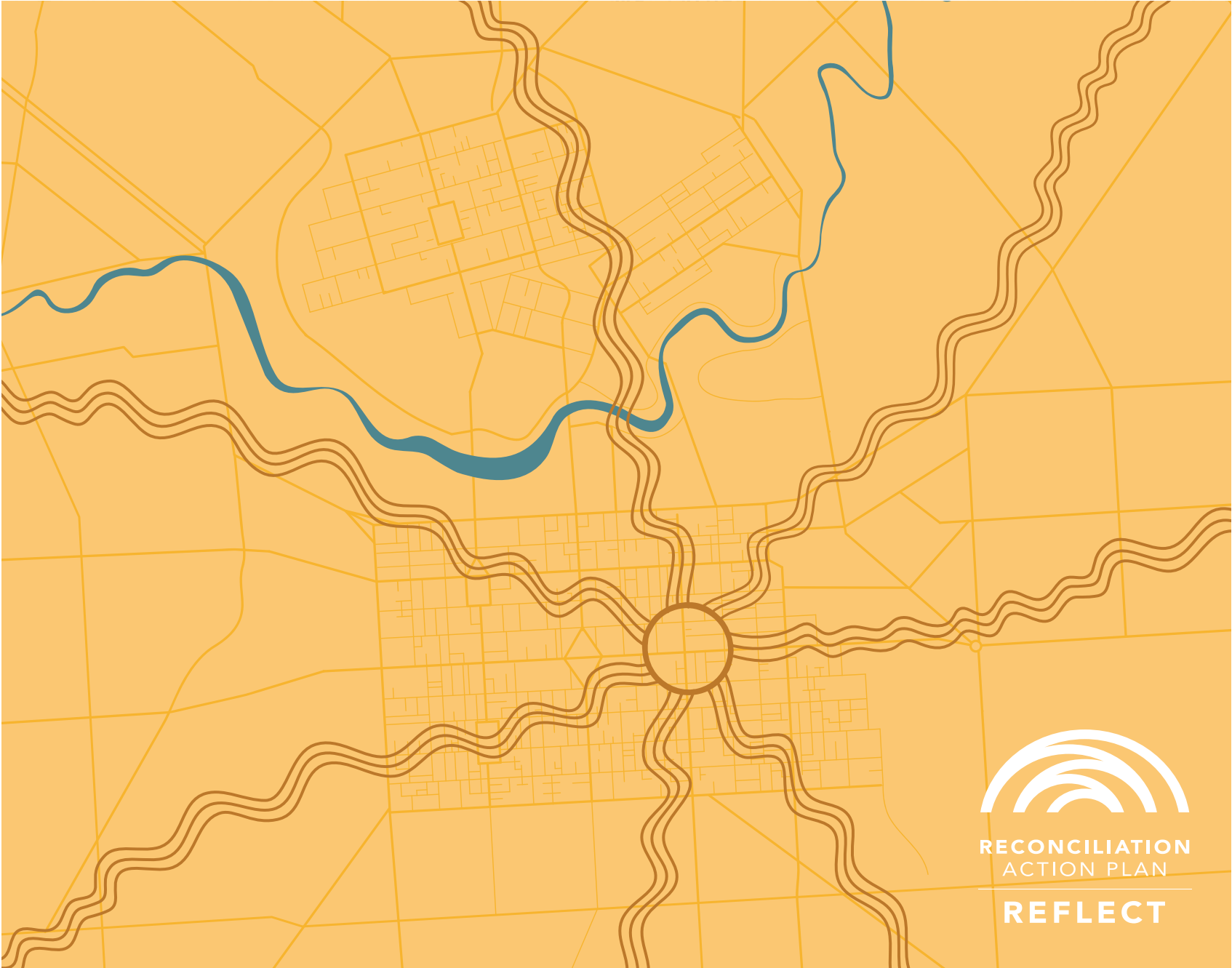


DesignInc

Adelaide



February 2023 to June 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Ngadlu tampinhi Kurna miyurna yarta mathanya Wama Tarntanyaku

We recognise that Kurna people are the land-owners and Custodians of the Adelaide Plains

Parnaku yailtya, parnuku tapa purruna, parnuku yarta ngadlu tampinhi

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land

Yalaka Kurna miyurna ithu yailtya, tapa purruna, yarta kuma puru martinhi, puru warri-apinhi, puru tangka martulyainthi

We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today

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Smoking Ceremony with Kurna Elder, Uncle Fred Agius, at the commencement of the construction of Blackwood Community Hub on Kurna Country. Image credit: City of Mitcham

CEO Message, Reconciliation Australia

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

DesignInc 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.

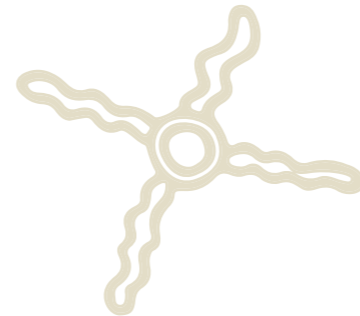
These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

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 DesignInc 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 DesignInc, 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 Vision

Our Vision for reconciliation is to listen, learn and show respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as we recognise the wrongs of the past and move forward to heal together.

Walking together, side by side

Reconciliation is a shared journey involving everyone. At DesignInc Adelaide, we acknowledge the ongoing strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in sustaining the world’s oldest living cultures. We acknowledge Kurna Miyurna are the Native Title Holders and Custodians of the Adelaide Plains. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today.

Our Vision for reconciliation is to listen, learn and show respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as we recognise the wrongs of the past and move forward to heal together. Many steps, big and small, are required to reach this vision. We commit to actioning change within our organisational culture, partnerships, our community in South Australia and Australia and through broader industry initiatives.

As a leading design firm shaping places across Adelaide, regional South Australia and Australia, we recognise that we have

a responsibility to bring the voice and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into the design of our built environment. We will do this by listening to understand, and by showing respect to the place on Country that our buildings will occupy.

At DesignInc Adelaide, we actively foster a culture of diversity and inclusion across gender, cultural background and ability. Our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) will align with and expand upon our existing organisational values. In our Reflect RAP, we commit to the practical actions required to build relationships, create mutual respect and improve opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Our commitments to working toward reconciliation are:

- to increase cultural literacy and awareness within our team;
- create new methodologies for embedding stories of Country into the built environment; and
- connecting with and providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our organisation.

We aim to achieve these goals through formal and informal initiatives. These will include:

- talking with our Kurna Elders and Custodians, the native title holders of Tandanya/Adelaide where our studio is situated;
- partnerships and collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander product and service providers;
- developing project methodologies, presentations and resources to assist professional staff with bringing stories of Country into the design process as a part of our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program;
- increasing access to resources, training opportunities, events, experiences and workshops that build cultural literacy within our team;
- developing a mentorship program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth who are interested in entering our industry; and
- connecting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and networks to share employment opportunities.

Recognising barriers and identifying opportunities

DesignInc Sydney has shared with us the industry research that they have conducted that has identified the under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the architecture and design sector. Visible and invisible barriers prevent equitable representation in Australia. One barrier is the lack of education and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our industry.

In the Reflect stage of our RAP, we will build relationships within our Kurna community to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth who express an interest in architecture and design.

We will provide industry guidance and mentorship through a work experience program for students to learn about the industry.

A scholarship program supporting a First Nations Australian student – similar to DesignInc Sydney’s partnership with Western Sydney University’s faculty of Architecture – may be developed at a later RAP stage.

Our Business

We believe in equality, diversity and sustainability. These values are the cornerstone of how we work and the actions that we take.

About us

DesignInc Adelaide is an architecture and design studio on Kurna land in Tandanya / Adelaide. Our team of design professionals champion an integrated approach to sustainable architecture, interiors, master planning and urban design. We are passionate about design and dedicated to delivering projects that have a positive impact on people's lives. We aim to create quality environments that reconcile natural, social, urban and economic forces. Our portfolios have been deliberately selected as they form the vital nodes of community – education, health, recreation, workplace and defence.

This Reconciliation Action Plan is for DesignInc Adelaide which has 45 employees. We do not currently employ any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Adelaide office. We seek to foster and grow their input in our industry by engaging with groups, industry partners and through developing mentorship, training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth who are interested in entering the architecture and design industry.

History of the business

The Adelaide office of DesignInc commenced operations as Geof Nairn Architects in 1976. Our practice joined the DesignInc group in 2000 to become DesignInc Adelaide. Stafford Architects merged with DesignInc Adelaide in 2008 to supplement the leadership team and expand the breadth of sector expertise that the studio offered.

DesignInc is an association of independent architectural practices with offices in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. The group is a powerful union of design talent, professional expertise, and multidisciplinary skills. Each office is owned and operated with separate governance structures but share a brand, ethos and core service offerings.

When DesignInc was formed between 1998 - 2000, our architectural heritage was already well established. Each firm had a legacy of at least 30 years' experience, the oldest established in 1905. In 2020, Wiradjuri architect, Craig Kerslake, came together with DesignInc Sydney to form Nguluway DesignInc. The joint venture adds Aboriginal leadership and cultural knowledge to the architectural expertise of DesignInc.

People and culture

DesignInc Adelaide is committed to creating a culture of collaboration that supports each individual on their career journey. Regular communications, group meetings and social events foster an inclusive collective experience. Our team members benefit from flexible work arrangements, mentoring and leadership programs to support personal and professional growth through Continuing Professional Development (CPD), regular social occasions, team events and work functions. The studio has a focus on wellbeing and provides access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a 'toolkit' of mental health resources, and 'be at your best' days.



Social and environmental charter

We believe in equality, diversity and sustainability. These values are the cornerstone of how we work and the actions that we take.

We are participants in the Champions of Change, an organisation focused on increasing the representation of women at the highest levels of our profession.

We acknowledge the native title rights of the Kurna peoples of the Adelaide Plains where our studio stands and acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, waters and sky our projects occupy. Our RAP is a roadmap for our collective journey towards reconciliation.

Our planet has finite resources – sustainability is an important consideration in all we do. We are currently working toward certified carbon neutrality.



Welcome to Country led by Aunty Penny Bonney and Uncle Mikey Hartman, and smoking ceremony by Uncle Doug Nicholls to acknowledge the coming together of cultures and promote the wellbeing of all in the construction of Wulanda Recreation + Convention Centre on Boandik Country in Berrin / Mount Gambier. Image credit: City of Mount Gambier

Our RAP Champion



Ben Luppino

RAP Champion
Associate Director
DesignInc Adelaide.

Ben is responsible for ensuring that the organisation commits resources to the actions identified within the RAP and that they are achieved within the timeframes specified.

Ben has been a valuable team member since joining the studio as a Graduate of Architecture in 2006. He is a registered architect with expertise in the design of public infrastructure including community centres, aquatic, sporting and leisure facilities, defence, education and transport. As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, Ben leads Service Delivery which includes strategic workforce planning, resourcing, project planning and reporting.

Ben's focus is on addressing social needs and creating spaces that provide opportunities for inclusion. This drives his passion for technical problem solving and designing for the community to provide positive outcomes for a diverse range of end-users.

'Our inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan is an important step in addressing our goals of advancing the communities we work and live within. Throughout our reconciliation journey, we will strive to be a business that values equality, diversity and sustainability as we acknowledge, show respect, listen and learn, and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.'

Ben Luppino
Associate Director, DesignInc Adelaide

Our RAP Working Group (RWG)



Kate Fitton

RWG Chair
Graphics + Communications Lead
DesignInc Adelaide

Kate Fitton is our RWG Chair and leads the group. Kate joined DesignInc Adelaide in 2019 to manage the studio's communications. She also designs environmental graphics and wayfinding for projects. Kate is an advocate for social justice and brings this passion to her role in delivering our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. Within our RWG, she is responsible for ensuring respect and cultural awareness continues to be supported and thrive in our organisation.



Amie Blanden

RWG Secretary
Interior Designer
DesignInc Adelaide

Amie Blanden is our RWG Secretary and is responsible for the day to day operations of the group; coordinating meetings, taking minutes and keeping us on track with the delivery of our RAP goals. Amie is coordinating our RAP initiative to build partnerships and collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander product and service providers. Amie joined DesignInc in 2021 and enjoys integrating placemaking and storytelling into her projects.



Richard Stafford

RWG Member
Managing Director
DesignInc Adelaide



Nirmal Mistry

RWG Member
Senior Architect
DesignInc Adelaide



Jacinda Hastwell

RWG Member
Senior Interior Designer
DesignInc Adelaide



Stephanie Bahr

RWG Member
Graduate of Architecture
DesignInc Adelaide

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Current Partnerships

DesignInc Adelaide has begun to build active partnerships with First Australians who collaborate with us and advise us in an ongoing capacity.

Craig Kerslake

Managing Director Nguluway DesignInc

Craig Kerslake is a Wiradjuri Man. He was born in the Illawarra region on Wodi Wodi Dharawal Country, his father was born in Bowral NSW on Gandangara Country, and his grandfather came from Dubbo NSW, Wiradjuri Country. In 2020 Nguluway DesignInc was formed, with 51% owned by Craig's company 'Saltwater Studios', and 49% owned by DesignInc Sydney. Craig is the Managing Director and the Design Director for all Nguluway DesignInc projects. Craig is a natural collaborator, and is contributing to DesignInc's shared reconciliation journey by generously sharing his knowledge, experience, networks and his personal stories. Craig is also leading the conversation about designing from Country both within our organisation and in the broader build environment industry.



Craig Kerslake leading a yarning circle. Image credit: DesignInc Sydney

Uncle Karrl Tamaru Smith

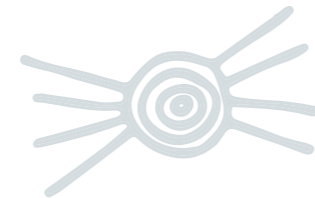
Deadly Mob

Uncle Tamaru is a Kurna Narunnga Man and emerging Kurna Elder and signature to Kurna Native Title. He is the Co-Chair of the Blackwood Reconciliation Group and advises the Hon. Kym Maher, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Attorney-General of South Australia. Uncle Tamaru is a cultural tourism specialist working in the education and private sectors, and with Muslim, Mormon and African communities. Uncle Tamaru provided guidance throughout our initial RAP development, including education about Kurna culture—the people, the history, the art, language, spiritual connection to country and some sacred ceremonies.

Jack Buckskin

Kuma Kaaru Cultural Services

Jack Buckskin is a proud Kurna Narunnga Man. Jack's knowledge and revitalisation of Kurna language, performance, art and culture is well known and respected in Tandanya / Adelaide. Jack is providing our team with cultural awareness training – land and diversity, kinship and responsibilities, spirituality and the spirit world. We will continue our learning about death and dying processes (traditional and contemporary), colonisation history and timeline and statistics of Aboriginal people today. Jack has also shared his language with us through an interactive Kurna Language Workshop.



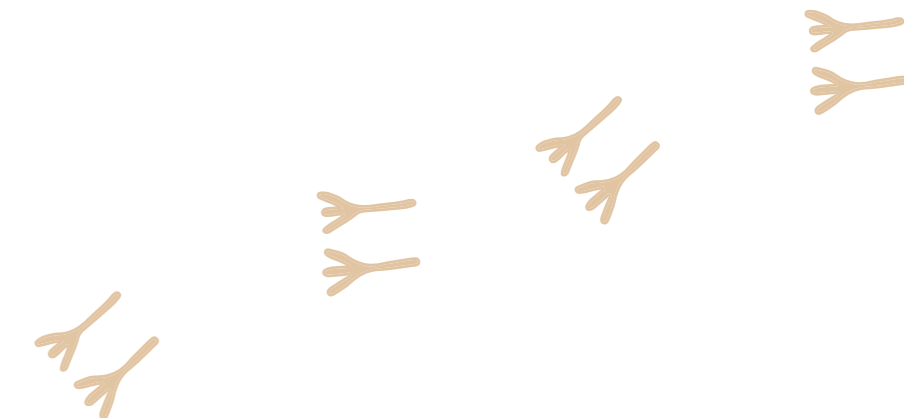
Current Initiatives and Activities

Our studio has a number of current initiatives and activities that include:



Jack Buckskin presenting a Cultural Awareness Training session to our team. Image Credit: DesignInc Adelaide

- Engaging Aboriginal land councils and groups when designing projects for SA Health and the Department of Defence.
- Promoting National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC weeks and events to our studio team at our weekly whole-of-studio meetings, in a monthly 'What's on' internal email, on our social media platforms, and by displaying posters around the studio.
- Acknowledgement of Country at the opening of meetings and presentations, on our website for our studio and project locations, on social media accounts, letterheads, email footers and other collateral, and at our studio entrance in Kurna and English.
- Cultural and Kurna Language Training included in our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program.
- We have a 'RAP Resources' digital board that includes links to fiction/non-fiction books, films, documentaries, media, podcasts and webinars, language group and native title references, case studies, maps and other materials for our team to direct their own learning.
- We have begun to purchase a library of resources and books for use in our studio including Aboriginal Design Thinking, language and stories.



Relationships

We are committed to fostering authentic, long-term relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure we are creating mutually-beneficial outcomes in the communities in which we operate.

DesignInc embraces cultural diversity and the many benefits that diversity brings to our organisation. We are dedicated to developing and learning from our cultural networks and raising awareness internally on the importance of reconciliation in Australia.

DesignInc aspires to increase the number of First Australian professionals in the design industry, as this is greatly lacking.



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain 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.	May 2023	RWG Chair
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	May 2023	RWG Chair
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023 / 24	RWG Secretary RWG Members
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2023 / 24	All RWG Members
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2023 / 24	All RWG Members
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	May 2023	RAP Champion
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	June 2023	RAP Champion RWG Chair
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	June 2023	All RWG Members
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	July 2023	RWG Chair RAP Champion Director People Practice Manager
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2023	RWG Chair RAP Champion Director People Practice Manager

Respect

At DesignInc we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, and of the land on which our projects are located.

We understand that respect is the foundation of long-lasting relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We are committed to ensuring that our engagement process is respectful of and appropriately acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their histories and cultures.



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.	May 2023	RAP Champion RWG Members Director People
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	May 2023	RWG Chair RWG Member
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.	May 2023	RWG Chair
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June 2023	RWG Chair RWG Secretary RWG Members
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2023	RWG Chair RWG Members
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2023	RWG Chair RWG Members
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2023	RAP Champion RWG Chair RWG Secretary RWG Members

Opportunities

DesignInc is committed to contributing to the economic and social wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the communities in which we operate.

We believe it is important to enhance and increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve their quality of life, wellbeing and provide opportunities for them to contribute to the built environment.

We are also passionate about building the community of First Australian architects through university scholarships, internships, mentorship and employment 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.	September 2023	RAP Chair Practice Manager Director People
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	September 2023	RAP Chair Practice Manager Director People
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.	May 2023	RAP Champion RWG Chair RWG Secretary RWG Members
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	August 2023	RWG Secretary



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	February 2023	RWG Chair
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	February 2023	RWG Chair
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	February 2023	RWG Chair
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	February 2023	RWG Chair RAP Champion
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	March 2023	RAP Champion
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	February 2023	RWG Chair
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September Annually	RWG Chair
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to ensure that our primary and secondary contacts are up-to-date to ensure we are receiving important correspondence.	June Annually	RWG Chair
	Follow up with Reconciliation Australia if we have not yet received our unique reporting link to participate in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2024	RWG Chair
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	April 2024	RWG Secretary


DesignInc

Contact

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We are an association of independent practices with offices in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.

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