

Merri Outreach Support Service

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan
August 2022 – August 2023



Acknowledgment of Country

**Merri Outreach Support Service acknowledges the
Wurundjeri people, the traditional owners of the
Kulin Nations and custodians of the lands on which
we work and pay our respects to
Indigenous Elders past, present and emerging.**



Contents

Acknowledgment of Country	2
Message from Reconciliation Australia	4
Message from MOSS CEO	5
A Conversation with Uncle Jack Charles	6
Our Business	8
Our RAP	9
Our partnerships / current activities	11
Relationships	12
Respect	14
Opportunities	16
Governance	17
About the art motif	19
Contact details	20

Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Merri Outreach Support Service (MOSS) to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

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

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

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

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

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

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

Congratulations to Merri Outreach Support Service, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine

CEO

Reconciliation Australia



Message from MOSS CEO

The MOSS Board and I are proud and honoured to share our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) with our incredible employees, the communities we serve and our partners. This commitment is not new, as we have always been active in building relationships with First Nations people, enhancing our knowledge through cultural training and integrating visual representation of the culture throughout the organisation. Our homelessness services are also delivered on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri peoples, and we consciously respect their cultural authority and connection to country.

MOSS joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government and not-for-profit organisations who have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program. We are committed to stand together in search of reconciliation, understanding, healing and trust. We acknowledge the past injustices have contributed to poor housing conditions, health, and wellbeing outcomes

At our core, MOSS exists to address inequality, characterised by MOSS staff who are called to care for others and strengthen communities. Our RAP is an extension of this care, with a deliberate focus to address wrongdoings and meaningful actions to reconcile with First Nations people. One of the greatest strengths in our community is the diversity of people who compose it.

We know that reconciliation is an ongoing process but are encouraged that the initiatives within the plan will build long-term positive change. We look forward to learning and growing as an organisation as we continue this journey.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have given their time and expertise to support the development of our Rap, especially our MOSS Ambassador Uncle Jack Charles who has lent us his knowledge, words and wisdom before his recent passing.

Mark Goodie

CEO
MOSS

A Conversation with Uncle Jack Charles

The family of Uncle Jack Charles has given kind permission for the continued use of his name, images and words by Merri Outreach Support Service.

MOSS ambassador Uncle Jack Charles offered the following insights into his experience and views of reconciliation.

The road to making amends is eternal. The Stolen Generation and what happened was a form of genocide, and there will continue to be redress. The Stolen Generation created loss and disconnection from culture and lore, which is passed down from generation to generation.

Governments, and communities are more aware of First Nations people. Their voices are full of frustration and hope – voices that are willing to partake and be part of the system. Being part of the system does not mean that First Nations people should be asked to lose their 'Indigeneity'.

Indigeneity will never be totally fulfilled living in a white man's world, with white man's laws. However, it is progress that First Nations people are now acknowledged as the original, traditional owners of the land in which we live and work – the basis of Indigeneity. This is demonstrated by acknowledgment of country, a practice that is slowly but surely becoming embedded throughout our society. This is a significant part of reconciliation, as is acknowledgement.

Acknowledgment is one of the prime concerns that First Nations people have. Acknowledgment in all its forms is what is needed to achieve reconciliation ongoing. Acknowledgment through symbolism, flying the Aboriginal flag in prominent government and community buildings. This needs to become more widespread across our country. Acknowledgment through action, with organisations finding measurable ways of contributing towards reconciliation, and relationship building with First Nations people.

Acknowledgment in education, with First Nations people invited to talk at schools, and push education in school curriculums. For education providers to acknowledge the true history of First Nations people.



Our Business

Merri Outreach Support Service (MOSS) was established in 1988 with the aim of providing better access to support, housing and social options for people who experience homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless. The Agency also seeks to address the underlying social and structural causes of homelessness. This is the context from within which all decisions, policies and office procedures are developed. MOSS provides a range of services to homeless and marginalised, men, women, and children in the North and West Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, Victoria.

MOSS provides case management and other direct service support to a variety of services from children specific services to older persons support and social support programs. The service delivery settings range from public housing, transitional housing support, rooming housing, 24/7 youth refuge and assertive outreach to rough sleepers. In addition to these core services MOSS is currently managing the support component of the high-risk accommodation response program associated in partnership with others to assist consumers in the older persons high rise in both Northcote and Brunswick during the pandemic.

The Agency is committed to providing the delivery of holistic case management to a high needs cross target group. MOSS is committed to ensuring all our consumers, stakeholders and community members are welcomed, connected, involved, supported and secure during all interactions with our agency. MOSS is able to advocate for positive change and a better deal for people experiencing housing stress and in need of community support. We do this by collaborating with partners across various sectors and industries to support and achieve sustainable outcomes.

Our head office is located in Broadmeadows, Victoria, on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin nation and four additional office locations in Northcote, Brunswick, West Heidelberg and Reservoir. In 2021 MOSS had 78 staff. We also have a network of 15 volunteers across our various worksites supporting us to achieve our purpose. At the time of writing no MOSS staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.





Our RAP

MOSS is developing a RAP as we are motivated and committed to participation in a more deliberate process of reconciliation. We want our organisation to make enduring meaningful contributions to reconciliation in whatever ways we can – building on our partnerships with First Nations organisations and communities, creating opportunities for equity, upholding culture and connection to country, and supporting in whatever ways possible the elimination of discrimination experienced by First Nations people. Becoming a RAP partner with Reconciliation Australia provides us with the resources and support to track our participation in deliberate actions of reconciliation, resulting in real and meaningful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A critical part of implementing the RAP both within MOSS and across our networks and participants is to firstly announce the RAP through our literature, website and networks, celebrating the achievement of participating in MOSS's first plan. Building measures into our business and teams plans so that we deliver, achieve and attain the standards required. The MOSS RAP working group is comprised of staff from the agency in the following roles, Executive; CEO and Business Manager, Operations; Assertive Outreach Case Manager, Crisis Response Youth and Families Case Manager, Intensive Case Manager and Case Manager Connections. We have nominated RAP working group member Kathryn Taylor Intensive Case Manager as our RAP Champion, and to be our inaugural RAP working group Chair. MOSS will continue the regular working group and work closely with Reconciliation Australia to ensure that we continue the journey of reconciliation, ensuring reflection on MOSS's continuing support for advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Our RAP continued

The following actions will be undertaken in implementing the plan:

- RAP working group meetings (monthly and as required)
- RAP working group members working collaboratively outside of set meetings to participate in actioning RAP goals
- RAP working group to become members of Reconciliation Victoria
- RAP update to be a standing item for both Agency and Board meetings
- Whole of agency involvement, – engagement, participation and potential endorsement of RAP actions
- MOSS's Intensive Case Manager will undertake the role of RAP champion, promoting and communicating across the agency
- Review of all MOSS policies to ensure language and intention is shared across all documents
- Investigate the development of new policies and procedures in order to fulfil certain RAP actions
- Presentation and Celebration of RAP once endorsed
- Communication/promotion of our RAP to all of our Agency's funding bodies, other stakeholders and partnership organisations
- Collaboration with First Nation's stakeholders and partnership organisations
- Recognition and reporting of RAP in Annual Report
- Development, resourcing and undertaking of RAP generated activities.

MOSS's reconciliation journey commenced at the beginning of our business. MOSS has always had active engagement, partnerships and collaborations in the provision of services to First Nations people within the community.

Internally MOSS have implemented visual acknowledgement and awareness raising by displaying First Nations flags or plaques and literature at all office sites and all email signatures, various posters and brochures which promote First Nations cultures and support service resources, Acknowledgment of Country given in Agency meetings and team meetings and bi annual Cultural awareness training undertaken by whole of agency.

Staff are encouraged and supported to attend NAIDOC week events, and services support consumers and stakeholders to attend NADOC events and activities. A local Traditional Custodian is invited to host the Welcome to Country at our Annual Public Meeting. MOSS have created and engaged the role of a First Nations Ambassador and we were honoured to have Uncle Jack Charles as our inaugural Ambassador. Our Statement of commitment to reconciliation is proudly placed on our website.



Our partnerships / current activities

Since commencing on our pathway to formalising reconciliation we have developed a number of partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, businesses and organisations. We regularly collaborate with Aboriginal Organisations in service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers.

MOSS Programs with a specific focus to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers include intensive case management homelessness support in partnership with WT Onus Hostel along with the City of Darebin Assertive Outreach Program. In addition, through our informal relationships with a number of Aboriginal organisations and groups including Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Aboriginal Advancement League, Djirra, Balit Djerring, Wadamba Willam and Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service we have a strong commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities access opportunities for secure and sustainable housing.

MOSS's current activities include a long-standing membership with the Victorian Indigenous State-wide Homelessness Network and offering flexible cultural leave which is incorporated into our Enterprise Agreement. As regular review of policies and procedures are undertaken, a First Nations lens will be applied and policy changes will be made where appropriate, with appropriate consultation. MOSS continues to work to raise staff, volunteers and key stakeholder awareness about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' aspirations and reconciliation goals through partnerships, regular Cultural awareness training, knowledge and program resource sharing.





Relationships

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. 	September 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	September 2022	Lead: RAP working group Chair Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP working group members to apply for membership with Reconciliation Victoria. 	March 2022	Lead: RAP working group Chair Support: RAP working group
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. 	April 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	27 May – 3 June 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	27 May – 3 June 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAP working group



Relationships

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. 	August 2022	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain SharePoint reconciliation library containing formal and informal resources for staff to access. 	August 2022	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, publish and communicate the MOSS reconciliation statement (website, AGM and Agency Meeting). 	August 2022	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. 	August 2022	Lead: RAP working group Chair Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	December 2022	Lead: RAP working group Chair Support: RAP working group
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 	February 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	February 2023	Lead: Business Manager Support: Quality Council



Respect

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. 	April 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. 	September 2022	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. 	September 2022	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	October 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Program Managers



Respect

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold cultural event for staff and volunteers during NAIDOC week. Sourcing funds to promote and support this event via NAIDOC Local Grants Program	July 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Program Managers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Program Managers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Program Managers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2023	Lead: RAP working group Chair Support: RAP working group



Opportunities

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	April 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	May 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	November 2022	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate Supply Nation membership.	August 2022	Lead: Business Manager Support: RAP working Group



Governance

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain RAP Working Group to govern RAP implementation. 	August 2022	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to meet monthly to monitor RAP implementation 	Monthly, Review November 2022	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update Terms of Reference for the RWG 	November 2022	Lead: RAP working group Chair Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	February 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAP working group
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. 	August 2022	Lead: RAP working group Chair Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	August 2022	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	August 2022	Lead: Business Manager Support: RAP working Group



Governance

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contacts are up-to-date to ensure we are receiving important correspondence. 	June 2023 and annually	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with Reconciliation Australia if we have not yet received our unique reporting link to participate in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. 	1 August 2023 and annually	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAP working group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	September 2022 and annually	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RAP working group
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP 	May 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RAP working group

About the art motif

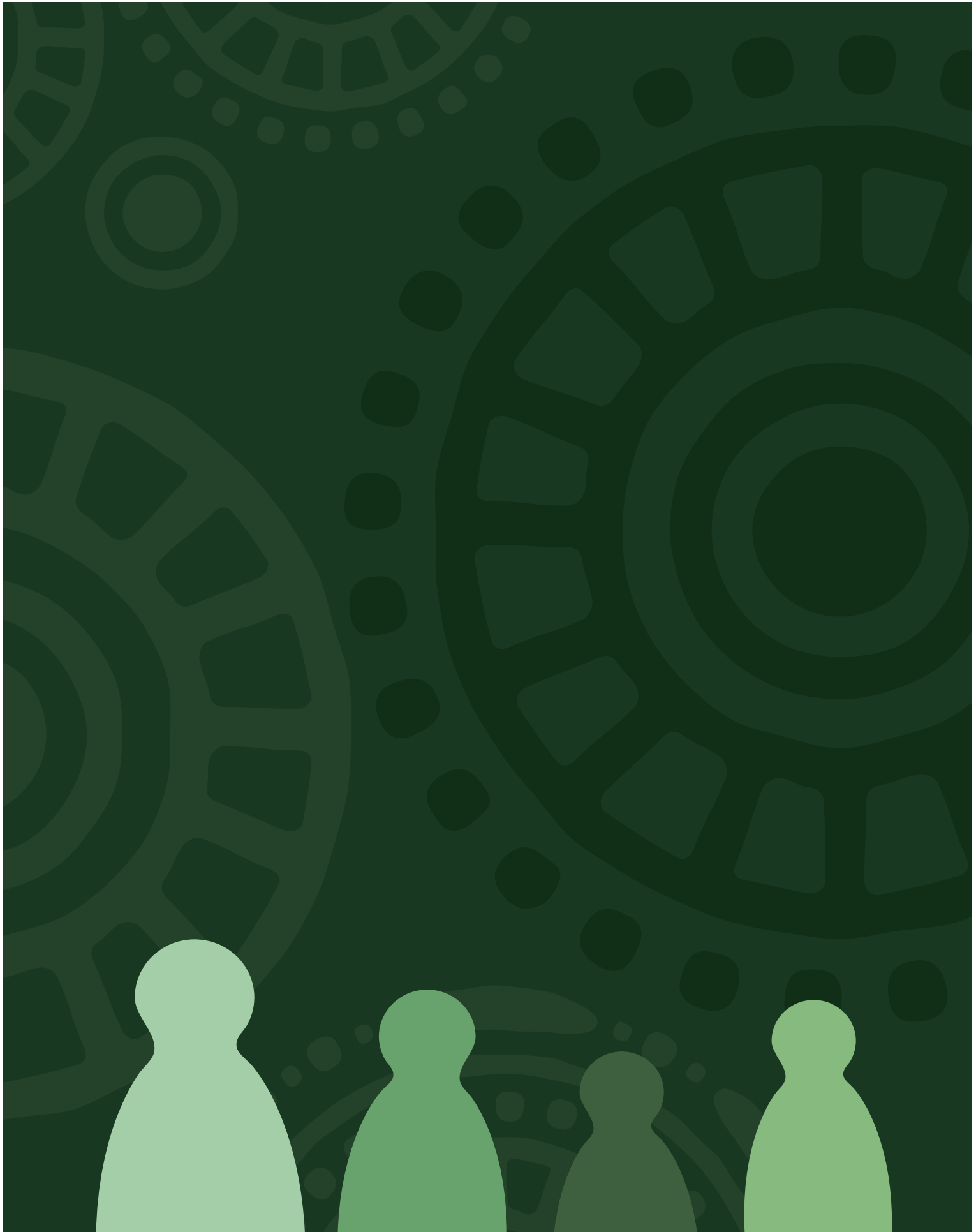
This art motif represents community support. As people, we all need assistance in one way or another. Connection is the foundation to our mental, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing. The middle circle represents both MOSS and at-risk people sitting in a circle to share and listen and to seek and give support.

The ripples depict the positive influence we can have on one another when we come together as a community. The art represents the Reconciliation journey for MOSS, immersing First Nations knowledge that will provide opportunities to embed Cultural Safety in the workplace and to consumers.

Artist: Bitja (Dixon Patten Jnr) of Bayila Creative

Tribes: Gunnai, Yorta Yorta, Gunditjmara and Yuin





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