



MEDIA RELEASE 12 DECEMBER 2023

Wildlife Health Australia launches its first Reconciliation Action Plan

Australia's national coordinating body for wildlife health – Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) has launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). WHA have worked with Reconciliation Australia to develop its inaugural Reflect RAP, which sets out steps to prepare the organisation for reconciliation initiatives in future RAPs.

Committing to a Reflect RAP sees WHA scoping and developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, and deciding on WHA's vision for reconciliation and exploring its sphere of influence.

WHA CEO Dr Rupert Woods said:

"Wildlife Health Australia is proud to announce the formal start of our journey towards reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the development of our first Reconciliation Action Plan in 2023."

"We aim to learn from and engage with First Nations peoples who have cared for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island landscapes through millennia of active custodianship and conservation and have a deep and abiding knowledge of caring for country."

As part of its lengthy preparation of its inaugural RAP, WHA commissioned Aboriginal Artist and Graphic Designer Lani Balzan to produce an original Contemporary Aboriginal Artwork and she created a unique story to underpin it, titled 'One Health: The Circle of Life'.

Ms Balzan said:

"The story unfolds to represent the vital connection between all living beings in Australia's natural environment. The central motif is a mesmerising circle, symbolising the unity and harmony that exists among wildlife, people, and the land. Within this circle, intricate patterns and vibrant colours intertwine, representing Wildlife Health Australia as a whole."

"The artwork beckons viewers to embrace the principles of One Health and cherish the precious gift of Australia's Culture of respect - symbolised by a hand print, reflecting biodiversity, ensuring that it thrives for generations to come."

WHA Chair Dr Peter Bridgewater said:

"Wildlife Health Australia's Board, along with WHA staff, are proud to be joining more than 2,700 organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program."

Reconciliation Australia CEO Karen Mundine said:

"Reconciliation Australia welcomes Wildlife Health Australia to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP."