

Statement from WCHN Reconciliation Sub-Committee in response to the WCH 140 Years Celebrations

In 1878 the first stone was laid to commence the build of the then Adelaide's Children's Hospital.

The Institution was a result of colonialism and white settlement in South Australia and was built for children of white settlers.

The health needs and human rights of Aboriginal children, young people and their families were not considered in the creation of these services and since that time, Aboriginal children and their families have suffered at the hands of state led policy which saw the removal of children from families, a lack of universal access to care, poor health outcomes and institutional racism.

“Reconciliation at the WCHN is a responsibility that belongs to all of us.”

The Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN) Reconciliation Sub-Committee acknowledges the pain and hurt suffered by Aboriginal families and communities in South Australia and the role that the Children's Hospital played in supporting those policies and attitudes. In 2008, 130 years since that first stone was laid, the then Children, Youth & Women's Health Service commenced consultation with Aboriginal communities as a commitment to improve the health of Aboriginal children, young people and women.

A partnership was formed with Tauondi Aboriginal Community College and the results are a series of three paintings (located in the Queen Victoria Lecture Theatre foyer) representing the past, the present and the future: a powerful symbol of our reconciliation journey. The consultation and partnership with artists, staff and community members identified a number of actions that was the foundation of the 2008 Reconciliation Action Plan. In 2018 the WCHN remains committed to continuing our journey into

the future and the 2017-2020 Reconciliation Action Plan represents the next steps of Reconciliation focusing on relationships, respect and opportunity.

The Reconciliation Sub-committee celebrates the positive commitment and purposeful actions the WCHN is leading as a priority for reconciliation to support service improvement and health outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families of South Australia. Some of these positive actions include; ensuring a strong presence at community events, the development of the Aboriginal Family Birthing Program, Cultural Respect Training, leading the development of the online Cultural Learning Framework, supporting and promoting the Aboriginal Health Plan and Workforce Strategy and the strong leadership of the Aboriginal Health Division.

Reconciliation at the WCHN is a responsibility that belongs to all of us. Over the next 12 months there will be many celebrations for the past 140 years of Children's Hospital Services in South Australia. In light of this the Reconciliation Sub-committee invites all of the WCHN community to reflect on how we can contribute to supporting and improving services and health outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families so together we can co-create a different story for the next 140 years.

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