

■ Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

Gadens

February 2022 – February 2023

About our artwork

Gadens partnered with Melbourne not for profit organisation [The Torch](#) to license artworks for use in our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

Since 2011 The Torch has been providing art, cultural and arts industry support to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria through its Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community program.

The program supports the development of self-esteem, confidence and resilience, through cultural strengthening and artistic expression. The Torch assists artists to reconnect with culture, earn income from art sales (with 100% of the sale price going directly to the artist), foster new networks and to pursue educational and creative industry avenues upon their release.

By embracing program participants as artists rather than offenders, The Torch provides an avenue to change.

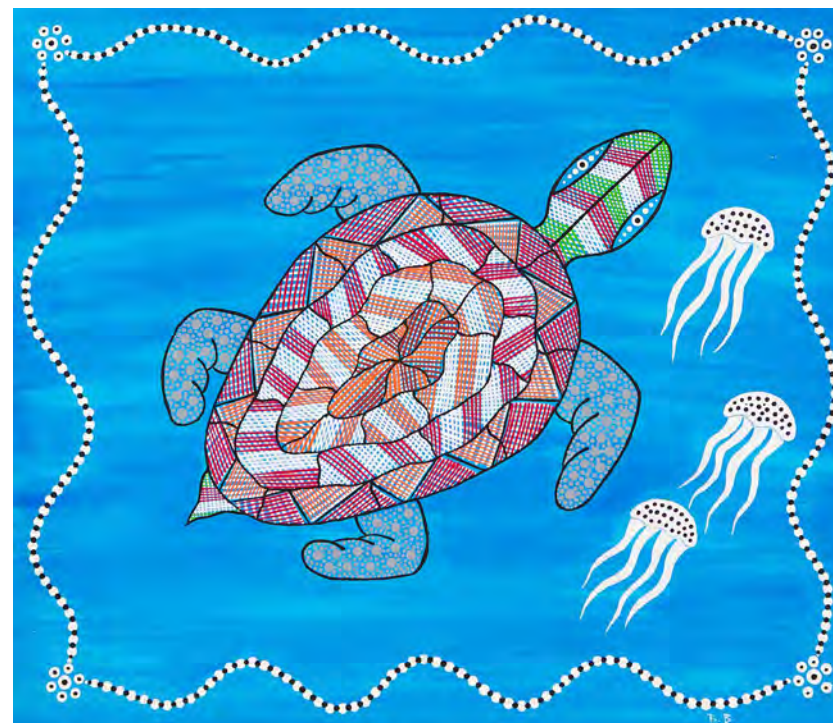
A selection of works by artists of the Traditional Custodians of the land where our offices are based were shortlisted and put to our full Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. The group selected 'Dreaming of a Turtle' by Wurundjeri artist Brenton and 'On the Move' by Wurundjeri artist Scott M for inclusion in our design.

Elements of the artworks have been incorporated throughout the Gadens Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. 'On the Move' has been licensed to also feature on Acknowledgement of Country plaques for our offices.

In further support of these artists, Gadens has purchased the original canvas works for display in our Melbourne and Sydney offices.

Acknowledgement of Country

Gadens acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. In particular we acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land our Sydney office is located on, and the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land our Melbourne office is located on.



Brenton (Wurundjeri) 'Dreaming of a Turtle' 2021, acrylic on canvas

I dreamed of turtles swimming up the Yarra before the pollution and muck was washed into our river.



Scott M (Wurundjeri) 'On the Move' 2020, acrylic on canvas

This is my first painting and I chose to paint a Goanna, to me it represents me in some ways. Goannas are solitary animals and I'm somewhat the same. Always on the move, always travelling exploring new challenges and adventures, because you never know what is around the next corner. In this world of trials and tribulations, I've found solace in my art and culture.

Message from Reconciliation Australia

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

Gadens joins a network of more than 1,100 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 Gadens 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 Gadens, 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



Message from the Chairman and the CEO of Gadens

Gadens' support for reconciliation reflects our commitment to First Nations people and our commitment to inclusion and diversity more generally.

These are two key elements of our firm's strategy and commitment to our people and the communities we serve.

We acknowledge the role that laws and the justice system have played in the oppression and disenfranchisement of First Nations peoples in this country, and the role it can play in addressing that oppression and disenfranchisement.

As lawyers and others working in a leading Australian law firm, we have an obligation to contribute to righting the wrongs of the past and present.

All of us at Gadens have the opportunity to contribute to reconciliation, whether it be through supporting our First Nations clients and team members, sharing our skills on a pro bono basis to support First Nations organisations and people, creating opportunities for First Nations people, learning about First Nations history and celebrating First Nations culture.

In the last year we formed our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, introduced an Acknowledgement of Country Protocol for our offices, voiced our support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart, switched to First Nations suppliers, celebrated cultural events such as NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week and undertook cultural awareness training.

We have also partnered with First Nations led organisations to deliver pro bono legal services and financial assistance.

We recognise that we are just getting started and we are proud to now be embarking on a Reflect-level RAP, to be implemented over the next 12 months.

We would like to thank everyone internally and externally who have worked together to create this plan. We are particularly grateful to the people who have helped us understand First Nations priorities, perspectives and approaches including Reconciliation Australia, our partner community organisations, and our friends in Brisbane, particularly Kathryn Dorante.

We would also like to thank Gadens' own Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, whose members have been a driving force in implementing our reconciliation efforts and bringing our Reconciliation Action Plan to life. We look forward to working with them further over the next 12 months.

We are proud of the progress we have made so far, but we recognise that there is so much more we need to do. We are committed to doing that, and hope that all of the people at Gadens will be part of our reconciliation journey.



Jeremy Smith
Chairman
Gadens



Mark Pistilli
Chief Executive Officer
Gadens

About Gadens

Gadens Melbourne and Sydney is a leading Australian law firm with 54 partners and 343 staff across offices located in Melbourne and Sydney. We currently have one known First Nations staff employed in our workplace. With our history dating back to 1847, our vision is to be recognised as a leading Australian law firm.

Gadens Melbourne and Sydney is led by our Chief Executive Officer, Mark Pistilli, together with our Board and Management Team.

We regularly undertake highly complex and day-to-day legal work for a wide range of clients across multiple industry sectors. Our clients include Governments at all levels, major Australian and multinational organisations – we are advisors to a number of the Top 200 companies listed on the ASX – as well as many small to medium-sized businesses, and high-net-worth families and individuals.

Our mission is to help people achieve their purpose in a complex world. To do so, we aim to lead by example, inspire others, innovate and build something we are all proud of.

Our core values are the firm's foundation and reflect the essence and character of the firm – they define how we interact with one another and our clients.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

Developing our Reconciliation Action Plan

Gadens has been a longstanding supporter of the ongoing process of reconciliation with First Nations peoples. We consider that reconciliation is important to our firm, our clients, the community within which we work and Australia's future.

As a law firm, we recognise that our professional standing confers a responsibility to contribute to the community, and this includes our professional and ethical responsibility to enhance access to the legal system. We have a responsibility to assist disadvantaged and marginalised people within the communities in which we live and work, enhance access to the legal system and embrace the concept of corporate social responsibility.

We recognise that the process of reconciliation involves a considered, genuine understanding and recognition of Australia's history coupled with contemporary collaboration with First Nations peoples.

Our CEO Mark Pistilli will be our RAP Champion. He will be ultimately responsible for championing the RAP internally and keeping staff focused and motivated.

In our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, we will formalise our existing commitment to reconciliation, consolidate our current initiatives and assist our firm to further develop relationships with First Nations stakeholders. A key part of this process is to improve our firm's internal awareness and understanding of the continuing challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities in Australia and develop culturally appropriate policies that reflect our firm's commitment to reconciliation.

Our reconciliation journey

Gadens has a proud history of supporting various community assistance initiatives aimed at engaging with, and giving back to, our local communities within which we live and work. We are a signatory to the Australian Pro Bono Centre's Target which encourages lawyers to subscribe to a voluntary target of 35 hours of pro bono work per lawyer per annum. Accordingly, we encourage our people across all areas and levels of the firm to proactively undertake pro bono work and participate in community assistance initiatives. The development of a formalised RAP is demonstrative of our ongoing commitment to supporting these initiatives and championing the rights of First Nations peoples.

Our RAP Working Group

Gadens' commitment to reconciliation has strong support from the members of the Gadens' Board and Executive Management Team and, in particular, the firm's Chief Executive Officer Mr Mark Pistilli and Chairman Jeremy Smith. At an implementation and integration level, our RAP is championed and driven by the RAP Working Group made up of a variety of representatives from across the firm.

Our RAP Working Group is currently made up of the following people:

RAP Chair

Sophie McNamara – Head of Sustainability and Social Impact

RAP Working Group

Ailsa Pender – Business Development and Marketing Coordinator

Andrea Towson – Partner

Cassandra Krylov – Senior Advisor

Deivina Peethamparam – Partner

Kathy Merrick – Partner, Board Member

Kelly Griffiths – Partner

Phoebe Brosnan – Senior Associate

Shabnum Cassim – Senior Associate - Sustainability and Social Impact

Sharna White – Lawyer

Stephanie Rawlinson – Senior Associate

Susan Verginis – Senior Associate

Our partnerships/ current activities

We are proud of our long standing partnerships with Many Rivers and First Nations Media Australia, organisations that focus on empowering First Nations peoples as they build their own businesses and tell their own stories.

We also encourage firm wide participation in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week celebrations. We are proud supporters of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Through our pro bono program, we have assisted a number of First Nations people to access justice. We have major partnerships with community legal centres including Fitzroy Legal Service (FLS), where we have recently commenced a prison advocacy program. A key objective of the prison advocacy program is to increase capacity so that FLS can promote the program to reach people in prison who need legal assistance relating to their incarceration, particularly groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

With the development of our RAP, we hope to expand our pro bono offering to First Nations communities and build connections with key organisations focused on creating a better future for disadvantaged Australians.



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	Identify First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	February 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	February 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April 2022	Business Development and Marketing Coordinator
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2022	RAP Board Member
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Message from CEO – All users email, posted on intranetStatement on websiteMedia release	February 2022	CEO
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	February 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	February 2022	Senior Advisor - Sustainability and Social Impact
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	April 2022	People and Development Manager
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	April 2022	People and Development Manager



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	February 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact Senior Advisor - Sustainability and Social Impact Business Development and Marketing Coordinator
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	March 2022	People and Development Manager Head of Sustainability and Social Impact
6. Demonstrate respect to First Nations 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.	February 2022	Senior Advisor - Sustainability and Social Impact Business Development and Marketing Coordinator
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	February 2022	Senior Advisor - Sustainability and Social Impact Head of Sustainability and Social Impact Business Development and Marketing Coordinator
7. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact Business Development and Marketing Coordinator
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact Business Development and Marketing Coordinator
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week July 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact





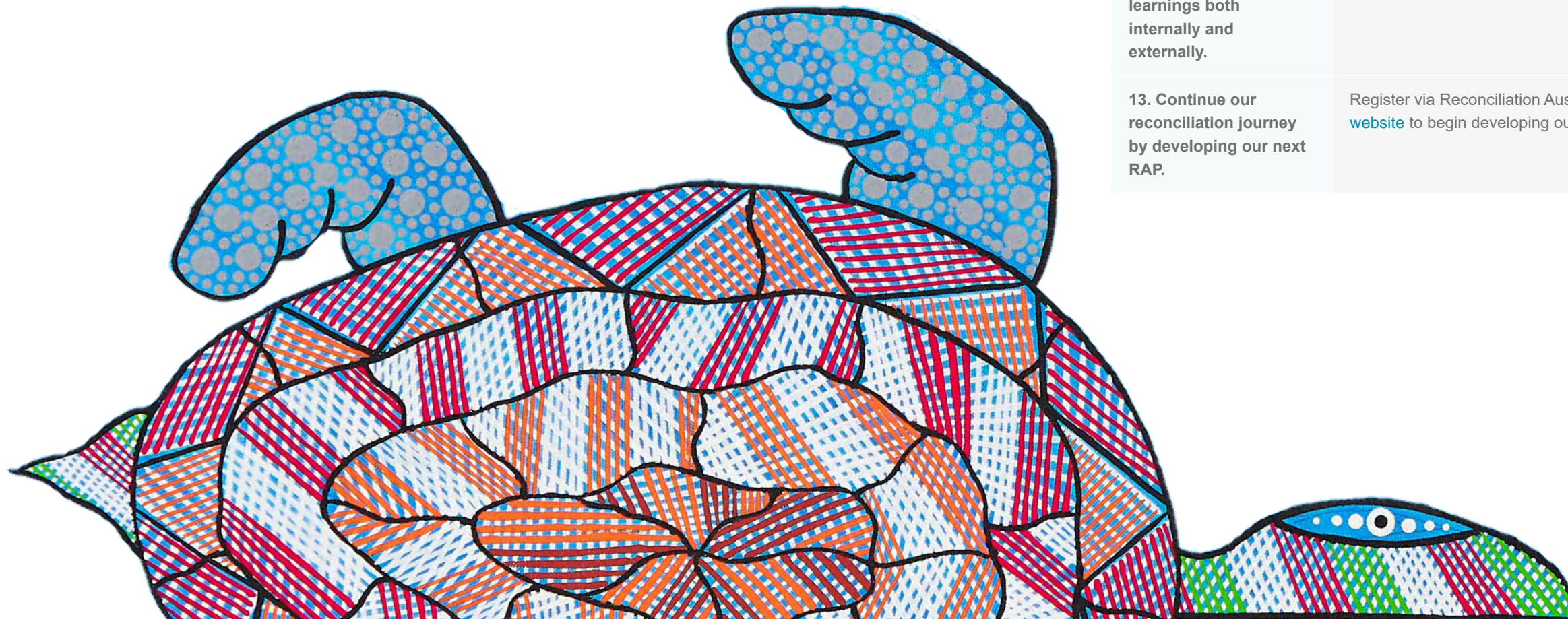
Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for First Nations employment within our organisation.	February 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact People and Development Manager
	Build understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	February 2022	People and Development Manager
	Develop a business case for CareerTrackers.	April 2022	People and Development Manager
9. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from First Nations owned businesses.	February 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact Head of Operations
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	February 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact Head of Operations



Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	RAP Working Group to govern RAP implementation.	February 2022	Head of Sustainability and Social Impact
	Review and update Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June 2022	RAP Chair
	Establish First Nations representation on the RAP Working Group.	April 2022	RAP Chair
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	February 2022	RAP Chair
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	February 2022	RAP Chair
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April 2022	RAP Chair
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2022	RAP Chair
	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	September 2022	RAP Chair
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.			



■ Notes



Design:

Ailsa Pender, Business Development & Marketing Coordinator

This publication does not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. It is intended only to provide a summary and general overview on matters of interest and it is not intended to be comprehensive. Careful consideration should be given to specific factual circumstances and the resulting legal implications. You should seek legal or other professional advice before acting or relying on any of the content.

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Contact

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