



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

STRETCH

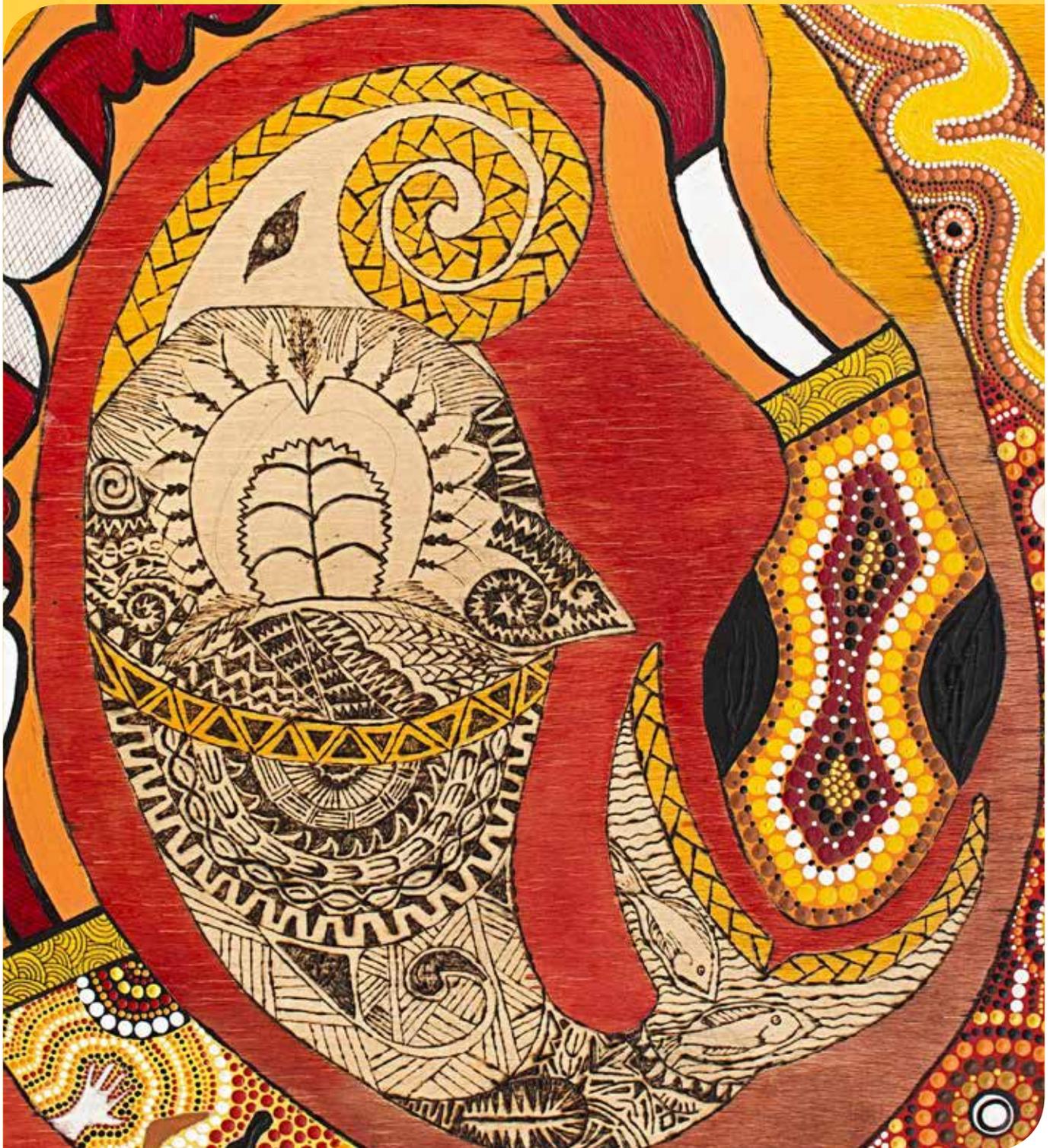
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

JULY 2017 – JUNE 2020



The Smith
Family

everyone's family





Artist Ayesha Woibo with her artwork *Burnt Culture*, coloured ink and acrylic paint on wood

Ayesha Woibo

Learning for Life student and artist

My name is Ayesha Woibo, I was born and raised in Cairns, Far North Queensland. It was in my two last years of high school I truly found a love for art. I never really thought of myself as artistically inclined or talented in arts, however I've always loved art and am always fascinated and moved by how art could be expressed and interpreted in many different ways. A big part of me relies on my culture as inspiration. Being Aboriginal has influenced a lot of the choices I have made throughout my life. I chose to study a degree in Health as I know how important it is for my people to receive better access to health education, resources and facilities. I moved to Townsville in 2015, after graduating from Year 12, to study a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy at university. The move away from my family was difficult but the opportunity the degree offers for me and my people excites me.

I come from a very small immediate family, however my extended family is huge. I was an only child raised by a single mother. My mum has done a lot for me, actually an extreme amount for me. She is the reason I applied for The Smith's Family scholarship. Being a part of the Smith Family has been a great financial support and assisted me a lot when starting university and moving away to another town.

Leaving school and starting university was a really big step in my life and I guess it wasn't a journey I was really prepared for. Leaving home you have to build your own support system and make your own connections. I did miss the security of school and home but had to train myself to know that I was there for a bigger reason. I did miss my art class that I learnt was a place I could express myself in a way that felt beautiful to me. Art to me was a way I could explore who I was as a person and what made me unique. In the last piece I did, called "*Burnt Culture*" I linked the two longest living cultures of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, using a dugong to represent the Torres Strait Islander peoples and a snake to represent Aboriginal people. As an Aboriginal woman I understand that each clan, tribe and language group holds different beliefs, ceremonies and ways of living. I embraced what I found unique from both cultures and wove them as one in *Burnt Culture*. The traditional dot painting was inspired by Northern Territory artists and the traditional markings I saw in many Torres Strait Island artworks.

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Photograph acknowledgement:
A number of photographs have been used in this Reconciliation Action Plan which have been taken by The Smith Family during a range of community events.

The Smith Family would like to acknowledge that these photographs have been approved for use by those people, and or their parents or guardians, depicted in the images. The Smith Family greatly appreciates this support which enhances our documents. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those people for their generosity of spirit - thank you one and all.

Statistics:
The statistics found in this document are current as at 30 June 2016.

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THE SMITH FAMILY

I pay respect to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connection to their lands, waters and communities. I pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

Our 2017–2020 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is The Smith Family's third RAP. It signals our continued commitment to supporting Australia's First Peoples to self-determination through our actions, and to addressing the education inequities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This plan continues those commitments and details practical actions The Smith Family will take to build strong relationships, create opportunities through our corporate action and build ongoing respect between cultures.

In developing our RAP, I acknowledge especially the support provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I thank all of the stakeholders and The Smith Family team members involved in developing our RAP. I thank Reconciliation Australia for their leadership and focus on continuous improvement in helping us work with through our RAPs.



Dr Lisa O'Brien
Chief Executive Officer
The Smith Family

RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia congratulates The Smith Family on its deep commitment to reconciliation as it implements its third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The implementation of a Stretch RAP signifies that The Smith Family is a leading advocate for reconciliation, and is demonstrating a deep dedication to making progress across the key pillars of the RAP program - respect, relationships, and opportunities.

The Smith Family understands the importance of building and maintaining respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in order to produce mutually beneficial outcomes. It champions these relationships by promoting and celebrating community events, such as National Reconciliation Week (NRW), and commits to hosting at least two internal NRW events per year.

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures is key to The Smith Family's core values and vision for reconciliation. This is exemplified by its aim to deliver a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, which is to be updated annually.

The Smith Family is dedicated to driving reconciliation through employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as demonstrated by its actionable goal to ensure that a minimum of 15% of students participating in its *'Learning for Life'* program are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend The Smith Family on its Stretch RAP, and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.



Justin Mohamed
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



The Smith Family approach

THE CONTEXT FOR THIS RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

At the heart of our policy approach is the principle of working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve educational outcomes. In this work we note the key principles, articles and guiding statements contained in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We share a commitment to the achievement of the Closing the Gap targets in the areas of Education and Employment and we will continue our best efforts to contribute to their achievement.

ABOUT THE SMITH FAMILY

Originally established in 1922 to provide traditional welfare services, today The Smith Family is a children's education charity helping young Australians in need to get the most out of their education, so they can create better futures for themselves.

With nine decades of experience and strong partnerships with corporate supporters, donors, sponsors and volunteers underpinning its work, The Smith Family delivers programs in 94 communities across Australia and employs over 650 team members, with 6 (1%) identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

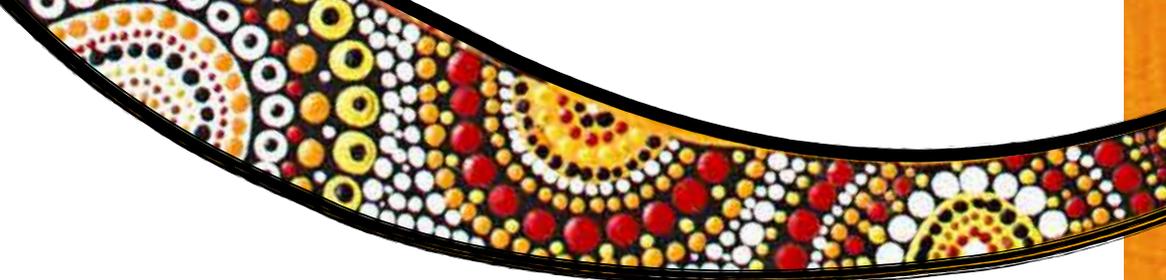
The organisation focuses on supporting the education of disadvantaged children and young people, recognising that the effects of family disadvantage go beyond the home environment. Disadvantage can negatively affect a child's school years and mean that children are less likely to achieve the educational outcomes they need to build a better future for themselves.

Gaps in educational achievement between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers start to appear in the first year of school. These gaps continue to widen as children move through school.

The level of educational attainment a young person achieves is an important predictor of their future life prospects. Young people who complete Year 12 for example, have a better chance of being employed throughout their adult life and are less likely to be dependent on welfare, than their peers who do not complete school.

While reaching and completing Year 12 is significantly harder for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, a young person's pathway through life does not have to be pre-determined.

Research shows that providing targeted long-term educational support at every stage of child's educational journey is an effective way of helping young people growing up in disadvantage to achieve better educational outcomes.



HOW WE HELP

The Smith Family starts working with families when their children are young, supporting parents to gain skills to nurture their children's early literacy and numeracy and prepare them for school. Then during the primary and secondary school years we provide targeted support to students through the provision of financial assistance to help with education-related expenses and access to extra personal support and outside-of-school learning programs.

The long term support and wrap-around approach delivered through our *Learning for Life* program helps disadvantaged young people to overcome the barriers that can negatively affect their educational and life outcomes. In 2016 the program reached over 33,000 students in need.

Through the program students receive financial support from sponsors to help cover the cost of education-related expenses such as uniforms, books and school excursions. Each sponsored student is also linked to a Family Partnerships Coordinator who connects them to local learning, skills building and mentoring programs. Family Partnership Coordinators also work with families, their schools and communities so that parents – the biggest influencers on children – can gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to effectively support their child's learning journey.

For every student on the *Learning for Life* program we measure their progress against three key long-term outcomes – school attendance, Year 12 completion and post-school engagement in employment, education or training.

The principle of working collaboratively with communities and families is critical to the success of any support provided and is an underpinning principle for our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples.

This RAP recognises that in general, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve significantly poorer educational outcomes than their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers.

Many of these young Australians face multiple and complex social challenges that can affect their ability to succeed at school. For some, their school readiness, attendance rates and educational achievement levels are below those of other disadvantaged young people, resulting in large gaps in educational outcomes and subsequently poorer life outcomes.

When communities, educational providers and governments work together, these students can be better supported to achieve educational outcomes.

We will ensure that 15% or more of students participating in our *Learning for Life* program are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background. We will facilitate the *Indigenous Youth Leadership Project (IYLP)* funded through the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Indigenous Advancement Strategy. *IYLP* supports secondary students from remote communities to attend high-performing academic schools where they can access opportunities and experiences that help them learn about career pathways and to develop positive aspirations for their futures.

our vision

A better future for young Australians in need.

our belief

Every child deserves a chance.

our Mission

To create opportunities for young Australians in need by providing long-term support for their participation in education.

our vision for Reconciliation

As a large not for profit organisation, The Smith Family recognises our role in providing sector leadership to create a fairer and more equitable society for all Australians. The Smith Family's vision for reconciliation is a nation where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children fully benefit from the education and learning opportunities that this nation has to offer and are truly valued as the First Peoples of Australia through a deep respect and understanding by the broader Australian community.

The *Deadly Little Learners* Playgroup in Palmerston, Northern Territory, has a strong focus on celebrating, sharing and exploring Aboriginal culture. Pictured: Layla and Tahlana

