



# State Trustees

## Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

May 2024 – November 2025







## **Acknowledgement of Country**

State Trustees acknowledges 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 made possible through The Torch, a not-for-profit organisation that provides art, cultural and industry support to First Nations criminal offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria.*





## Artwork & Acknowledgment of Artist

### About the artist – Melissa Bell

Melissa is a proud Gunditjmara / 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 while art has always been a part of her, 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 industry support to First Nations 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.

By embracing program participants as artists rather than offenders, The Torch fosters new networks and gives people educational and creative industry avenues to pursue once their art has been released.





## 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 our inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (our plan), reinforcing our commitment to serving Victorians from all walks of life.

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

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

Our core values of care, unity and passion underpin our plan, 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, we understand 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 plan is 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 Coming Together' as part of the development of our plan.

We would also like to acknowledge all members of the dedicated working group who drove this plan forward from concept through to finalisation. Your commitment to such an important document can be seen throughout our plan and we have every confidence it will continue as we implement it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Acton', written over a light grey rectangular background.

**The Honourable Jennifer Acton - Chair**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Velegrinis', written over a light grey rectangular background.

**John Velegrinis - CEO**





## About State Trustees

**State Trustees is a Victorian Government backed company providing financial and legal services at important life moments. We help Victorians from all walks of life with their financial and legal affairs in times of need and when they pass away.**

Our wide range of financial and legal services includes Wills, Writing Powers of Attorney, Deceased Estate Administration, Trust Administration and Personal Financial Administration for thousands of Victorians who, due to mental illness, injury or disability, are unable to manage their own affairs.

We give our clients complete confidence that their financial and legal affairs are in good order through our diligent care, comprehensive expertise and our enduring accountability.

### **Diligent care**

Our people take pride in looking after Victorians from all walks of life. We listen to our clients' unique needs and preferences, take the time to explain what needs to be done and then make sure it's done well.

### **Comprehensive expertise**

Our skilled and experienced team has worked with thousands of clients across a variety of specialised services. Whether our clients' needs are complex or simple, we are here to help.

### **Enduring accountability**

We have an 80-year history of being here when our clients need us. We are accountable to the Government and the people of Victoria, not private owners.

### **Our people & culture**

Our organisation includes around 580 employees based across three locations including Footscray, 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 are 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. In our ‘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.

We live our values of care, unity, and passion. Our culture guides our reconciliation journey, acknowledging that when we create culturally and psychologically safe environments for our diverse workforce, our 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 are needed, and that we will 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 that values and celebrates our diversity, we are committed to creating an environment where people feel they belong and reflect the diverse communities in which we live and work.





In 2022, we developed our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Roadmap 2022–2024. Our roadmap outlines the key initiatives that will support us to build our capability and impact in creating a genuine culture of inclusion. Our roadmap makes a commitment to build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness and education and develop our first Reconciliation Action Plan.

In recognition of both the richness and diversity of First Nations cultural practices and protocols, and the historical injustices and inequities they have and continue to experience, we recently established our Specialised Support teams, who support all our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. We currently support around 120 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients through collaboration and participation in discussions about their finances, skill development and by improving their overall financial circumstances.

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 financial and legal services which might otherwise lead to further social disadvantage.

The teams comprise 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

We established the Belonging Working Group – a cross-business team which meets regularly, working to foster a sense of belonging at State Trustees. Since forming, the group has established a clear purpose: 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

We launched our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Roadmap where we articulated our commitment to reconciliation. We started work on a plan for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.

## September

We released the Special Broadcasting Service Inclusion program, including the First Nations module to improve knowledge and understanding of the oldest surviving culture on earth across our employee population.

## October

We developed and launched Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners resource for our employees.

## November

We registered with Reconciliation Australia to commence creating our first Reconciliation Action Plan and shared our commitment to reconciliation with all employees.

## December

We established the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.

2023

## January

We commenced the development of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

## March

We engaged with The Torch to purchase and license artwork for our Reconciliation Action Plan and broader physical and digital artefacts.



**2023**

## **April**

Through The Torch we purchased an artwork by Melissa Bell, a Gunditjmara / Yorta Yorta woman. The artwork is exclusive to State Trustees and provides a direct connection between us and the First Nations people, and vulnerable client groups who we work with through empowerment and self-determination.

## **May**

We hosted an event for National Reconciliation Week where Melissa Bell presented to the organisation on her background, the meaning of her artwork and her vision for reconciliation.

## **July**

We celebrated and recognised NAIDOC week.

## **September**

We launched a Voice to Parliament eLearning module to educate employees on the 2023 Referendum, the Uluru Statement from the Heart and outlined the procedure required to enshrine a First Nations Voice in the Australian Constitution.

## **October**

We recruited a Specialised Support Consultant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**2024**

## **January**

We encouraged employees to reflect on how they talk about Australia Day, and to acknowledge that the day means different things to different people. As such, all employees were encouraged to be respectful in how they choose to mark the day, and to be mindful that it is not a celebration for some people due to painful associations it may have for indigenous communities.

## **April**

We developed lanyards featuring the design of artwork by Melissa Bell to be distributed to all employees.

### **What's next?**

Following the endorsement of our Reconciliation Action Plan, we will be hosting an internal event to launch our Reconciliation Action Plan and proudly promote our commitment to reconciliation. Following which we will commence the fulfillment of the deliverables outlined within this Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.





## Implementing our plan

### Our working group

A working group was established in late 2022 and is a cross-sectional employee-driven group from across our business. Supported by the People & Culture team, the group is responsible for leading the development, consultation, implementation and reporting requirements of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

One person in the 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.

### Our champion

Our Head of Specialised Support and Transition is our Reconciliation Action Plan champion and has been an active member of the working group since its inception. In their role, they drive the strategic approach for how we support our First Nations clients, their families, and communities. A Specialised Support Consultant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has also been recruited into our Financial Administration team. This person uses their knowledge and expertise to provide culturally appropriate support to our First Nations clients, along with providing advice and guidance to employees to support and improve our service delivery to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.





## Our partners

While we are still in the early stages of improving how we partner with other organisations to support our First Nations clients, our teams regularly work with organisations and service providers to meet client needs and ensure culturally appropriate support. These include the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Koori team and local First Nations agencies.

Since 2020, we have been partnering with iCAN Learn to offer 'Improving the Client Journey', a 12-month professional development program for our employees, that builds client skills and improve self-determination. Since its introduction, we have had 58 employees enrol in this program.

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 planned 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.	November 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.	November 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 employees.	May 2024	Manager, Communications & Public Affairs
	Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group 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 all employees.	August 2024	Manager, Communications & Public Affairs
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	August 2024	Manager, Communications & Public Affairs
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2024	Lead: Head of Specialised Support & Transition Support: Organisational Development Business Partner
	Identify Reconciliation Australia and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2024	Lead: Head of Specialised Support & Transition Support: 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.	September 2025	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning
	Conduct a review of Human Resource policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. .	September 2025	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning





## 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 plan for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	August 2025	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	September 2025	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.	February 2025	Lead: Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning Support: Organisational Development Business Partner
	Increase employee's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	February 2025	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
	Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024	Lead: Organisational Development Business Partner 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 plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	May 2025	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	May 2025	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a plan for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	July 2025	Manager, Contracts and Procurement
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	July 2025	Manager, Contracts and Procurement



## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group to drive governance of the plan.	Maintain a working group to govern plan implementation.	May 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Maintain and adhere to a Terms of Reference for the plan.	May 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the working group.	May 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	Define resource needs for plan implementation.	July 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of plan's commitments.	July 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Maintain a senior leader to champion the plan internally.	July 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on the plan's commitments.	August 2024	Manager, Organisational Development, Diversity & Learning; Organisational Development Business Partner
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting Reconciliation Action Plan 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 plan correspondence.	June annually	Organisational Development Business Partner
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online Impact Survey.	1 August annually	Organisational Development Business Partner
	Complete and submit the annual Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Organisational Development Business Partner
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next plan.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next plan.	September 2025	Organisational Development Business Partner





## For Reconciliation Action Plan enquiries, please contact:

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Head of People & Culture

E: [People&Culture@StateTrustees.com.au](mailto:People&Culture@StateTrustees.com.au)



## Contact us

### Call Us

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#### Telephone:

1300 138 672

8.30am – 5.00pm

Monday – Friday

### Visit us (By appointment)

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### Write to us

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### Website

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