



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

**phn**

NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

An Australian Government Initiative



# Reflect

# Reconciliation Action Plan

Northern Queensland PHN | September 2018-19

# Cover artwork

*The Indigenous Healing Mandala* by Luke Mallie • [www.malliedesigns.com](http://www.malliedesigns.com)



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*Northern Queensland Primary Health Network acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we live and work, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.*





## Message from NQPHN Board Chair, Vladislav Matic



Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our region by ensuring we understand how to embed culturally appropriate foundations across all aspects of NQPHN operations.

In order to advance our commitment, NQPHN has established a dedicated Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, recognising that an increase in community engagement and co-design requires greater insight regarding the barriers and opportunities that are impacting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As part of NQPHN's journey, we are pleased to provide our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan which outlines our commitment to embedding a shared vision for reconciliation by addressing key actions to foster mutually respectful, meaningful, and inclusive relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and their communities within our region.

NQPHN acknowledges that building relationships and opportunities with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both internally and within communities, builds a better understanding of the importance of culture and heritage. Broadening our knowledge of customs, traditions, and values sets the precedent for internal sustainable change, thus re-defining the way NQPHN plans, acts, and engages.

This Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan is the first step in our reconciliation journey, and it is a key starting point for NQPHN to walk together as we learn and grow on this continuous improvement path to build successive plans for the future.

The NQPHN Board is honoured to support this first step in a meaningful pathway toward reconciliation, inclusion, and the wellbeing of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vladislav Matic', written in a cursive style.

Dr Vladislav Matic

*MBBS (Syd) M. Bus (Mgmt) FACRRM FRACGP FAICD*

Chair

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network

## Message from Reconciliation Australia CEO, Karen Mundine



Reconciliation Australia is delighted to welcome Northern Queensland Primary Health Network to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program and to formally endorse its inaugural Reflect RAP.

As a member of the RAP community, Northern Queensland Primary Health Network joins over 1,000 dedicated corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have formally committed to reconciliation through the RAP program since its inception in 2006. RAP organisations across Australia are turning good intentions into positive actions, helping to build higher trust, lower prejudice, and increased pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Reconciliation is no one single issue or agenda. Based on international research and benchmarking, Reconciliation Australia defines and measures reconciliation through five critical dimensions: race relations; equality and equity, institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. All sections of the community—governments, civil society, the private sector, and Aboriginal and Strait Islander communities—have a role to play to progress these dimensions.

The RAP program provides a framework for organisations to advance reconciliation within their spheres of influence. This Reflect RAP provides Northern Queensland Primary Health Network a roadmap to begin its reconciliation journey. Through implementing a Reflect RAP, Northern Queensland Primary Health Network will lay the foundations for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

We wish Northern Queensland Primary Health Network well as it takes these first critical steps in its reconciliation journey. We encourage the organisation to embrace this journey with open hearts and minds, to grow from the challenges, and to build on the successes. As the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation reminded the nation in its final report:

“Reconciliation is hard work—it’s a long, winding and corrugated road, not a broad, paved highway. Determination and effort at all levels of government and in all sections of the community will be essential to make reconciliation a reality.”

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Northern Queensland Primary Health Network on its first RAP, and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen Mundine'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

Karen Mundine  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
Reconciliation Australia







## Our business

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation funded by the Australian Government to commission services to meet the health needs and priorities of our region, with a vision to help northern Queenslanders live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Across northern Queensland, from Sarina in the south to the Torres Strait in the north, NQPHN co-ordinates and commissions primary and preventive healthcare—that is, the healthcare that is undertaken outside of a hospital, such as GPs, allied health, chronic disease management, aged care, mental health, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Primary health care is recognised as the most effective way to keep communities and individuals healthy and well. NQPHN identifies where there are areas of need, such as lack of healthcare services, difficulty in accessing these services, or regions with particularly high health needs, and works closely with GPs, allied health care providers, hospitals, and the broader community to ensure that people can receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

We aim to improve health outcomes for all by working with GPs, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, allied health professionals, and organisations specialising in chronic disease management, health promotion, aged care, mental health, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. We also work with secondary care providers, hospitals, and the wider community.

NQPHN currently employs upwards of 80 staff, five of whom identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Our region spans an area of 510,000km<sup>2</sup> and is home to over 730,000 residents, of whom 11 per cent are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The majority of our population is located within the regional centres of Cairns, Townsville, and Mackay, but a significant amount of people live outside of the cities in rural and remote communities, including Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait Islands. Our region includes four Hospital and Health Services, and covers 31 local government and Aboriginal Land Council areas.

NQPHN's main office is located in Cairns, with regional offices located in Townsville and Mackay.





## Our RAP

NQPHN is strongly committed to embarking on a journey of learning and discovery through the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP will help to build a culturally-aware workforce, improve upon appropriate practices, and strengthen our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. With an organisational purpose to drive change within and support primary health care to improve individual and community health, we recognise the importance of an inclusive and culturally appropriate approach towards our core business activities.

The RAP development will guide NQPHN to improve our relationship and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Its development reflects a deep-seeded commitment by the NQPHN Board and our Members to assure the actions and programs developed by NQPHN are culturally relevant, safe, and give due consideration to the aspirations of our nation's First Peoples. NQPHN is at the beginning of this journey and is being guided by the frameworks and experiences of Reconciliation Australia.

NQPHN is developing a RAP to:

- acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture by continuing to build an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customs, values, and traditions through ongoing education

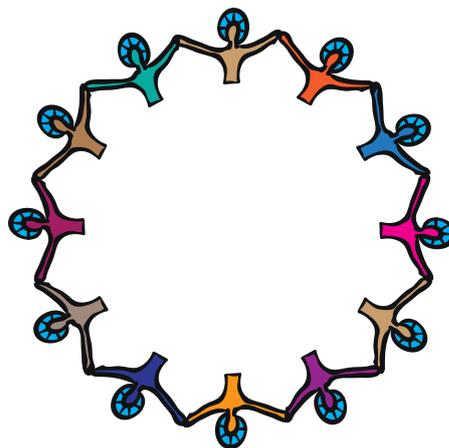
- improve relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our region
- build partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to ensure more effective and relevant engagement, and make meaningful contributions to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our region
- inform NQPHN's commissioning activities and procurement to improve clinically and culturally-safe and accessible primary health services, including championing connected and integrated service commissioning actions wherever possible
- support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and services in identifying and securing resources that meet locally-identified health needs
- demonstrate NQPHN's continuing focus and commitment to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan and other State and national policy frameworks which aim to Close the Gap
- support workforce development actions which assist to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations, and communities.



## Our RAP team

NQPHN's RAP is championed internally by the NQPHN Board, Chief Executive Officer, NQPHN RAP Working Group, and all NQPHN staff. The RAP was developed by the RAP Working Group, with members including NQPHN employees:

- Vivian Mook  
(Area Manager/RAP Chair)
- Dearne Lee  
(Senior Program Officer)
- Karina Hughes  
(Communications Officer)
- Terri-Ann Christensen  
(Executive Assistant)
- Emily Craze (Program Officer)
- Niki Naylor (Area Manager)
- Bernie Triggs  
(Senior Program Officer)
- Frankie Clive (Executive Director)
- Lauriann Trevy (Area Manager)
- Tracey Woolf  
(Senior Program Officer)
- Nicolette Mancigli  
(Administration Officer)
- Dana Triffett (Senior Program Officer)
- Jacqui Morris  
(Senior Program Officer)





## Our partnerships and current activities

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) plays an important role in planning, co-ordinating, and funding primary health care services across the region. We do this by working with the local community, clinicians, health, and other services to identify gaps and develop solutions that will work within our region. Our goals and strategies guide us to commission primary health care services that meet local health needs.

Stakeholder engagement is the meaningful and purposeful engagement in the process of decision-making by persons or groups who have an interest in a decision and/or its consequences. NQPHN's stakeholders include persons, groups, or communities who have a vested interest in 'what we do and who are, in some way, connected to our purpose'. NQPHN engages with these stakeholders in order to achieve its vision of 'Northern Queenslanders live happier, healthier, longer lives'.

NQPHN has made a commitment to broad engagement in its strategic goals, which are:

- to place individuals at the centre of their own health and wellbeing
- to work with communities to understand local needs, and design and implement solutions that improve local health and wellbeing
- to ensure an integrated approach to health and wellbeing
- to build local capacity to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

NQPHN has established relationships and collaboration with local Aboriginal organisations across the region. We recognise that NQPHN can significantly improve our engagement and that this journey needs to be informed by a clear and measurable plan, and a commitment by NQPHN to be transparent in these approaches. NQPHN will build on our existing relationships and develop new partnerships in the development of the RAP by connecting with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The NQPHN Board and Membership recognises that an increase in community engagement and co-design is required to gain greater insight about the issues, barriers, and opportunities impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and commits to including reconciliation actions and activities in our workplaces. As an initial principle, NQPHN will apply the following processes to inform developments of a targeted Reconciliation Action Plan as an outcome of our initial steps on the Reconciliation journey:

- Seek advice on who are the 'appropriate' cultural representatives to be invited/participate.
- Clearly assess and address cultural considerations of all cultural groups.
- Be responsive/receptive to cultural issues that may arise at 'last minute', e.g. Sorry Business, family considerations.
- Ensure 'Welcome to Country' protocol—acknowledge and/or invite Traditional Owners to perform this practice.
- Use other relevant cultural protocols as appropriate.

## Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish a RAP Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue operation of RAP Working Group to support the implementation of our RAP, comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and decision-making staff from across our NQPHN organisation. The working group is to meet at least four times a year, with each meeting documented and uploaded to the NQPHN staff intranet.</li> </ul>	September 2018 December 2018 March 2019	NQPHN Board & NQPHN CEO
2. Build internal and external relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Elder Groups, communities, and organisations within the NQPHN region that could be approached to connect with on our reconciliation journey and develop ongoing relationships with.</li> <li>Develop a list of RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations that NQPHN could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey.</li> <li>Actively participate and attend community meetings to network with other like-minded organisations.</li> <li>Strengthen already developed relationships and partnerships with stakeholders, organisations, and community groups within the NQPHN region to help produce outcomes that focus on positive health initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and aim to close the gap.</li> </ul>	October 2018  October 2018  June 2019  October 2018 June 2019	RAP Chair
3. Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate and introduce NQPHN staff to reconciliation and National Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June)</li> <li>Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> <li>Encourage staff to attend a local NRW event and internal NRW morning tea.</li> <li>Promote and circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all NQPHN staff through NQPHN's social media pages, fortnightly newsletter, intranet, website, and visual displays of posters and flyers in each NQPHN office location.</li> </ul>	27 May 2018- 3 June 2019	Area Manager



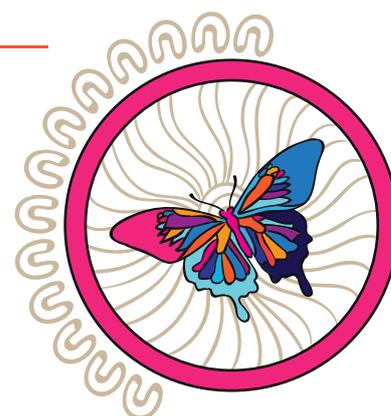
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness amongst all staff across the organisation about our RAP commitments and ensure all staff remain informed. This will be done with the use of internal communications via the staff intranet, internal posters, weekly staff meetings, CEO communications, and newsletters.</li> </ul>	September 2018	RAP Chair & Communications Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a plan to engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP to ensure they are proactive in promoting awareness, and leading by example in championing reconciliation. This will be done via team meetings, the staff intranet, cultural awareness and/or competency training, and newsletters.</li> </ul>	November 2018	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness of NQPHN's RAP amongst consumers, stakeholders, and other relevant organisations associated with NQPHN. This will be done via NQPHN's website, social media pages, and media releases.</li> </ul>	December 2018	



# Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for increasing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, and achievements within NQPHN</li> <li>Articulate how a RAP continues NQPHN's work of leading by example and doing the right thing, and how it benefits NQPHN.</li> <li>Evaluate NQPHN staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, and achievements.</li> <li>Ensure cultural knowledge for all staff is a continual process through training programs, mentoring, and connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, through compulsory cultural competency and cultural awareness training for all staff, both new and existing.</li> <li>Encourage and promote all NQPHN staff to use Reconciliation Australia's 'Share our Pride' website.</li> <li>Ensure all new employees receive an introduction to NQPHN's RAP as part of their induction.</li> <li>Develop a calendar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance, and acknowledge these via internal and external communications.</li> <li>Investigate cultural immersion programs across the NQPHN region and opportunities for staff to be involved.</li> </ul>	<p>Development: January 2019</p> <p>Review: April 2019</p>	Area Manager
6. Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness and share information amongst NQPHN staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week, which includes seeking information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in which we work.</li> <li>Introduce NQPHN staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting events in our communities via the staff intranet.</li> <li>Actively promote and support NQPHN employees' engagement in local NAIDOC celebrations, leading up to and including NAIDOC Week.</li> <li>All NQPHN staff will participate in at least one external NAIDOC Week event within the communities in which we work, incorporating/highlighting aspects of primary health and coordinating opportunities for community engagement and connection.</li> </ul>	July 2019	Area Manager





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope and develop a list of local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within the areas of the NQPHN region, and have available for all NQPHN staff to access.</li> <li>• Provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational information on the staff intranet, including community profiles, meaning of reconciliation, practiced traditions, meaning of culturally appropriate and culturally safe, and how to put that into practice.</li> <li>• Explore existing partnerships to determine which of our partner organisations have a current Reconciliation Action Plan, and promote awareness where required.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols, including any local cultural protocols.</li> <li>• Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as guest speakers to NQPHN events and staff meetings to talk about their culture.</li> <li>• Explore online resources to assist staff to better understand cultural practices, in particular, the use of Reconciliation Australia website and 'Share Our Pride' online resources.</li> <li>• Incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander symbols, paintings, and artworks into NQPHN literature and/or infrastructure where appropriate.</li> <li>• Ensure NQPHN employees understand and know the general protocols of specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations or communities prior to engaging with them.</li> <li>• Review cultural protocols on NQPHN procurement and commissioning processes.</li> </ul>	All be developed/ reviewed in: October 2018/June 2019	Area Manager
8. Promote the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture within the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities to erect signage and/or visual recognition of the traditional custodians of the regions that NQPHN covers.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for good news stories to be developed and shared in relation to the work NQPHN is doing within the community relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.</li> </ul>	Scope opportunities: November 2018  Implement: February 2019	Area Manager

## Opportunities



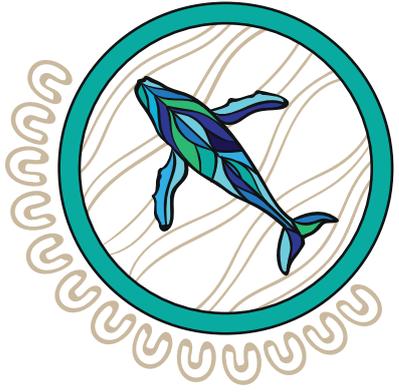
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Investigate how to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within NQPHN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current human resource policies, procedures, and resources to identify constraints and opportunities to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and career development opportunities.</li> <li>NQPHN commits to engaging with current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment.</li> <li>Develop a business case proposing strategies to position NQPHN as an 'employer of choice' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</li> <li>Investigate further education and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples via traineeship and/or funded programs, as well as pathways for vocational education and training qualifications relevant to primary health.</li> </ul>	March 2019	Human Resource Manager
10. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate NQPHN's capacity and eligibility to become a member of Supply Nation.</li> <li>Investigate opportunities for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and/or run businesses within the NQPHN region.</li> <li>Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and/or run businesses, and organisations focused on making a difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</li> <li>Develop a procurement policy reflective of the Commonwealth Government's Indigenous procurement policy.</li> </ul>	November 2018 April 2019 August 2019 September 2019	Area Manager ED Clinical Governance Performance & Contracts and Procurement Manager





# Governance and tracking progress

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Build support for the RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation, including funding, people, partnerships, marketing and communications, collateral, and time.</li> <li>Define systems and capability needs to track, measure, and report on RAP activities, including using PHN key performance indicators.</li> <li>Evaluation of events and participation in external events, using articles, photos, and include in NQPHN's Annual Report.</li> <li>Reporting linked to Department of Health Pre-submission Planning Form (PPF) and NQPHN CEO Report to Board, and report ability in Annual Report.</li> <li>Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia.</li> </ul>	August 2019	Executive Director
12. Review and refresh RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new Innovate RAP based on learnings, challenges, and achievements.</li> <li>Submit draft Innovate RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review.</li> <li>Submit draft Innovate RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement.</li> <li>Evaluation and review prior to expiry of RAP Reflect.</li> </ul>	August 2019	Area Manager



# Our RAP artwork

## Title: *The Indigenous Healing Mandala*

The Indigenous Healing Mandala explores Northern Queensland Primary Health Network's (NQPHN's) commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our region.

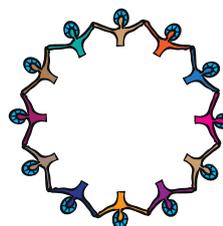
It recognises the importance of an inclusive and culturally-appropriate approach for NQPHN to work with local communities in achieving its vision of helping all northern Queenslanders to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

The combination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander components throughout the artwork represents NQPHN's collaborative approach in strengthening its relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, and nurtures belief and purpose through healthy connections.

The basic circle shape of the mandala is the symbol of eternity, just as spirits are eternal. It also represents the need for people to take care of the body that carries them.



At the centre of NQPHN's Reconciliation Action Plan artwork sits the heart, which encapsulates the family unit. Surrounding this family unit is primary health care (NQPHN) and other healthcare professionals in the community, who link and work together in unity to provide primary health support and education to achieve better living practices.



The linking of hands also represents the evolution of relationships and reconciliation through respect and opportunities.

The five symbols (apple, microscope, healing hand, stethoscope, and 'OK' hand symbol) represent how primary health care links and flows into the community through the support of joint primary healthcare services:

- research and evidence (microscope)
- primary care and education (stethoscope)
- nutrition and healthy living (apple)
- healing and prevention (healing hand)
- mental health support and suicide prevention ('OK' hand).



# Artist profile

Luke Mallie is an award-winning Indigenous artist, who has won the national NAIDOC Poster Award, and the Art Lovers Prize.

Luke's inspiration for his artwork is his family, his Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and his tropical surroundings. His work is also influenced by pop culture, animation, and modern design. "I feel that my artwork is my gift to help others appreciate the beauty of Australian Indigenous cultures through colourful art and designs," he says.

While he was born and bred in Brisbane, Luke's heritage is from North Queensland. His father is from Kubin Village on Moa Island in the Torres Strait Islands, where their spirit totems are the manta ray and sea eagle. His mother is from the Kuku Yalanji people in the Daintree/Mossman area, where their spirit totems are the saltwater crocodile and sea eagle.

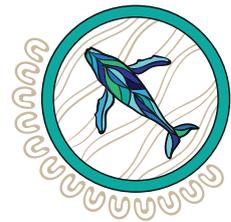
Luke has drawn since he was a young child, and studied a B.A. of Visual Art (Fine Art) and a B.A. of Multimedia Studies. His artistic styles range from original paintings and graphic design to illustrations and murals.

To view more of Luke's work, visit [malliedesigns.com](http://malliedesigns.com)

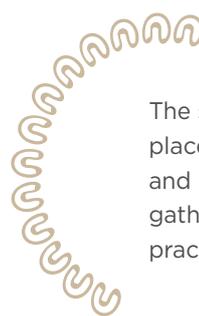


The five animals in the circles represent the regions where they are commonly found, and the regions in which NQPHN commissions its services. They also represent unity and the strength local communities draw from them:

- manta ray (Torres Strait Islands)
- butterfly (Cairns)
- whale (Mackay).
- crocodile (Cape York Peninsula)
- turtle (Townsville)



By drawing a line from each region in the above order, and then finishing with a line from Mackay straight back to the Torres Strait Islands, it creates the shape of a star, which indicates the potential of people who are living a healthy lifestyle.



The symbol of the meeting place surrounds the five regions, and represents where people gather to learn, educate, and practise healthy living.

The flowers on the outside of the mandala represent the beauty of the land throughout these five regions.





For public enquiries  
about our RAP, please contact:

John Gregg, *Chief Executive Officer*  
Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN)

Phone: (07) 4034 0300 Email: [john.gregg@nqphn.com.au](mailto:john.gregg@nqphn.com.au)



Australian Government  
Department of Health

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