

MEDIA RELEASE

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Community focus drives launch of Stretch RAP

National not-for-profit Life Without Barriers (LWB) has developed its latest plan of targeted reconciliation activities – known as the 2016-2019 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) - to ensure its work is focused on a keystone of justice for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Life Without Barriers believes reconciliation must live in the hearts and minds of all Australians and that as a nation everyone needs to work together if we are to close the gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the rest of the population by improving cultural, spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing.

The 2016-2019 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, is LWB's third endorsed RAP in the past seven years, and is a call to action for all. In the plan, key activities, timeframes and targets have been identified to ensure the delivery of services that result in increased opportunities and improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations.

The RAP is a conscious, cooperative and determined action, and LWB Chief Executive Claire Robbs said reconciliation is a strong priority for the organisation.

"We wanted to work effectively and responsibly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ensure our services meet their needs, so we launched our first RAP in 2009 and the second in 2012,"

"The key objective of our 2016-2019 Stretch RAP is to embed cultural recognition in every aspect of our current and future work. We are committed to ensuring it's reflected in our workplaces, our program development, and in our service design and delivery, to ensure respect and positive engagement in the way with work with people and their communities,"

The Stretch RAP has been developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and influenced by the voices of carers, families and communities.

Activities in the 2016-2019 plan include celebrating National Reconciliation Week, meeting regularly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander organisations and people in the community, delivering a high impact Cross Cultural Leadership Program and increasing staff knowledge by providing online learning, cultural immersion and awareness events. Setting targets for staff recruitment is also a key element of the plan.

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Life Without Barriers has learnt much about reconciliation, including the importance of continuing to be consultative and having a formalised stakeholder engagement plan.

Claire Robbs said the detailed nature of the plan gives everyone the chance to be involved.

“The Stretch RAP embodies the value of having a workforce development strategy supported by a dedicated leadership team, who will assist with implementing the plan and ensure delivery of outcomes so it becomes a core component of the way we do business,”

“Reconciliation matters so much and we are committed to being part of that journey in a public way and will hopefully influence other leaders to follow this direction for the future.”

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EDITOR'S NOTES

About Life Without Barriers

Now in our 21st year, Life Without Barriers has supported thousands of people to live the best life possible and we are proud to champion opportunity for all. We are a not-for-profit organisation working in more than 250 communities to support more than 5,500 people to live their best life possible.

Today, we are one of the largest providers of social services in Australia. We work with individuals, their carers and others in the community to ensure the best care and support is developed for each individual's needs. This includes working in partnership with the community, elders, government and private sector to improve the lives of the people we support. We believe in the rights of people and the importance of relationships. These foundations shape our unique approach to care and underpin our values.