

Media Release

6 March 2019

A PLAN OF ACTION FOR RECONCILIATION

Directions Health Services' vision for reconciliation is to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not disproportionately impacted by substance use and can access culturally competent treatment and support when they need it.

Releasing the organisations 2018-2020 *Innovate* Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), Directions Health Services President, Frank Quinlan acknowledged that words on paper alone cannot achieve reconciliation with Australia's First People.

The action Directions Health seeks from its RAP is to support staff to work more sensitively, respectfully and in unison with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and communities.

"We provide services across the ACT and regional NSW for both individuals and family members," Directions Health Services CEO, Bronwyn Hendry explained. "Whilst a smaller proportion of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people use alcohol and other drugs compared to the Australian average, the impact of substance misuse on their families and communities is high.

"Directions Health is striving to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who want to seek assistance feel comfortable and able to do so. We believe the most effective services are those that meet each person's individual needs."

When speaking with staff while preparing the RAP, a Wiradjuri staff member defined reconciliation as walking "with Aboriginal people on their journey to healing by not telling them what to do, but by working with them. Giving them the tools to restore their lives."

"This is a moving description of what we are striving for with our Reconciliation Action Plan," Ms Hendry said.

"While this is our first RAP, the principles of reconciliation are embedded in Directions' philosophy and organisational culture. We hope by formalising our commitment to reconciliation we can drive positive change and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"I would like to thank all the staff who helped develop the RAP and Nevada Brown from Coolamon Advisors who generously worked with us. Ms Brown is a Ngunnawal woman with a wealth of experience and knowledge and we were privileged to be able to draw on her expertise."

The Directions Health RAP is available at www.directionshealth.com

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