet needs of the community.

"It is difficult to come up with a greater unmet need than the health inequality of Australia's First Nations peoples," Prof Beckmann said.

"The outcomes achieved over the past 10 years are impressive and represent years of reciprocal relationship to redesign the ways of caring to truly meet the needs of First Nations women and families."

The BiOC program integrates the midwifery services and expertise of the Mater Mothers' Hospital – Australia's largest and leading maternity services provider – with the expertise of IUIH (Institute of Urban Indigenous Health) and ATSICHS Brisbane in leading service reform, enabling a unique approach to delivery.

Prof Beckmann said the expertise that each partner organisation brings to the table through a reciprocal relationship has made BiOC a success.

"It's promoted a move towards a model that is about community, that is safe and engaging and is about health in the truest sense of the word," Prof Beckmann said.

"Health and wellbeing should be much more than hospitals – it is feeling safe, connected, and understood.

"It's about meeting your physical needs as well as your emotional, psychological, spiritual and cultural needs, and that's exactly what this program does."

IUIH CEO Adrian Carson said improved outcomes demonstrate the success of Aboriginal community-controlled health services (ACCHSs) leading system reform with mainstream maternity services, such as Mater.

"The ACCHS (Aboriginal community-controlled health services) sector has long advocated that models of care specifically designed for First Nations people and delivered by ACCHSs can achieve better outcomes for our people and be more cost-effective," Mr Carson said.

"The model is achieving preterm birth rates for First Nations families that are better

than those achieved by the Australian health system for the general population.

"Supporting its expansion makes sense from both a healthcare delivery and economic perspective."

ATSICHS Brisbane CEO Renee Blackman said the success of the BiOC program shows what can be achieved when partners work together with a shared vision and a commitment to Aboriginal-led models of care.

"Investing in developing an Indigenous workforce to support women has been key to keeping women engaged in the program and also supports employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the region," Ms Blackman said.

"Every mum at BiOC gets their own midwife 24/7 working side by side with a multidisciplinary workforce to make sure all our women feel confident and safe to access the care they need for themselves and their bub."

Former landscaper Natalie Page said she benefitted from the program when she fell pregnant with her third daughter Unarra.

"Having constant support brought me a lot of comfort," Natalie, from Beaudesert, said.

"They have provided so many services, including transport to medical appointments and have been there to help provide milk and bread if needed," she said.

Pictured: BiOC patient Natalie Page and her three daughters



**Mater welcomes community
feedback or questions regarding
our Reconciliation Action Plan.**

Please contact our Reconciliation
Action Plan Manager.

rap@mater.org.au
0492 274 735



