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ACA Launches Reconciliation Action Plan

In a commitment to paying respect to and helping improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA) are launching their inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The purpose of the RAP is to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by showing an organisational commitment to cultural acceptance and understanding.

The RAP program, governed by Reconciliation Australia, provides a framework for organisations to support the national reconciliation movement. The RAP itself is a strategic document that supports an organisation's business plan. It includes practical actions that will drive the Association's contribution to reconciliation both internally and in the chiropractic community.

ACA CEO, Adjunct Associate Professor Matthew Fisher is grateful for the prospects that an ACA RAP can do to develop respectful relationships and create meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"The RAP is about making a statement that as an Association we are committed to the needs and welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people," said Dr Fisher.

"The implementation of the RAP establishes the ACA's place in leading other allied health professions towards a culture of acceptance and understanding. It not only states that we acknowledge the problems of the past, but as an Association are willing to put in place procedures to abide by the commitments of the RAP."

To celebrate the development of the RAP, the ACA held a Welcome to Country smoking ceremony at the ACA Conference in October. The smoking ceremony was performed by Uncle Colin Hunter, elder of the local Wurundjeri people. Uncle Colin shared the stories and history of his people while performing the ceremony in the Fitzroy Gardens in Melbourne.

To further commemorate this achievement, the ACA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rural and Remote Practitioner Network commissioned an artwork to represent the Aboriginal perspective of the chiropractic profession. The artwork sits as the front cover image of the ACA's RAP and was created by Wayne Krause, a Wiradjuri man of the Parjong (Fish River) people. The artwork was created in Wollombi, NSW and is representative of chiropractic as a hands-on profession, committed to working and coming together to achieve health and healing as part of the reconciliation journey.

The ACA's RAP will continue to develop and evolve over the coming years as the ACA continues to understand how it can make a positive impact in this space. Currently the Association has developed the 'Reflect' RAP type, which sets out the steps the ACA will take to prepare the organisation for reconciliation initiatives in successive RAPs.

Committing to a Reflect RAP allows the ACA to spend time scoping and developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, deciding on the Association's vision for reconciliation and exploring the sphere of influence, before committing to specific actions or initiatives. This process will help to produce future RAPs that are meaningful, mutually beneficial and sustainable.

ACA encourages the public, and in particular health practitioners, to read the ACA's RAP to understand the Association's commitment toward improving the health of Australia's first people, not just in words but in actions.

To view the RAP and to watch a short documentary outlining the significance and process of the Plan visit www.chiro.org.au/rap

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