



Mercy Services

RECONCILIATION POLICY

Manual: Values

Document ID: A.5

1. PURPOSE

This Reconciliation Policy and Procedures aims to provide information and instructions to assist management and staff to establish and maintain positive working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within and outside Mercy Services

2. BACKGROUND

In 1996 Pope John Paul II said:

“... for thousands of years you have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day. And during all this time, the Spirit of God has been with you. Your "Dreaming", which influences your lives so strongly that, no matter what happens, you remain forever people of your culture, it is your only way of touching the mystery of God's Spirit in you and in creation. You must keep your striving for God and hold on to it in your lives...

The establishment of a new society for Aboriginal people cannot go forward without just and mutually recognized agreements with regard to these human problems, even though their causes lie in the past. The greatest value to be achieved by such agreements, which must be implemented without causing new injustices, is respect for the dignity and growth of the human person...

... what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow.

Twenty years later Pope Benedict XVII

“Much has been achieved along the path of racial reconciliation yet there is still much to be accomplished. No one can exempt themselves from this process...I therefore again encourage all Australians to address with compassion and determination the deep underlying causes of the plight which still afflicts so many Aboriginal citizens.”

In this spirit we commit ourselves to the future envisaged by the Australian Parliament:

“A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.

A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.”

3. WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO

This policy applies to all Mercy Services staff, visitors and volunteers

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3. POLICY

Mercy Services acknowledges and pays respect to the Awabakal, Worimi and Wonnarua, as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of the land across which we work.

Mercy Services recognises that the European occupation initiated massive changes to the land and its peoples.

As a vital step towards building a just, common future, Mercy Services recognises the loss and the grief felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the alienation from their traditional land, the loss of their freedom, their lives, the forced removal of their children and other injustices.

Mercy Services supports the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to live according to their own values and cultures.

Mercy Services will consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their services and will develop ways to better respect them and assist them to enjoy a standard of living equal to that of others in Australia, without the loss of their personal spirit or cultural identity.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Acknowledgement and respect

Mercy Services accepts the definition of an Aboriginal person, as being a person who:

- is of Aboriginal descent.
- identifies as an Aboriginal person, and
- is accepted by the Aboriginal community in which he/she lives.

Traditional people in our area (see Appendix 1 Consultation):

Newcastle/Lake Macquarie Awabakal
Port Stephens Worimi
Maitland Wonnarua

4.2. Consulting

a) Mercy Services has previously established a Reconciliation Advisory Group to provide advice and guidance to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on the organisation's Reconciliation Plan. The CEO will report the views of the Advisory Group to the Board.

The Reconciliation Advisory Group may reconvene at any time to discuss fulfilling the directions of the Reconciliation Policy. This Advisory Group will ideally be made up of: The Mercy Services CEO, two Mercy Services staff chosen by the CEO and three

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Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people (see Appendix 2 Advisory Group Terms of Reference).

b) Getting permission

Mercy Services will endeavour to speak with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and/or their services before seeking funding, starting a service or making significant changes to services that assist them. (see Appendix 1 Consultation)

Mercy Services acknowledges the right of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to be recognised as the owners and guardians of their cultural and intellectual property.

The prior informed consent of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons and groups will be obtained prior to any recording, use or display of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Cultural and Intellectual Property.

Consent will be obtained from both: -

- Copyright owners
- Group - discuss with elders - persons in authority (see Appendix 1 Consultation)

4.3. Following correct protocols

a) Mercy Services will display a sign in the entrance area to its buildings used for service provision that says:



b) Welcome to Country

At all major official events, where members of the public and/or the media are present, Mercy Services will seek to include a Welcome to Country ceremony.

A Welcome to Country requires an Aboriginal Elder to welcome people to the land. If this person does not have employment that will pay for their participation Mercy Services will pay a suitable honourium.

At events at which flags are shown, the order of display, from an audience perspective from left to right, is the Australian flag then the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag.

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c) Acknowledgment of Country

At major events or meetings that are substantially comprised of Mercy Services staff, volunteers and/or clients the Chairperson will start
'I would like to acknowledge that we meet today on the traditional land of the Awabakal (or applicable) people'.

4.4. Supporting Aboriginal organisations

Mercy Services will assist the development of Aboriginal services through partnerships, consortiums and other mutually agreed assistance

4.5. Assisting Aboriginal people within Mercy Services

a) Mercy Services will join with individuals and groups to foster Reconciliation e.g. Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group

b) Mercy Services will provide a positive cultural environment and build awareness of Aboriginal culture and its relevance among Mercy Services staff, volunteers and clients by recognising in appropriate ways significant Aboriginal and Reconciliation events e.g.,

26 January	Australia Day/Survival Day
13 February	Anniversary of Federal Parliament's Apology
26 May	National Sorry Day
26 May to 3 June	National Reconciliation Week
3 June	Mabo Day
1st full week of July	NAIDOC Week

Staff will be supported in attending such events

c) Mercy Services will seek opportunities to develop the Aboriginal cultural competence of Mercy Services staff/volunteers particularly those working in services where there is no equivalent Aboriginal service.

d) Mercy Services will ensure that its employment policies and procedures result in adequate recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in Mercy Services.

e) Mercy Services will ensure Aboriginal people are encouraged and supported to seek career development opportunities while employed with Mercy Services

f) Mercy Services will provide high quality services in culturally appropriate ways to Aboriginal people.

5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Aboriginal Poster displayed in the foyers of campuses
Care of ATSI persons is delivered in a culturally sensitive manner

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6. EXPECTED OUTCOME

ATSI clients and staff are a respected and valuable contributor to Mercy Services and care of ATSI persons is delivered in a culturally sensitive manner

7. REFERENCES

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- NSW Government Aboriginal Cultural Protocols And Practices Policy
- NSW Dept of Education and Training Aboriginal Consultative Group Inc
Welcome to Country & Acknowledgment of Country
- Community Cultural Development New South Wales (2003) RESPECT, ACKNOWLEDGE, LISTEN: Practical protocols for working with the Indigenous Community of Western Sydney
- Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association (ACRA)
<http://www.arwarbukarl.com.au/>
- Lake Macquarie City Council (2005) A Commitment by Lake Macquarie City Council to Aboriginal People of the City of Lake Macquarie
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council
<http://www.natsicc.org.au/>
- Newcastle City Council Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2004-2006
- Reconciliation Australia (2006) Reconciliation Action Plans: Turning good intentions into actions
- Uniting Care (2007) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Project
Dreaming As One

8. OTHER RELATED POLICIES OR PROCEDURES

- E.13 Cultural Awareness

9. VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Date Reviewed	Amendments
1.0	20.4.18	Changed to current policy template

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Appendix 1. Consultation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultation Contacts

Additional options can be found in the Hunter Valley Directory produced by the Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association

<http://www.miromaa.org.au/ourcentre/indigenoustdirectory/onlineirectory.html> with full agency details in the paper copy of the Directory available from Mercy Services Tighes Hill or Carrington or West Wallsend offices.

Person	Position & Organisation	Postal & Email address	Phone	To be consulted regarding
Whole of community issues				
Chief Executive Officer	Awabakal Land Council	127 Maitland Road, Islington (PO Box 437, Hamilton 2303) awabaka@bigpond.net.au	02 4965 4532	Economic and cultural development of ATSI people living in the Newcastle LGA
Chief Executive Officer	Bahtabah Land Council	44 Pacific Highway, (PO Box 3018) Blacksmiths 2281 bahtabah@nexon.com.au	02 4971 4800	Economic and cultural development of ATSI people living in the Eastern Lake Macquarie area
Chief Executive Officer	Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council	Lot 457 1A Chelmsford Drive, Metford (PO Box 401, East Maitland 2323)	02 4934 8511	Economic and cultural development of ATSI people living in the Maitland LGA
	Wanaruah Land Council	19 Maitland St, Muswellbrook NSW 2333	02 6543 1288	Economic and cultural development of ATSI people living in the Upper Hunter Valley area
Chief Executive Officer	Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council	173 Nelson Bay Rd, Williamtown 2314 (PO Box 56; Tanilba Bay 2314) reception@worimi.org.au	02 4965 1500	Economic and cultural development of ATSI people living in the Port Stephens LGA
Andrew Hawkins	Lecturer	Hunter TAFE		Education and Training issues and Reconciliation Policy
Lyndsay Stanford	Blakwoks			Employment solutions
Sandra Griffin	Elder			Issues in western Newcastle
Chief Executive Officer	Awabakal Cooperative	64 Hannell Street, Wickham 2293	02 4969 4711	Services for ATSI people
Aged and Home & Community Care Services				
Donna Munn	CACP Worker Awabakal		02 4962 2811	Services for older ATSI people
	Awabakal Disability Service		02 4969 4711	Services to ATSI people with a disability

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Person	Position & Organisation	Postal & Email address	Phone	To be consulted regarding
<i>Kathleen Leayr</i>	<i>Home Care Service of – Daramulen Aboriginal Centre</i>	<i>70 Northcott Ave Kotara NSW 2289</i>	<i>02 49 66 6322</i>	<i>Domestic assistance and personal care services for older ATSI people</i>
<i>Clare Shrimpton</i>	<i>Port Stephens Community Care, Aboriginal Services Project Officer</i>	<i>14/25 Sturgeon St, Raymond Terrace (PO Box 170, Raymond Terrace 2324) clares.admin@pscc.com.au</i>	<i>1300 763 257</i>	<i>Community Support including transport Services for older ATSI people</i>
Alcohol & Other Drug Services				
<i>Darren Barton</i>	<i>Service Manager Awabakal Medical Service</i>	<i>38a Samdon Street, Hamilton 2303</i>	<i>02 4969 2424</i>	<i>AOD services and issues for ATSI people</i>
<i>David Maher</i>	<i>AOD Worker Awabakal Medical Service</i>	<i>38a Samdon Street, Hamilton 2303</i>	<i>02 4969 2424</i>	<i>AOD services and issues for ATSI people</i>
Children's & Family Services				
<i>Louise Campbell</i>	<i>Education Officer (Aboriginal Education) Catholic Schools Office</i>	<i>841 Hunter Street Newcastle West (P.O. Box 714 Newcastle 2300) louise.campbell@mn.catholic.edu.au</i>	<i>02 4979 1222</i>	<i>Education and Catholic Church issues for ATSI people</i>
	<i>Awabakal Pre School</i>		<i>02 4956 9132</i>	<i>Services and issues for ATSI children 4-5 years old in Newcastle/Lake Macquarie area</i>
	<i>Muloobinba Aboriginal Corporation Family Support Service</i>	<i>22 Lambton Road, (PO Box 208) Broadmeadow 2292 admin@muloobinba.org.au</i>	<i>02 4962 1809</i>	<i>ATSI families or individuals in the Newcastle LGA who are experiencing financial hardship, separation, homelessness, domestic violence, and parenting problems.</i>
	<i>Kup-Poon -Dee Community Services</i>	<i>29 Shearman Avenue Raymond Terrace 2324 kup29@bigpond.net.au</i>	<i>02 4987 7685</i>	<i>This is a family support services that offers support for students at school and counselling for families in crisis etc</i>
	<i>Port Stephens Family Support Service Inc. Ba-Ra-Bolarang (is an annex to the above service)</i>	<i>3 Phillip Road Raymond Terrace 2324 admin@psfss.org.au</i>	<i>02 4987 4674</i>	<i>This is a family support centre and the Aboriginal services offer culturally based skill building and learning experiences such as weaving classes as well as men's meetings.</i>
	<i>Wandiyali</i>	<i>16 Bruncker Road Broadmeadow 2292</i>	<i>02 4940 8133</i>	<i>youth (14-18yrs), 13-25 yrs parenting support, OOHC (8-18yrs) in foster placement and support for parents of children aged 0-16yrs.</i>

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Person	Position & Organisation	Postal & Email address	Phone	To be consulted regarding
Karen O'Hara	Coordinator Wandiyali – Brighter Futures	3 Thomas Street, Cardiff wandiyalikbf@hotmail.com	02 4954 2736	Early intervention for families with children 0-8 years as part of the Brighter Futures consortium of which Mercy Services is also a member
Bush Tucker				
	Youle-ta		4949 5877	

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Appendix 2. Advisory Group Terms of Reference

Mercy Services Reconciliation Advisory Group
Terms of reference as at 20.4.18

Aim:

- to provide advice to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on the content the Mercy Services Reconciliation Policies and their implementation.
- to provide advice to the CEO on issues of relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait people, especially those who are Mercy Services clients or staff

Membership

- Mercy Services CEO,
- Two Mercy Services staff (chosen by the CEO)
- Three Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people (chosen by the CEO) - The CEO will ask ATSI individuals and agencies (listed in Appendix) to advertise vacancies when they arise on the Advisory Group. Individuals will then contact the CEO who will choose individuals with the best understanding of: (1) ATSI issues (2) the situation of ATSI people eligible to be Mercy Services clients and/or (3) the services operated by Mercy Services.

Term of Membership

- All Advisory Group members, except the CEO, are limited to a three-year term. After a year away from the Advisory Group a person can be invited to join for another term.

What can be discussed?

- The CEO will chair meetings in an informal manner (more like a discussion than a formal meeting)
- The CEO will ensure that an Agenda is circulated prior to the meeting listing items for discussion.
- The chair will always ask at the beginning of the meeting if members have other items to add to the agenda. The agenda will always have a place for Advisory Group members to raise other issues.
- If there is some dispute on the relevance of an issue the meeting will vote and a majority will decide if it is relevant. If there is insufficient time for all items the chair will limit the length of time for each item.

Frequency of meetings:

- Meetings will usually last for a maximum to 90 minutes
- The Advisory Group may meet when required to discuss progress on fulfilling the directions of the Reconciliation Policy and the Reconciliation Plan.
- Only the CEO can call additional meetings.

Payments:

- Advisory Group members who do not have employment that will pay for their participation will be paid an honourarium of \$50 per hour of meeting time.

Communication:

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- The CEO will ensure that minutes are kept of discussions and decisions of the Advisory Group
- The CEO will report the views of the Advisory Group to the Board.
- All Advisory Group members must keep as confidential discussions that an Advisory Group member has requested be confidential
- Mercy Services members of the Advisory Group will try to follow these guidelines¹:
 1. Don't assume anything.
 2. Be honest and sincere.
 3. Use simple clear, plain and appropriate language.
 4. Speak slowly if and when necessary.
 5. Jargon or technical language should be explained.
 6. Don't mimic Aboriginal ways of speaking i.e. words, slang, speech or accent.
 7. Be open minded.
 8. Never be boastful about your ideas.
 9. Don't be too direct as this can be taken as confrontational and/or rude.
 10. Direct eye contact may also be considered confrontational and/or rude.
 11. Emphasise the purpose of your activity and intended benefits to the community.
 12. Don't ask hypothetical questions.
 13. Deal in practical real issues not theoretical ideas

Decision making capacity:

- The Advisory Committee is a valued means of learning from the experience and wisdom of Aboriginal people but it does not have responsibility for running Mercy Services. As this is an consultative forum, the CEO is not obliged to follow the advice of the Reconciliation Advisory Group

¹ Protocols for Consultation and Negotiation with Aboriginal People', by Huggins, Jackie, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development, Brisbane, QLD, 1999

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Appendix 3

Mercy Services Reconciliation Action Plan 2016



Activities	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
<i>Acknowledgement and Respect</i>			
Reconvene Reconciliation Advisory Group to meet at least once in 2016	CEO	By November	Minutes as a record of meeting
Consultation sought before seeking for funding or starting a service that aims to assist Aboriginal people/services	CEO	ongoing	Report to Advisory Committee number of times consultation is sought
Permission sought prior to any recording, use or display of ATSI Cultural and Intellectual Property	CEO	ongoing	Report to Advisory Committee number of times permission sought
Continue to display a Reconciliation sign in the entrance area to all buildings used for service provision	CEO	ongoing	Report to Advisory Committee to sign still present
Welcome to Country at all major official events, where members of the public and/or the media are present	CEO	ongoing	Report to Advisory Committee number of times Welcome provided
<i>Acknowledgement of Country at major events or meetings that are organised by Mercy Services</i>	CEO	ongoing	Report to Advisory Committee number of times Acknowledgement provided
<i>Supporting Aboriginal Organisations</i>			
Assist the development of Aboriginal services through partnerships, consortiums and other mutually agreed assistance: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cooperate with Wandiyali as a partner in Brighter Futures Consortium 2. Cooperate with Awabakal Medical Service as a potential partner in any possible suitable Initiative. 3. Respond positively to Aboriginal organisations requesting our assistance with submission writing 4. Respond to other requests for assistance 	CEO	ongoing	Report to Advisory Committee number of times and types of assistance provided

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Appendix 3

Mercy Services Reconciliation Action Plan 2016



Activities	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Review employment policies and strategies to improve the employment experience of Aboriginal people <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase number of ATSI staff to be equivalent to the proportion of ATSI population in the Hunter (currently 2.6%) - targeting services that do or should have ATSI clients Approach aboriginal employment services when recruiting staff 	CEO and Learning & Development Manager	ongoing	Report to Advisory Committee percentage of ATSI staff and recruitment/retention initiatives
Provide high quality services in culturally appropriate ways to Aboriginal people <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Macquarie Community Transport to continue providing a bus and driver for two activities the elders organised for their youth Lake Macquarie Community Transport to seek funding to have an Aboriginal design painted on one of its buses Promote Mercy Services programs to ATSI people in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie areas 	CEO and Community Transport Manager	ongoing	Report to Advisory Committee number and types of services to Aboriginal people

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