

# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

JULY 2023 - JULY 2024

**LAW** ARCHITECTS



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

**Law Architects PTY Ltd.**

2/45 Watkins St, Fitzroy North VIC 3068

**T +61 3 9489 9200**

[studio@lawarchitects.com.au](mailto:studio@lawarchitects.com.au)

<https://www.lawarchitects.com.au/>

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN - *REFLECT*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Law Architects acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the unceded lands on which our team collectively live and work ...

- *Woiwurrung*
- *Boonwurrung, and*
- *Wathaurung in Victoria,*
- *Bundjalung in New South Wales, and*
- *Turrbal in Queensland*

We recognise the unique connections held by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples to the land, waterways and skies of the Australian continent for more than 60,000 years.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and express our gratitude for their continued sharing of knowledge and culture.





# CONTENTS

CEO STATEMENT

OUR BUSINESS

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

OUR PARTNERSHIP & ACTIVITIES

OUR RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP

RELATIONSHIPS

RESPECT

OPPORTUNITIES

GOVERNANCE

RAP EXECUTION PROGRAM

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please note that all photographs (excluding Karen Mundine's photo) were taken by Law Architects and all the individuals have given permission for their images to be used.

# CEO STATEMENT

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Law Architects to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

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

**Karen Mundine**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia*







## OUR BUSINESS

LAW ARCHITECTS' core business is to provide professional services in civic and architectural placemaking.

We are committed to the delivery of environmentally and socially sustainable architecture, and endeavour to connect our client communities to their specific contexts through daylighting, natural ventilation, materiality and connection to landscape.

Our clients, who are primarily educational, community or government organisations who set our project briefs and budgets. We like to work collaboratively with them in designing built environments and landscapes that respond to existing topography, flora and fauna of their sites.

Our work to date has been mainly focused in metropolitan, growth and regional areas of Victoria. However, it has been awarded both regional (SE Asia, including Australia and NZ) and international (US) recognition in educational facility design.

We currently employ 27 people, none of whom are presently known to be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Our main studio is located in North Fitzroy, Melbourne on Woi-Wurrung (Wurundjeri) country, and when our team regularly work from home offices, who are mostly based on Woi-Wurrung (Wurundjeri) & Boon-Wurrung (Wurundjeri) lands of the Kulin Nation. We also have individuals who are located on Wathawurrung country in Melbourne's west, Bundjalung country on the NSW North Coast, and Turrbal (Yuggera) on traditional lands in Brisbane. From time to time, individuals also regularly work remotely from Torquay, Cape Patterson, Gippsland and Mornington Peninsula in Victoria.





## OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

LAW ARCHITECTS understand our work has the potential to impact on sites and communities, and we hold a responsibility to influence and contribute to positive social outcomes.

We firmly believe reconciliation is based upon truth-telling and accountability, and hope our work can increase the collective efforts toward reconciliation through the development and implementation of this Reconciliation Action Plan.

We recognise every project in Australia is on unceded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land, and every project we undertake is on Country that holds its own particular knowledge, culture and story.

We approach each project with a sensitivity to the local context, climate and opportunities. Our methodology is collaborative and iterative, as we engage with clients, stakeholders and community to understand the project brief, site and history.

In 2022, LAW ARCHITECTS established an internal RAP Working Group to listen, learn and raise awareness within our spheres of influence. Our aims this RAP are to educate our practice, and foster meaningful relationships within the communities in which we design and collaborate.

We are still in the formative Reflect phase of our reconciliation journey, and although our actions to date have been limited, we are committed for the long term.

Along with the Working Group, we have endorsed two RAP Champions in Vicki Leo and Nicole Kirby to drive the engagement process within the practice. Each deliverable in our RAP will be jointly shared by at least two members of the group.

## OUR PARTNERSHIPS & ACTIVITIES

In 2022, LAW ARCHITECTS collectively committed to including an Acknowledgement of Country in our weekly whole-of-studio Learnings gatherings, key presentations, major submissions, proposals and email signatures. We have further added an Acknowledgement of Country on our website.

We have an established and ongoing relationship with Aunty Lois Peeler at Worawa Aboriginal College, in Healesville Victoria, and have recently assisted the College in the development of new learning facilities.

On our government-funded school projects particularly, LAW ARCHITECTS have endeavoured to liaise with representatives at the Victorian Aboriginal Educational Association Inc. (VAEAI), who introduced us to local community representatives for our projects for co-design input and consultation:

- Woi-wurrung Uncle Alf at Mickleham Primary School
- Woi-wurrung Aunty Gail and Aunty Julieanne at Concord Specialist School
- Woi-wurrung Aunty Doreen at Upper Yarra Secondary College

We are committed to fostering greater community engagement through the implementation of this and our future RAPs. We will aim for continual improvement and growth in initiatives and processes with each subsequent RAP phase.

This year our RAP Working Group has endeavoured to first understand, through processes of self-education and participation that included:

- collective reading of Songlines: The Power and Promise, by Margo Neale and Lynne Kelly
- attendance by individuals at Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) Parlour talks Deadly Djurumin Yarns, presented by ... Dr Daniele Hromek and Sarah Lyn Rees  
*<https://parlour.org.au/parlour-live/deadly-djurumin-yarns/deadly-djurumin-yarns/>*
- attendance by individuals at AIA CPD Session Connect, Engage, Design with Country, presented by indigenous architect and academic Carroll Go-Sam from Brisbane
- attendance by individuals at AIA CPD Session on architects' professional competencies presented by Kathlyn Loseby of the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA), indigenous architect Sarah Lyn Rees from Melbourne, and Dr Daniele Hromek director of Djinjama in NSW.
- Listening by individuals of LEA Places for Learning podcast, Episode 3, Traditional Knowledge in Design, presented by Yorta Yorta man, Dr Scott Alterator,  
*<https://play.acast.com/s/places-for-learning/traditional-knowledge-in-design>*
- Attendance by individuals at a WSP seminars, Working with Indigenous People & Co-Design, presented by Sian & Michael Hromek, and Matt Pellow of WSP in NSW.
- Attendance by individuals at Interface Carpets collection release, Upon Common Ground
- In 2023, our Working Group will collectively endeavour to read Design: Building on Country, by Alison Page & Paul Memmott, ed. Margo Neale.



# OUR RAP WORKING GROUP

LAW ARCHITECTS established a working group drawing together people who are passionate about developing our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Serendipitously, this group has achieved representation from all levels of our practice structure, from director to assistant. Each member will participate and contribute, regardless of level, and assume responsibility and ownership of tasks in each of the RAP phases.

Our RAP Working Group comprises the following individuals:



**Sandy Law**  
Managing Director



**Vicki Leo**  
Principal - RAP Champion



**Suki Styant-Browne**  
Studio Manager



**Chris Cogdon**  
Senior Associate



**Krystal Rawnson**  
Associate



**Patrick Hayes**  
Associate



**Nicole Kirby**  
Architect - RAP Champion



**Hansi Hettikanda**  
Project Assistant



# RELATIONSHIPS



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Architect (RAP Champion)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Architect (RAP Champion)
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</li> </ul>	May 2024	Studio Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June 2024	Studio Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June 2024	Studio Manager
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.</li> </ul>	July 2023	Managing Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Architect (RAP Champion)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Principal (RAP Champion)
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Associate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.</li> </ul>	September 2023	Studio Manager

# RESPECT



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	• Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	October 2023	Associate
	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	October 2023	Associate
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation’s operational area.	September 2023	Architect (RAP Champion)
	• Increase staff’s understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	July 2023	Studio Manager
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• Raised awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2024	Studio Manager
	• Introduced our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	Studio Manager
	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2024	Studio Manager

# OPPORTUNITIES



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.</li> </ul>	July 2023	Associate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</li> </ul>	July 2023	Managing Director
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a formal strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.</li> </ul>	July 2023	Architect (RAP Champion)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain Supply Nation membership.</li> </ul>	July 2023	Senior Associate



# GOVERNANCE



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	November 2023	Architect (RAP Champion)
	• Review and update a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	December 2023	Principal (RAP Champion)
	• Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	January 2024	Managing Director
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July 2023	Principal (RAP Champion)
	• Continue to engage our RAP Champions by reviewing their progress and feedback regularly.	December 2023	Managing Director
	• Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	February 2023	Managing Director
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	July 2023	Associate
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	• 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	Studio Manager
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August, annually	Architect (RAP Champion)
	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Senior Associate
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	April 2024	Studio Manager



**RAP Contact:**

Vicki Leo (RAP Champion)

T : +61 3 9489 9200

E : vicki.leo@lawarchitects.com.au

Nicole Kirby (RAP Champion)

T : +61 3 9489 9200

E : nicole.kirby@lawarchitects.com.au

**Law Architects (Head Office)**

The Old Dairy

2/45 Watkins St,

Fitzroy North VIC 3068

**T +61 3 9489 9200**

studio@lawarchitects.com.au