

# Reflect

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# Reconciliation

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# Action Plan

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January 2023 — December 2023





## **Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians**

**Amaze respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work. We pay respect to their Elders past and present and reflect on the continuing connection with Country and community. Recognising our work provides services to the Autistic community in all corners of the land now referred to as Australia, we extend this acknowledgement to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across this continent.**

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

**Amaze acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the land now referred to as Australia, and that sovereignty was never ceded. We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Elders past and present on the land and waters where we live, work and provide our services. For thousands of generations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have cared for these lands and waters, and we recognise and celebrate their spiritual and ongoing connection to Culture and Country. With the guidance of Elders past and present, we are committed to working towards a future where all Autistic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families are supported to live their best lives.**

### **For more information contact:**

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## **About the artwork**

### **Corey He**

Boon Wurrung people  
Dotted Turtle, 2022  
Acrylic on canvas

Men and women's gathering place  
between a river stream.

## **About the artist**

Corey is a Bunurong/Boon Wurrung artist that joined The Torch in late 2020. Since then, he has explored his culture through brightly coloured paintings that reference connection to his land and ancestors. A recurring theme of his artworks is waterways and the animals that live within them.

He has also experimented with multimedia artworks, creating didgeridoos out of materials accessible to him in prison such as matchsticks.

## **About The Torch**

Since June 2011, The Torch has been providing art, cultural and arts industry support to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria through its Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community program.

The Torch supports Indigenous men and women both in prisons and post-release in Victoria to explore their Indigenous culture and identity through practising art.









# Statement from Amaze Chief Executive Officer



**We are proud to present Amaze's first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and committed to its implementation. This is the start of our journey with reconciliation and sets out the approach we will take, within our organisation, to increase awareness and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. It's our commitment to being an active contributor and ally in rebuilding an Australia that is just and inclusive, and where Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people have equitable life opportunities as all other Australians.**

Our Reflect RAP focuses on the opportunities and outlines the actions we are committed to taking to engage our staff and stakeholders in reconciliation and empower and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For over 60,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have cared for this land and embodied resilience, originality and heart. Through our reconciliation journey, we want to embrace this opportunity to learn from their wisdom, cultures and customs.

Amaze is committed to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and we acknowledge that connection to Culture and community is fundamental to their identity and wellbeing. We are

committed to undertaking authentic and continuous reflection and review of our practices, processes, and relationships to nurture an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel safe, seen and heard. We are not approaching this process lightly, but rather with heart, energy and intention. On behalf of Amaze, I want to express our deep gratitude for the generosity, compassion and openness of Reconciliation Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, who are working with us on this important journey of addressing a historical injustice and turning that into a shared future.

We look forward to working in partnership to bring our Reflect RAP to life and deliver meaningful change so that all Autistic people, whether they are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their families can live their best lives in a more autism inclusive Australia.



**Jim Mullan**  
Chief Executive Officer





# **Statement from Reconciliation Australia Chief Executive Officer**

## **Reconciliation Australia welcomes Amaze to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.**

Amaze joins a network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Amaze to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Amaze, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.



**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer



# Who we are

**Amaze is a leading autism organisation driving change so that Autistic people and their families can live their best lives in a more autism inclusive Australia.**

For more than 50 years, Amaze has been supporting Autistic people, their families and the community. While based in Victoria, our reach is national, and we are the home of Australia's first-ever national autism helpline – Autism Connect. This service is free to any person residing in Australia.

We also work closely with governments, partner organisations, corporates and grassroots community groups and supporters across the country to deliver vital services and information to the autism community.

Our focus also extends to assisting employers to create more autism inclusive workplaces that can sustainably support increased and improved employment of Autistic people. As well as working to increase broader community understanding and acceptance of autism and providing high quality advice and support, we translate autism community experiences into broader policy needs that inform and drive systems-change.

## Our vision

An Australia that embraces Autistic people and their families living their best lives.

## Our mission

To create positive change with Autistic people and their families at all life stages by advocating, influencing, innovating, mobilising efforts and opening doors. This ambition will be realised by being a trusted source of information, advice and support, and a willing partner in the development of new practice and approaches.

## Our values

- Community Centric
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Constructive and Solutions-focused
- Determination and Independence
- Evidence-informed and Outcomes Driven
- Strengths-based



## **Where we are**

Amaze employs around 50 individual staff members, with an additional 15 interstate contracted partner staff who directly support our Autism Connect program. We operate the Autism Connect service, connecting Autistic people, their families, and supporters, from all corners of the continent. At the time of developing our Reflect RAP, two Amaze staff members identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Another two individuals who are contracted for various services including participating in our Consumer Advisory Group for Autism Connect also identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The Amaze head office is based in Richmond, Victoria, and is located atop the banks of Birrarung Marr (Yarra River). Our office is situated on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country,

whose peoples are the Traditional Custodians of the land. Most of our 40+ Victorian-based staff reside in Naarm / Melbourne and surrounds, on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Bunurong and Taungurung peoples, all of which are part of the Kulin nation. Amaze employs staff directly in other parts of Victoria, including those living and working in Mildura (Latji Latji nation).

We engage in close partnerships with other autism organisations, contracting 11 staff to provide Autism Connect services in Canberra (Ngambri Ngunnawal Country); Meanjin / Brisbane (Turrbal Country); Boorloo / Perth (Whadjuk/Noongar Country); nipaluna / Hobart and the lands of the Palawa Peoples (present-day Tasmania); and Garramilla / Darwin (Larrakia Country).



# **Our Reflect** **Reconciliation** **Action Plan**

Reflect



**Amaze is committed to actively and authentically contributing to Australia's journey to reconciliation, and the development and implementation of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) throughout the next year is our first step. As a community-centric organisation, we care deeply about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the Autistic community.**

We recognise the historical and current-day injustice that was and continues to be committed against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and we aspire to an active contributor to rectifying these wrongs. Our RAP provides a strategic framework that promotes awareness and acceptance and champions equity and equal job opportunities. We seek to build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and members of the autism community that will help us to be a better ally and vocal supporter of their rights. These relationships will be pivotal in helping us to grow and improve our learning, and successfully implement our RAP.

We stand in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and similarly to how we view the Autistic community, our approach is through a strengths-based lens and with the understanding of the importance of self-determination for these communities. We will be braver and lend our voice to support the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our sphere of influence, and we will listen to them and follow their lead in our partnerships.



# Our partnerships and current activities

**We acknowledge we have only made small steps thus far in establishing working partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We are committed to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations in a more substantial and significant way so they may support Autistic people and their families in their communities. We will listen and follow their advice to inform how Amaze can best support and contribute to their communities.**

While Amaze is not a 'service provider', we deliver activities and programs that enable free, independent and strengths-based information and advice to Autistic people, their families, and professionals (such as teachers, health professionals, employers, etc.).

Users of our Autism Connect service are invited to identify as belonging to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These individuals and their communities can access information and resources that have been curated by and in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations. We also maintain ongoing relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals who sit on our Autism Connect Consumer Advisory Group to ensure

representation and lived experience is incorporated into any decisions this group makes or advises on. Similarly, our NDIS workshops incorporate bespoke materials developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We are committed to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and have taken early steps to improve our staff members' understanding, awareness, respect and appreciation for First Nations Cultures and achievements. We also begin internal and external meetings, both in-person and online, with an Acknowledgement of Country. Recently, we conducted a staff survey to gauge our organisational knowledge and cultural awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. This will enable us to tailor training to best support our staff's journey of listening, learning and taking action to advance reconciliation.

We acknowledge we are only at the very beginning of our journey. We are committed to improving our relationships through partnerships that promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' autonomy and leadership, while supporting Autistic individuals in their communities.



We commenced our Reflect RAP with the formation of our RAP Working Group (RWG) in 2022. Since then, we have met weekly and initiated some of the action outlined items in our plan:

- Surveyed our staff about their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures
- Liaised with training organisations to secure culture awareness training which is mandatory for all Amaze employees
- Updated staff on our Reflect RAP journey and activities
- Raised awareness of cultural protocols by showing Djirribul woman Shelley Rey's 2021 TEDx Talk "Deliver an Acknowledgement of Country that really means something"

We are also working with Worimi woman and founder of The I Am, Movement, Tanika Perry, to support, identify and assist Amaze in making meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



# Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence to approach and potentially partner with.	January 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Research, summarise and present best practice principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to ensure whole of organisation approach.	May 2023	Head of Evidence and Impact
<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to Amaze staff.	May 2023	Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2023	RAP Working Group
	Encourage and support staff to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2023	RAP Project Manager
<b>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	January 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Launch our final/approved Reflect RAP through all available social media channels and digital platforms.	May 2023	Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. E.g., training organisations with local understanding of cultural practice in Victoria where possible.	January 2023	RAP Project Manager (to inform Head of People and Culture for decision-making)
	Include Reconciliation Australia's "Share Our Pride" online tool in the induction of all new staff and volunteers to increase cultural awareness.	March 2023	Head of People and Culture
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	December 2023	Head of Evidence and Impact
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	August 2023	Head of People and Culture
	Ensure respecting and upholding cultural safety is captured in our organisational code of conduct and clearly communicated as representing the values of Amaze.	February 2023	Head of People and Culture

# Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.</b>	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.	April 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Conduct a review of cultural learning and inclusivity needs within our organisation. We will survey our staff, the data of which will inform and tailor organisation training and learning opportunities.	June 2023	Head of Evidence and Impact (to inform Head of People and Culture for decision-making)
	Make available to all staff a registry of appropriate resources, including information from First Peoples – State Relations and the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council.	November 2023	Head of Evidence and Impact
<b>6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols</b>	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation’s operational area.	June 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Increase staff’s understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	January 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Include Acknowledgement of Country on physical and digital spaces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital: website, social media pages, internal documents and corporate communications, and continue to incorporate in all staff email signatures.</li> <li>Physical: display in meeting rooms, events and shared spaces.</li> </ul>	Review, March 2023	Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement
<b>7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff and volunteers about the meaning of National Aborigines and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week.	June 2023	Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Introduce our staff and volunteers to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area	June 2023	Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement
	Promote culturally appropriate activities/events through our social media channels and webpage in solidarity with NAIDOC week (e.g., a film screening, a panel discussion, morning tea with presentation).	June 2023	Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement
	Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to apply for inclusion leave to attend official celebrations and activities that occur during NAIDOC.	June 2023	Head of People and Culture



# Opportunities



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.</b>	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	June 2023	Head of People and Culture
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	March 2023	Head of People and Culture
	Develop paid, contracted delivery partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led health organisations to support the delivery and reach of Autism Connect and our information and training supports.	July 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Review and update HR and recruitment policies and procedures to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the workforce.	Review January 2023	Head of People and Culture
	Include in position descriptions and job advertisements a commitment of cultural safety, inclusivity, and reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Review January 2023	Head of People and Culture
<b>9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	Develop a business case and operational strategy for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	June 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	June 2023	RAP Project Manager



# Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Review, July 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Maintain a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	January 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	December 2023	RAP Project Manager
<b>11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	February 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. RAP updates to be included as a standing item in our wider leadership and Executive meetings.	January 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	January 2023	Chief Executive Officer
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. RAP progress updates on action plan included in wider leadership meetings.	February 2023	RAP Project Manager
<b>12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June, annually	RAP Project Manager
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August, annually	RAP Project Manager
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	RAP Project Manager
<b>13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	September 2023	Chief Operating Officer





**“On behalf of Amaze,  
I want to express our deep  
gratitude for the generosity,  
compassion and openness  
of Reconciliation Australia  
and Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander peoples and  
cultures, who are allowing  
us to be part of this important  
journey of addressing a  
historical injustice and turning  
that into a shared future.”**

**Jim Mullan, Amaze CEO**









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### **Autism Connect**

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