



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 16th June 2023

The Y Canberra Region establishes key Indigenous community partnerships in the region as part of new Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan just launched

[The Y Canberra Region](#), formerly YMCA Canberra Region, last night launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan after significant consultation with members of our local First Nations community, across the ACT and NSW, and Reconciliation Australia.

“Our organisation, founded only 80 years ago, was established to serve the needs of our growing Canberra community, extending now from ACT to NSW. The traditional owners of this broader Canberra region, the Ngunnawal, Ngambri, and Ngarigu people, have continually lived and cared for this land for over 60,000 years. Our new refreshed Y mission is to build *A better world, with and for young people*. To be true to this mission, we simply cannot progress without commencing this important reconciliation journey, in working with and for our First Nations local communities.” said Kirsty Dixon, CEO of The Y Canberra Region.

“This inaugural RAP for the Y Canberra Region, is timely, in supporting the Y’s vision to promote and advance justice, peace, equity and human rights for all and follows the important position by Y Australia to support the *Voice to Parliament* and Constitutional recognition for First Nations People,” said Ms Dixon

“We also know that while a strategic mission and vision is important, real change, requires practical action within our local communities, including genuine partnerships with our local First Nations peoples’ said Ms Dixon.

“One example of a new partnership is the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Program where we provided First Nations peoples from our region with gym facilities, programs and support to help all participants work towards a healthier lifestyle.

“Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm is an invaluable resource providing a place of healing for Indigenous peoples from the region. When the opportunity came up for The Y Canberra Region to be a part of the program, we knew we could play a crucial role in contributing to the overall wellbeing of our community,” continued Ms Dixon.

The Ngunnawal Bush Healing partnership is one of several initiatives The Y Canberra Region is delivering as part of its new Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) launched onsite today at the Canberra Sailing Club with members of local Indigenous communities.

Other community partnerships established as part of The Y Canberra Region RAP include investigating the cultural significance of a site leased from the ACT Government which has historically been used for school camps; engaging Aaron Chatfield of Dream Time Connections to help The Y improve how it integrates cultural education with the organisation and as part of this, the establishment of native gardens and providing education to over 3500 children and young people; consulting with a local artist, Rayne Huddleston from Urulah Cultural Art, who was commissioned to complete a mural and facilitate workshops teaching children Aboriginal art within The Y's Vacation Care programs; discussions with Elders from the Ngambri and Ngunnawal people around the historical significance of the land (Camp Sturt) and what opportunities might be presented to ensure the land is respectfully used by the local First Nations people in partnership with The Y.

Other collaborative initiatives include SBS inclusion training for The Y Canberra Region's management team on themes central to the understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, engaging in community events for NAIDOC week, Reconciliation Day and Tracks to Reconciliation in the Kippax community.

"We also aim to provide early learning environments for our children and families, that focus on learning curriculums and resources that reflect a sense of place, culture and histories, with specific focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"We are excited to be enhancing our current partnerships and also creating new linkages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations in commencing our reconciliation journey" concluded Ms Dixon.

For more information about The Y Canberra Region, visit www.ymcacanberra.org.au

MEDIA CONTACT:

For more information, images or to arrange an interview contact Lauren Griffiths, Threesides, on 0417 409 264 or lauren.griffiths@threesides.com.au

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

About The Y Canberra Region:

- Established in 1941, The Y Canberra Region, formerly YMCA Canberra Region, has grown side-by-side with the nation's capital.
- Today, The Y Canberra Region's vision is to build a better world, with and for young people.
- The Y Canberra Region delivers services across Canberra and its surrounds in community health, recreation and fitness, before and after school care, early learning centres, accommodation, camps and youth services.
- The Y Canberra Region are a significant local employer providing employment to over 400 staff and volunteers.
- The Y Canberra Region assists many Canberra Region families each year, engaged through the Y's various business.
- For more information on The Y Canberra Region, visit www.ymcacanberra.org.au, call (02) 6242 4040 or follow us on social media @YMCACanberra

About Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm:

- Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm provides a place of healing, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can feel safe and supported to make ongoing and meaningful changes in their lives.
- The Farm uses a therapeutic community approach, traditional healing concepts, cultural programs and life skills training to tackle underlying social and economic issues.
- The Farm is open to anyone aged 18-50 years who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and does not have a history of violent and/or sexual offending. There are a range of criteria for people to attend and a referral process in place.
- For more information visit <https://www.health.act.gov.au/services-and-programs/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health/health-and-wellbeing-service-0>