

RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



youthfocus

APRIL 2021-  
OCTOBER 2022



Youth Focus acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia. We recognise their continuing connection to the land, waters and community and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.



## Artwork by Tyrown Waigana

'The Youth Focus Reconciliation Action Plan artwork is based on four pillars of support. The blue circle is representative of community, the green is country, the red is family and the purple is culture. These four elements are integral to creating strong young people. The bigger yellow circle illustrates youth itself. This symbolisation of youth is central as it is focused on their development and connection to the pillars of support. These elements need to work together to create a single network which allows for the holistic progress of young people.'



# Our Vision

The Youth Focus vision for reconciliation is a national culture that represents a place of equity, dignity and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our organisation aspires to become a trusted mental health provider for all young people, their families and communities.

Our inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is an agreed strategy - developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - on how Youth Focus intends to achieve a greater level of trust, understanding and connectedness with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and contribute to their positive emotional and social mental health and wellbeing.

We know from external evidence and our own research and work, that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities are socially and economically disadvantaged. This is no more evident than in the unacceptably high numbers of self-harm and suicide occurring in these communities.

Reducing deaths by suicide and suicidal behaviour among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is an issue of major concern for our organisation and remains a public health priority for all Australian governments.

**FOR THE LONG-TERM BENEFIT AND COHESION OF THIS COUNTRY, IT IS VITAL THAT GOVERNMENTS, COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND BUSINESSES PLAY THEIR PART IN BUILDING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS AND WORKING TOWARDS A RECONCILED, INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE AUSTRALIA.**

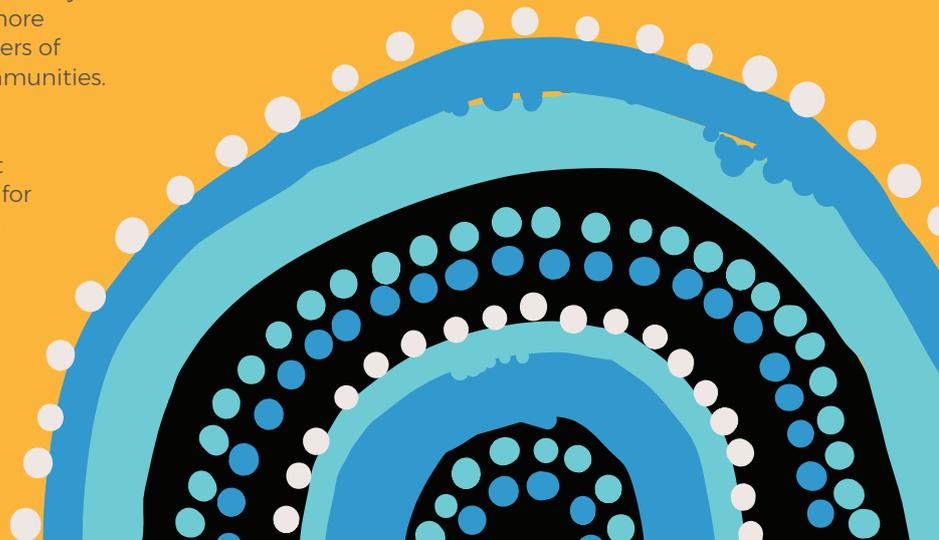
At Youth Focus, we recognise the strength and resilience of the Traditional Owners of the Land and are committed to respecting and celebrating more than 60,000 years of connectedness to Country.

As a leading Western Australian mental health service provider, we have an opportunity to serve the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we work with in a culturally appropriate way, developing and delivering mental health support services and programs after consultation with the community that are best suited and respectful to local circumstances. In doing so, young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will experience a sense of belonging, trust and safeness at Youth Focus.

We are delighted to wholeheartedly commit ourselves to the actions outlined in this RAP, and as we embark on this important journey, we look forward to further developing enduring relationships with, and opportunities for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

**DEAN HELY** CHAIR

**ARTHUR PAPAKOTSIAS** CEO



# Our business



Youth Focus is committed to embedding a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as part of its vision, mission, values and culture. An opportunity to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the Building Bridges Project (2017-2019) helped to inform and guide the plan.



Youth Focus is a leading youth mental health service provider in Western Australia. We deliver professional counselling services and programs to young people aged 12 to 25.

**OUR MISSION IS TO EQUIP YOUNG PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES TO LEAD MEANINGFUL LIVES.**

Our organisation endorses a capacity-based approach where recovery includes an experience of value, positive relationships, and achievements in education and employment. In 2019/20, we supported 6,090 young people and their families through free and unlimited professional counselling and assessment services. An additional 5,773 participants attended in-school, community or workplace education programs.



Youth Focus's service model is to provide locally based, decentralised whole-of-region services to meet community need. These services differ from other providers in that they are specifically targeted and designed for young people and are delivered by highly skilled psychologists, social workers, counsellors and youth engagement officers at no cost to young people. We are committed to working collaboratively with young people, local providers, government and community groups to enable client choice and maximise synergies at both state and local level.

Our clinical services team provides evidence-based therapeutic interventions that are developmentally tailored to meet the needs of the young person. These therapies include Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Interpersonal Psychotherapy, Narrative Therapy, Expressive Therapies, Brief Solution Focussed, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy and Systemic Therapies. As part of this process, clinicians utilise their initial sessions to work with the young person to identify risk factors and personal strengths, and establish their goals for therapy.

**YOUTH FOCUS COUNSELLING SUPPORTS THE EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND AIMS TO BE FLEXIBLE IN TERMS OF SERVICE PROVISION TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND BUILD BETTER OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.**

Community engagement is considered integral to the positive mental health of all young people. Our organisation engages with communities to educate and build awareness about mental health issues and suicide prevention. As part of this engagement, we deliver education programs in schools, workplaces and communities across Western Australia.

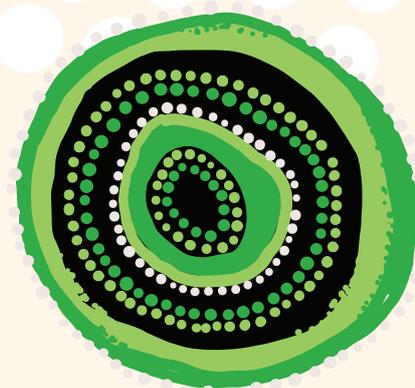
**CONNECTEDNESS TO COMMUNITY THROUGH ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES HAS BECOME AN INTRINSIC COMPONENT OF OUR APPROACH.**

We have been providing impactful education programs in school communities since 2012. Through these programs, we share important knowledge and skills to enable young people, parents and educators to recognise and address mental health challenges at the earliest opportunity.

Youth Focus employs 150 staff (with an additional 30 volunteers across the Youth Reference Group, Carer Reference Group and mentoring program), which includes a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples across regional and metropolitan Western Australia.

Youth Focus is a Western Australian based service with a strong reputation. Our office, community and in-school services employ community consultation and the development of local partnerships and linkages to ensure collaborative service delivery. This credibility, and the trust that communities place in our organisation, affords us the opportunity to continue to expand not only financially and geographically, but in the way we deliver our suite of services.

Our organisation provides services from diverse locations across Western Australia including the Mid West, South West and Great Southern as well as four headspace centres.



# Our RAP



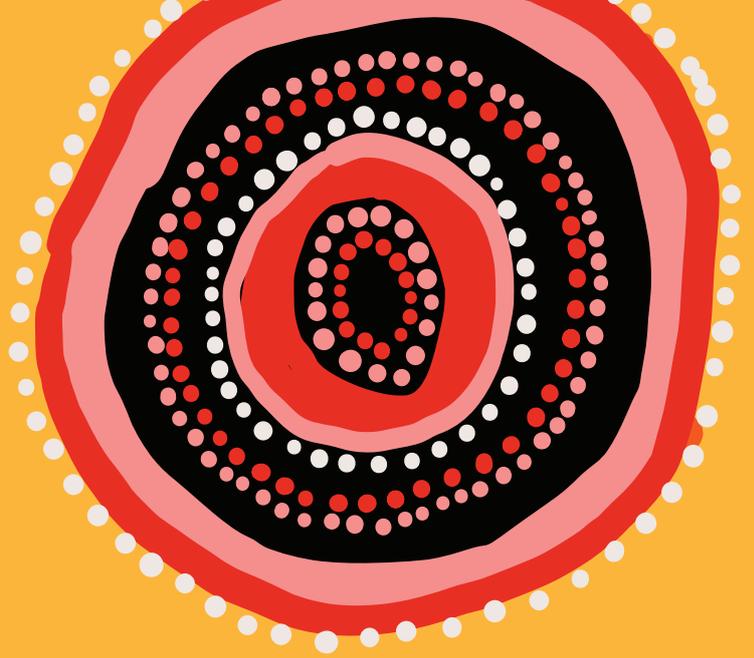
Youth Focus's inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan has been developed out of a deepening recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples being the Traditional Owners of the Land.

We are committed to respecting and celebrating a 60,000 year old tradition of connectedness to Country.

It is our intention that our RAP aligns with the Uluru Statement from the Heart: Voice, Treaty, Truth. This statement recognises:

**'OUR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES WERE THE FIRST SOVEREIGN NATIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN CONTINENT AND ITS ADJACENT ISLANDS, AND POSSESSED IT UNDER OUR OWN LAWS AND CUSTOMS. THIS OUR ANCESTORS DID, ACCORDING TO THE RECKONING OF OUR CULTURE, FROM THE CREATION, ACCORDING TO THE COMMON LAW FROM 'TIME IMMEMORIAL', AND ACCORDING TO SCIENCE MORE THAN 60,000 YEARS AGO.'**

FULL STATEMENT AT [WWW.ULURUSTATEMENT.ORG/THE-STATEMENT](http://WWW.ULURUSTATEMENT.ORG/THE-STATEMENT)



The experience of powerlessness is no more evident than in the unacceptably high numbers of self-harm and suicide occurring among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples. This is a deep concern for us as an organisation and as a community. Through an opportunity to share intentions with local Aboriginal Elders, and learning from The Looking Forward project (2011-2015), we have a strong desire to work together led by the Minditj Kaart-Moorditj Kaart Framework 'sick head to good head'.

The development of a RAP is confirmation of our commitment to creating meaningful relationships that are inclusive, trustworthy, reciprocal and adaptable. Through participation in both the Building Bridges Project (2017-2019) and the Our Journey, Our Story Project (2020-ongoing), which brought and continues to bring together, Elders, young people and service providers, we understand that change needs to occur at a systems level as well as an individual level to make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

We recognise that a reconciliation journey is not linear. Much like the undulating landscape that surrounds us all, we have navigated this process by seeking input and support through conversations, relationships, and partnerships to inform our inaugural RAP. Led by the Board of Directors, the Executive Leadership Team will champion the RAP in collaboration with the RAP Working Group, service managers, Youth and Carer Reference Group, so that it is visible to and understood by all who engage with our services.

When we commenced our RAP exploration in 2018, we were fortunate to be guided by Dr Michael Wright, a Nyoongar Elder, who cautioned us "Debarkan, Debarkan, Debarkan" (steady, steady, steady). We listened to his words and placed relationships, respect and trust before words on a page. We now believe we are in a position to put actions into words and further strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, their families and their communities.

We are thankful to Aunty Muriel Bowie, Aunty Cheryl Phillips, Aggie Manel, Dr Michael Wright and Associate Professor Ashleigh Lin for their invitation to participate in the Building Bridges Project, which has been a path of discovery that has brought an authentic experience of connectedness to ways of knowing, doing and being.

A RAP mission statement has been developed by the RAP Working Group by combining key themes and words emanating from the focus groups:

**OUR ORGANISATION  
ENDEAVOURS TO BECOME A  
MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER  
OF CHOICE FOR ABORIGINAL  
YOUNG PEOPLE, THEIR FAMILIES  
AND COMMUNITIES.**

It is with a great sense of pride and unity that we have set about creating a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. This plan seeks to explore the possibilities of how and where we can achieve a greater level of understanding and connectedness with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

Through a number of deliberate and meaningful actions and activities, we strive to provide a service that respects all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In doing so, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youths will experience a sense of belonging, trust and safeness at Youth Focus and all related services.

Youth Focus would like to acknowledge the invaluable work of the RAP Working Group in driving the development of the Youth Focus Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, and extend special thanks to local Elders, Auntie Cheryl Phillips and Auntie Muriel Bowie for committing their time and expert knowledge throughout the consultation process. Youth Focus also acknowledges the important contributions of both our Executive and Senior Managers as internal champions of the Reflect RAP, and thanks all previous members of the RAP Working Group for their contributions.

We look forward to celebrating and sharing our successes, and being transparent in our setbacks as we continue to walk this path.

# Our partnerships & current activities

## MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS & PARTNERSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STAKEHOLDERS

- ★ Curtin University led research project 'Our Journey, Our Story: Building bridges to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth mental health and wellbeing (2020-ongoing)'
- ★ Clontarf Academy
- ★ Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS)
- ★ Aboriginal and Family Law Service
- ★ Midwest Employment and Economic Development Aboriginal Corporation (MEEDAC)
- ★ Baldja Maar Foundation
- ★ Follow the Dream
- ★ Impact
- ★ Fremantle Football Club

## INTERNAL ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES

- ★ Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission funded 'Our Journey, Our Story Project (2020-ongoing)'
- ★ Provision of Cultural Sensitivity Training for all staff
- ★ Monthly meetings with Aboriginal Elders and young people
- ★ Ongoing recruitment of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in key roles including clinical, engagement, and management
- ★ Recruitment of a young Whadjuk Noongar man, Jack Collard, to the Youth Focus Board of Directors



headspace

headspace

mental health support and information for young people aged 12 to 25



headspace





# Respect



| ACTION  | DELIVERABLE   | TIMELINE         | RESPONSIBLE                       |
|---|---|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning</b> | Engage with local Elders and providers across WA to develop a calendar of cultural learning opportunities available to staff  | July 2021        | Corporate Services [CS]           |
|   | Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.               | August 2021      | CS                                |
|   | Staff conference commences with an extended Welcome to Country and cultural training opportunities  | October 2021     | Chief Executive Officer [CEO]     |
|   | Directors and Executive team to attend On Country professional development and cultural training  | November 2021    | CEO                               |
| <b>Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols</b>   | All Acknowledgements of Country are delivered with space and time between them at the commencement of all internal meetings   | April 2021       | All Staff                         |
|   | Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area   | April 2021       | Chief Operating Officer [COO]     |
|   | CEO to refer to the Traditional season in Executive updates (E.g. As we come to the end of the year, and the Noongar season of Birak, we look forward to time off with our families...)               | June 2021        | CEO                               |
|   | Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country, through the development of internal procedures | June 2021        | COO                               |
|   | Opportunity is taken within our Acknowledgement of Country to allow education on the area, the time of year, the date or any other key items of significance to be communicated to attendees          | August 2021      | COO                               |
|   | Build knowledge within organisation of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates beyond NAIDOC/Reconciliation Week by using a global calendar (i.e. IndigenousX)                        | October 2021     | COO                               |
|   | Add Country to all mailing addresses of Youth Focus corporate offices   | November 2021    | COO                               |
| <b>Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week</b>  | All staff, in partnership with the RAP Working Group, to participate in external NAIDOC Week events throughout WA   | 8 - 15 July 2021 | All Staff                         |
|   | Raise awareness and share information among our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week  | July 2021        | COO                               |
|   | Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area   | July 2021        | Brand Events & Partnerships [BEP] |



# Relationships

| ACTION  | DELIVERABLE  | TIMELINE  | RESPONSIBLE             |     |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|-----|
| <b>Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations</b> | Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations  | May 2021  | Service Excellence [SE] |     |
|   | Identify, document and maintain links with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marr Mooitiji</li> <li>• Nadju Native Title Aboriginal Corporation</li> <li>• Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation</li> <li>• Langford Aboriginal Association</li> <li>• Baldja Maar Foundation</li> <li>• Wheatbelt Aboriginal Health</li> <li>• Yulella Aboriginal Corporation</li> <li>• Buttah Windee Aboriginal Corporation</li> <li>• Yulga Jinna Remote Aboriginal School</li> <li>• Ngangganawili Aboriginal Health Service</li> <li>• Wirrapunda Foundation</li> <li>• Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA)'s Future Footprints program</li> <li>• Stephen Michael Foundation</li> <li>• KEEDAC (Narrogin)</li> <li>• Moorditj Youth Foundation Aboriginal Corporation (Narrogin)</li> <li>• Shooting Stars (Narrogin)</li> <li>• Koori mail</li> <li>• Clontarf</li> <li>• Mulga Mail</li> <li>• National Indigenous Times</li> <li>• Fremantle Football Club</li> </ul> | June 2021   | COO                     |     |
|   | Share these networks with employees through staff meetings and intranet promotion  | July 2021   | SE                      |     |
|   | Identify and develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey  | September 2021  | COO                     |     |
|   | Consult with external organisations to inform and complement our services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples, their families and communities   | September 2021  | All Managers            |     |
|   | <b>Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)</b>  | RAP Working Group members to participate in and promote an external NRW event   | 27 May - 3 June 2021    | COO |
|   |  | Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW | 27 May - 3 June 2021    | COO |
| Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff  |  | May 2021  | SE                      |     |

| ACTION  | DELIVERABLE   | TIMELINE       | RESPONSIBLE    |
|---|---|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence</b>                 | Raise awareness through listing the RAP as a standing agenda item at every ELT and Board meeting  | April 2021     | CEO            |
|   | Commit our BoD's to lead our RAP at a Director level, including additional opportunities for inclusion of First Nation peoples on our Board           | April 2021     | CEO            |
|   | Formally acknowledge and endorse the Uluru Statement of the Heart   | April 2021     | CEO            |
|   | Communicate commitment to reconciliation to all staff   | April 2021     | CEO            |
|   | Provide a RAP introduction for new recruitment through induction  | May 2021       | CS             |
|   | Identify other external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey  | September 2021 | COO            |
|   | Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations, including local government that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey | September 2021 | COO            |
|   | Display Uluru Statement of the Heart in all offices   | October 2021   | Facilities [F] |
| <b>Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies</b> | Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination  | March 2022     | CS             |
|   | Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs                                  | July 2022      | CS             |



# Opportunities

| ACTION   | DELIVERABLE   | TIMELINE   | RESPONSIBLE |
|--|---|------------|-------------|
| <b>Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development</b> | Build an understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities | April 2022 | CS          |
|  | Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation  | April 2022 | CS          |
| <b>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes</b>                  | Investigate memberships with and utilise Supply Nation and the Aboriginal Business Directory WA   | July 2021  | F           |
|  | Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses in procurement of services and supplies  | July 2021  | F           |

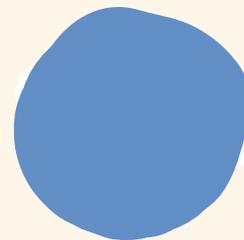
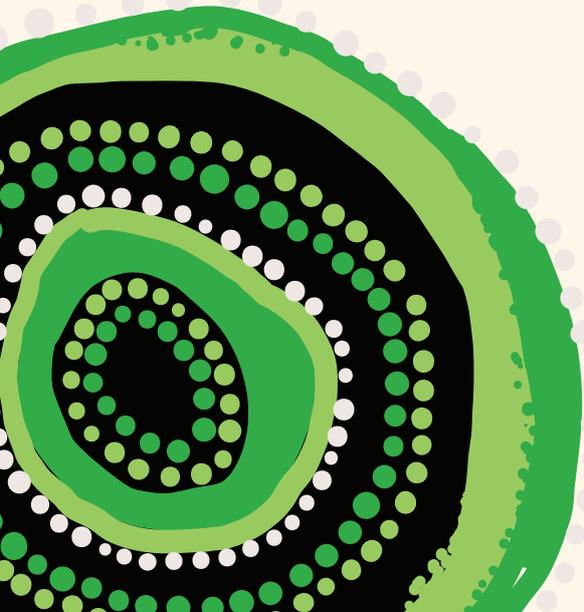




# Governance



| ACTION   | DELIVERABLE   | TIMELINE          | RESPONSIBLE |
|--|---|-------------------|-------------|
| <b>Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP</b>  | Coordinate the RAP Working Group to govern RAP implementation                                   | April 2021        | SE & COO    |
|  | Develop, maintain and update a Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group                     | April 2021        | SE & COO    |
|  | Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Working Group         | April 2021        | SE & COO    |
| <b>Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments</b>   | Define resource needs for RAP implementation  | April 2021        | COO         |
|  | Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments  | April 2021        | CEO         |
|  | Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments       | May 2021          | COO         |
| <b>Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally</b> | Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia | 30 September 2021 | COO         |
| <b>Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP</b>  | Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP                | July 2022         | SE          |





YOUTHFOCUS.COM.AU

📱📷📺 @youthfocuswa #youthfocuswa  
08 6266 4333 | hello@youthfocus.com.au  
54 Goodwood Parade BURSWOOD WA 6100