



State Trustees

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

December 2023 – December 2024





Acknowledgement of Country

State Trustees acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures; and to Elders past, present and emerging.



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

State Trustees Limited joins a network of more than 2,500 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 State Trustees Limited 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 State Trustees Limited, 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



Artwork Credit: Melissa Bell (Gunditjmara / Yorta Yorta) 'Four Sisters Coming Together' 2023, acrylic on canvas

This artwork was created through The Torch, a not for profit organisation, that provides art, cultural and arts industry support to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria.



Artwork / Acknowledgment of Artist

About the artist – Melissa Bell

Melissa is a proud Gunditjmara and Yorta Yorta woman who paints where she comes from, her totem and her Country. She likes to represent her Country and culture in bright colours and striking patterns, such as diamonds to represent fishing spots and dots to represent waterholes.

‘Making art makes me feel connected to my land. To be an Aboriginal female artist, just to put down a beautiful picture from my Country – knowing I can put that down on a canvas and express my Country to other people is amazing.’

Melissa believes that ‘art has always been a part of me’ but being a part of The Torch has changed her life. She has been able to get her artwork out into the world, which she thinks has kept her out of prison and saved her life.

About the artwork – Four Sisters Coming Together, 2023

The four sisters coming together on the Murray River doing women’s yarning and women’s business.

About The Torch Project



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 and earn income from art sales (with 100% of the artwork price going directly to the artist), licensing and projects.

The Torch fosters new networks, as well as educational and creative industry avenues to pursue for post-release artists. By embracing program participants as artists rather than offenders. The Torch provides an avenue for change.



Vision for reconciliation

To be known as an inclusive organisation that takes purposeful action to respect and celebrate First Nations cultures. Standing side by side with First Nations peoples, we work together to provide support and improve outcomes through considered action that acknowledges the past and looks to a future where we are reconciled and live together respectfully.

Message from the Chair & CEO



It gives us great pleasure to present State Trustees' inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), reinforcing our commitment to serving all members of the Victorian community..

As the public trustee for the State of Victoria, we work with a diverse cross-section of the community. It is vital that we publicly and clearly state our intention to strengthen and enrich our relationships with individuals and organisations that will help deepen our understanding of First Nations peoples and cultures.

Our organisation is in the early stages of achieving the goals and aspirations outlined in this plan. Our RAP does, however, provide a solid foundation for us to deliver a meaningful contribution to Australia's reconciliation journey while standing alongside First Nations peoples.

Our core values of Care, Unity and Passion underline our RAP, with Care at the forefront of creating an environment that promotes and facilitates increased financial empowerment of marginalised communities. Pleasingly, Unity is one of the five dimensions of reconciliation outlined by Reconciliation Australia, along with race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity and historical acceptance. As one of our core values, State Trustees understands the role Unity can play in bringing together First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Australians to recognise the social legacy of our shared histories and move forward to create a just, equitable and reconciled Australia. The Passion displayed by our workforce in the development of this RAP was heartening to see.

We would like to thank Indigenous art organisation The Torch, and Melissa Bell, a proud Gunditjmara and Yorta Yorta woman and the creator of the 'Four Sisters Coming Together' artwork featured throughout this document. Melissa shared her story with us and the background of the painting, its personal meaning for her and her ancestors. Through The Torch, we were fortunate to purchase and license 'Four Sisters' as part of the development of our RAP.

We would also like to acknowledge all members of State Trustees' RAP Working Group, who drove this plan forward from concept through to finalisation. Your commitment to such an important document can be seen throughout our RAP and will continue as we implement the plan.



The Honourable Jennifer Acton - Chair



John Velegrinis - CEO



Our business

Who we are

State Trustees is a State Government owned company – the Public Trustee for Victoria. Since 1851, under various predecessors, State Trustees has been providing administration, trustee and estate related services; often in circumstances where no other provider will meet these needs.

We exist to help people plan, manage and live on through every stage of life offering products and services including Will Writing, Powers of Attorney, Executor Services, Trustee Services and Personal Financial Administration for more than 9,500 Victorians who, due to mental illness, injury or disability, are unable to fully manage their own affairs.

We deliver public benefit to Victoria through vital services and expert support that improves our clients’ financial wellbeing and peace of mind. We are committed to:

Empowering

- Clients to have improved financial sustainability and enjoy greater financial independence.
- Clients to make and participate in decisions affecting their personal and social wellbeing.

Advocating

- Using our knowledge to improve our clients’ circumstances.
- Protecting the rights and finances of Victorians.

Encouraging

- Victorians to have wills and enduring powers of attorney.
- Victorians to give more, in perpetuity.

Our People

State Trustees currently employs approximately 530 employees predominantly at their head office of Footscray, with site offices in Dandenong and Bendigo.

Our purposeful work inspires us to collaborate, learn and innovate together so that we do better – by our community, ourselves and each other – every day. We’re a caring and united team, passionate about making a difference. Flexible and inclusive, we value our diversity. We bring our whole selves to what we do and actively support everyone’s wellbeing.



Based on State Trustees' People Matter Survey 2022, 21% of our employees identify with a cultural identity other than Australian and 22% speak a language other than English with their family and community. 1 employee shared that they identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

Our Care, Unity, Passion Culture

State Trustees is committed to living our Care, Unity, Passion culture, for our clients, our people and the Victorian community. Our culture guides our Reconciliation journey, acknowledging that when we create culturally and psychologically safe environments for our diverse workforce, people feel empowered to share their unique experiences and wisdom and we achieve better outcomes for our clients and the community.

- **CARE** is all about being here for our clients, the community and each other. 'We are here' means that we can be counted on to be there

when we're needed, and that we'll show up with empathy, respect and open minds. It also speaks to how we support and look after each other and our wellbeing

- **UNITY** shows up in how we work together as one State Trustees – how we collaborate, share and learn from our interactions, how we value what everyone brings to the table and about how we celebrate our successes
- **PASSION** relates to being our best and bringing our best. It speaks to taking ownership, delivering on our promises and being proactive about making things happen. It also expresses our approach of listening and considering the bigger picture before we act.



Our commitment to diversity, equity & inclusion

As an organisation who values and celebrates our diversity, State Trustees is committed to creating an environment where people feel they belong and reflect the diverse communities in which we live, work and serve.



In 2022, we developed our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Roadmap 2022–2024, which provides an overview of the key initiatives that will support State Trustees to build our capability and impact in creating a genuine culture of inclusion where our people recognise the value of DEI, can recognise and challenge their own bias and relative privilege, and advocate for a workplace where all our people can thrive. Our Roadmap articulated a year 1 commitment to build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness and education and develop our first RAP.

State Trustees currently supports 122 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and strive towards their financial independency by demonstrating we can be trusted through collaboration and participation in discussions about their finances, skill development and improving their overall financial circumstances. Recognising both the richness and diversity of First Peoples cultural practices and protocols, as well as the historical

injustices and inequities they have experienced – and continue to experience – State Trustees’ recently established our Specialised Support teams, who support all our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

Our Specialised Support teams tailor their support to the individual and provide innovative and culturally sensitive solutions to clients who may have difficulties engaging with services appropriately which may impact their access to finances and lead to further social disadvantage.

The team are experts in the community sector, focusing on building and improving communication with our client’s support networks to assist in de-escalation of crisis situations and risk, providing alternatives to clients to access their funds by building rapport and trust with the client and their community.

Our journey so far

2021

September

Establishment of the Belonging working group, that is cross-business team who meet regularly, working to foster belonging at State Trustees. Since forming, they have worked to clarify the group's purpose, which is... "to champion the value of our people feeling safe, heard and included, so that individually and as an organisation we can perform at our best."

October

Initiated our relationship with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) Koori team to work in partnership to support culturally safe options for First Nations peoples going to VCAT.

2022

August

Launched STL DEI Roadmap where we articulated our commitment to reconciliation. Started to develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.

September

Launched the SBS Inclusion program, including the First Nations module to improve knowledge and understanding of the oldest surviving culture on earth across our employee population.

October

Development / launch of Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners resource for STL employees.

November

State Trustees registered with Reconciliation Australia to commence creating our first RAP. Communicated our commitment to reconciliation to all employees.

December

Establishment of the State Trustees RAP working group.

2023

January

Commenced the development of our Reflect RAP.

March

Engaged with The Torch Project to purchase and license artwork for our RAP and broader physical and digital artefacts.

Implementing our RAP

Our RAP working group

Our RAP Working Group was established in late 2022 and is a cross-sectional employee-driven group from across State Trustees. Supported by the People & Culture team, the group is responsible for leading the development, consultation, implementation and reporting requirements of the State Trustees RAP.

One person in the RAP working group identifies as a First Nations person. The group aims to increase membership of First Nations peoples as it forges reconciliation across our organisation with the support of our RAP Champion and the State Trustees leadership team.

Working group members are:

Andrea Fox	Estate Consultant, Trustee Services
Diana Jovanovic	Specialised Support Consultant, Financial Administration
Janene van Wyk	Head of Specialised Support and Transition, Financial Administration
Karen Deltondo	Onboarding Consultant, Financial Administration
Marilyn Saville	Personal Financial Consultant, Financial Administration
Sherrone O'Hagan	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning
Renee Surace	Acting Head of Integrated Support, Financial Administration
Sid Ranatunga	Acting Head of Cashflow & Property, Professional Services
Steve Clark	Team Leader, Specialised Support, Financial Administration
Steven Antonellos	New Estates Consultant, Trustee Services
Yasara Dissanayake	Organisational Development Business Partner



Our RAP Champion

Our Head of Specialised Support and Transition, Janene van Wyk, is our RAP Champion and has been an active member of the RAP Working Group since its inception. In her role, Janene drives the strategic approach for how we provide support for our First Nations clients, their families, and communities. First Nations consultants will be recruited into the teams that Janene leads to provide the knowledge and expertise required to better support our First Nations clients. As our RAP Champion, Janene brings her passion for achieving the best possible outcomes for our clients, our people and our organisation, to driving and championing internal engagement and awareness of our RAP.

Our partners

While we're still in the early stages of improving how we partner with other organisations to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, our teams regularly work with organisations and service providers to meet client needs and ensure culturally appropriate support. These include the VCAT Koori team and local Aboriginal agencies.

Since 2020, State Trustees has been partnering with iCAN Learn to offer the Improving the Client Journey, a 12-month professional development program, which helps to improve the client journey through approaches that build client skills and improve self-determination.

iCAN Learn is an arm of the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network (iCAN) and a not-for-profit registered training organisation focusing on financial counselling and financial capability education. Incorporated in 2007, iCAN has become a national leader in consumer advocacy, financial counselling and financial literacy for First Nations peoples.

Our RAP commitments



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	Commencing February 2024	Lead: Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning Support: Organisational Development Business Partner
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Commencing February 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024	Manager, Communications & Public Affairs
	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2024	Lead: Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning Support: Organisational Development Business Partner
	Encourage and support employees and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2024	Lead: Manager, Communications & Public Affairs Support: Organisational Development Business Partner
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation our employees.	February 2024	Manager, Communications & Public Affairs
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly, including clients and stakeholders.	February 2024	Manager, Communications & Public Affairs
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Commencing March 2024	Lead: Head of Specialised Support & Transition Support: Organisational Development Business Partner
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Commencing March 2024	Lead: Head of Specialised Support & Transition Support: Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning / Organisational Development Business Partner
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	Commencing March 2024	Organisational Development Business Partner
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	Commencing May 2024	Organisational Development Business Partner



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.	Commencing March 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Commencing March 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
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.	December 2023	Lead: Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning Support: Organisational Development Business Partner
	Increase our employee's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2023	Lead: Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning Support: Manager, Communications & Public Affairs
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our employees about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2024	Manager, Communications & Public Affairs
	Introduce our employees to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	Manager, Communications & Public Affairs
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024	Lead: Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning, Support: Manager, Communications & Public Affairs.



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	Commencing June 2024	Organisational Development Business Partner
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Commencing June 2024	Organisational Development Business Partner
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	December 2023	Manager, Contracts and Procurement
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2023	Manager, Contracts and Procurement



Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	December 2023	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Maintain and adhere to a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	December 2023	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	December 2023	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	December 2023	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	February 2024	Organisational Development Business Partner
	Maintain a senior leader to champion RAP internally.	December 2023	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	February 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
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	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August annually	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	December 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner

For RAP enquiries, please contact:

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Head of People & Culture

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Contact us

Call Us



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Monday – Friday

Visit us (By appointment)



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Bendigo

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