

Reconciliation Action Plan Reflect

September 2022 - September 2023



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



SOUTH-EAST
MONASH
LEGAL
SERVICE INC.



Contents

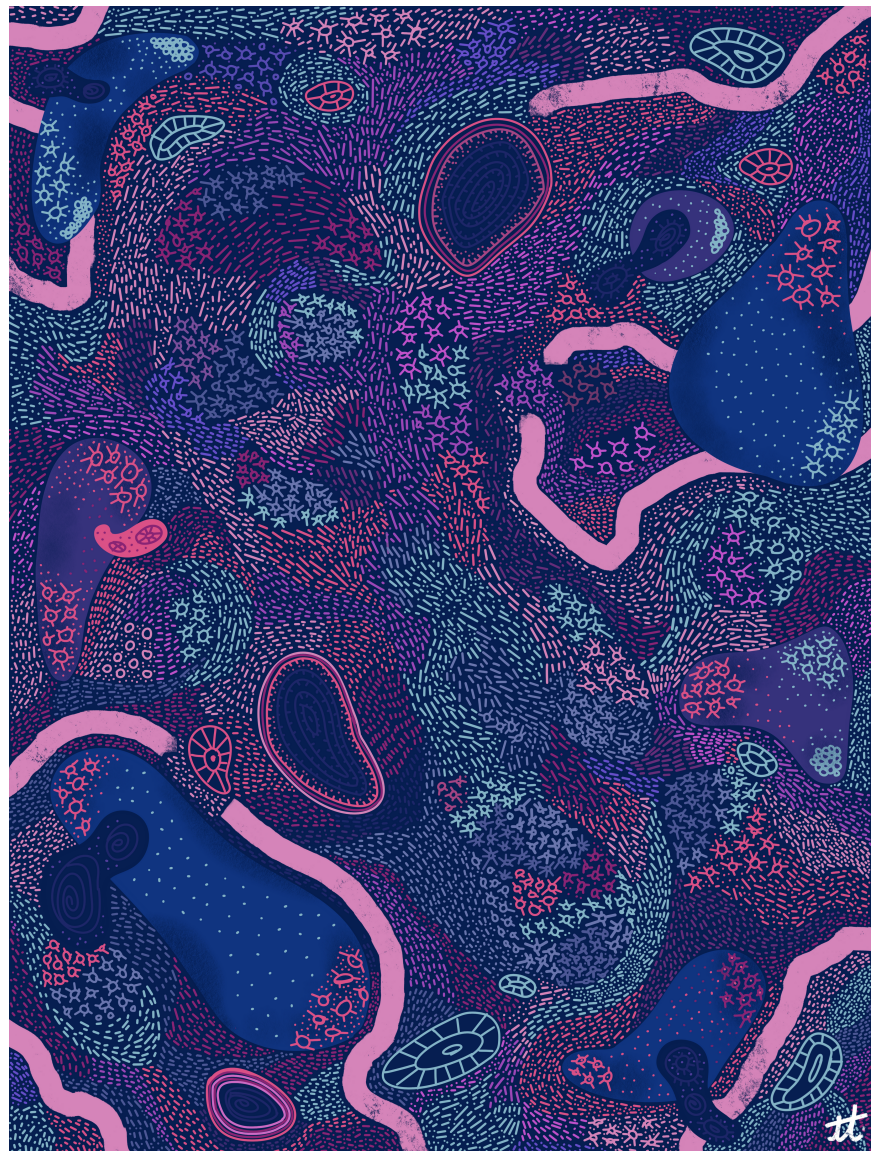
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About the Artist: Timothy Buckley

Tim has a rich and diverse heritage of Oceanic First Nations peoples — Aboriginal (Mununjali), Australian South Sea Islander and Māori. Raised in the country on Darumbal Country, he learnt firsthand our connection to the natural world, and many of the challenges his communities face as a result of on-going colonisation. He is also a proud member of the LGBTQIA+SB community.

Living between these spaces, he has an acute awareness of complex social issues and lived experience of the complex intersection between race, culture, gender, sexuality and spirituality.

"We are all connected to one another; through our shared environment and experiences. Connections represents how understanding, empathy and acknowledgement — every interaction, no matter the size — can have a profound impact and is an opportunity to make meaningful, lasting change."



Connections (2022) by Timothy Buckley



Message from Reconciliation Australia CEO

Reconciliation Australia welcomes South-East Monash Legal Service (SMLS) to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

SMLS 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 SMLS 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 South-East Monash Legal Service, 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 South-East Monash Legal Service's Executive Director

SMLS is excited to embark on the first step of our journey to a Reconciliation Action Plan, to ensure our commitment to the recognition and voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our organisation, across our community and more broadly, in Australia.

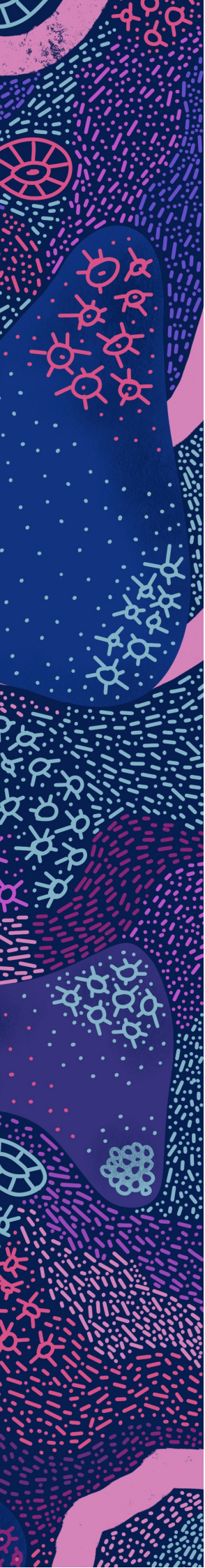
SMLS' vision is for a fair and inclusive community where people can access the resources, networks and support they need to resolve legal issues and overcome barriers to social, cultural and economic inclusion and participation. Recognition and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is paramount to this vision.

SMLS acknowledges the critical importance of formalising a Reconciliation Action Plan within the organisation; to ensure that our values, our people and our actions reflect the commitment to properly reflecting our nation's past, present and future.

SMLS is pursuing opportunities to partner with relevant organisations to engage in culturally appropriate policy and law reform. SMLS is proactively taking internal steps to ensure there is a current and reflective practice of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their rightful place in what shapes our country. SMLS looks forward to better understanding and implementing engagement with our local community.

SMLS is committed to ensuring that we can support, advocate, and deliver on the avenues for proper recognition and voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia

Kristen Wallwork
Executive Director
South-East Monash Legal Service



About South-East Monash Legal Service

Established in 1973, South-East Monash Legal Service (SMLS) is a community legal centre that provides free legal advice, assistance, information and education to people experiencing disadvantage in our community. SMLS also engages in advocacy work and develops community programs and initiatives. SMLS has 49 staff members, comprising of 36 employees, nine volunteers, four volunteer night service lawyers, as well as several law and social work students on placement.

We work from two offices – one in Springvale, one in Narre Warren, as well as outreach programs throughout the region. None of our staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. SMLS is located in the Local Government Areas (LGA) of the City of Greater Dandenong and the City of Casey, with outreaches throughout the southeast. We have been addressing the needs of marginalised community members, the majority who reside within the City of Greater Dandenong, the City of Casey and the Shire of Cardinia.



Our Reconciliation Action Plan

SMLS acknowledges that as an organisation we need to do better at recognising and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Developing a RAP is also part of our accreditation plan with the National Association of Community Legal Centres. From a client service perspective, data of clients who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is low, noting there are a number of organisations (such as VALS and Djurra) that provide state-based services that would traditionally service clients identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Further to this, we would like to work more closely with other organisations in the southeast region that identify as, or work with/for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. We recently renewed our strategic plan and have identified developing and implementing a RAP as a priority.

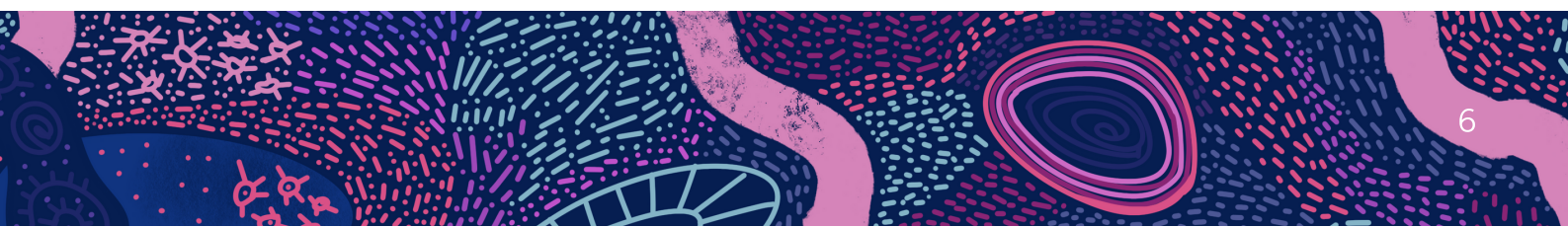
We are committed to implementing our RAP taking a whole-of-organisation approach. We would like to see this investment so that the RAP has a meaningful and sustainable place in SMLS. To ensure the SMLS RAP is progressed, we will be developing a RAP Working Group (RWG) that will have representatives from both board and staff (from each team/division), as well as engaging an external consultant. Additionally, Kristen Wallwork, our Executive Director, will be our RAP Champion.

A number of actions throughout the years could be identified as being a part of a reconciliation journey, however we do not wish to overstate them. We ensure that there is a Welcome to Country at significant events, or Acknowledgement of Country where a Welcome is not possible. We believe we have inclusive employment practices, but to date we do not have any formalised RAP journey.



Relationships

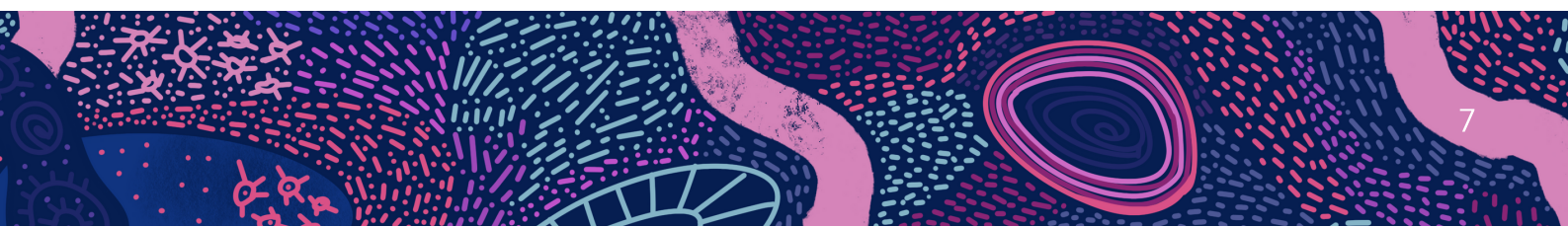
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	September 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Director of Advocacy & Development
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	September 2022	Lead: Executive Support Support: RAP Champion
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	HR
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May/June 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Executive Support
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May/June 2023	Executive Director





Relationships

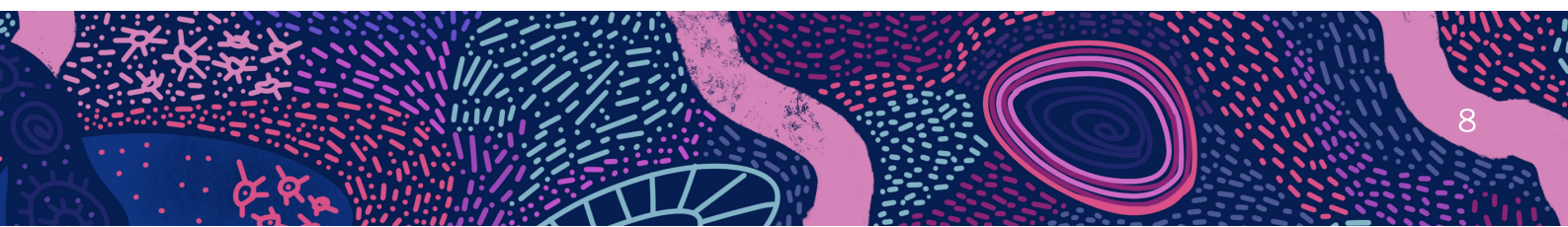
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	October 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Management Team, Marketing and Comms Team
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly through publishing our RAP on SMLS website, updates in newsletter and across socials	November 2022	Lead: Marketing & Comms Support: RWG
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2022	Lead: Executive Support Support: Director of Advocacy & Development
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Management Team
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	September 2022	Executive Support
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	October 2022	Lead: Executive Director Support: Director of Operations, Executive Support





Respect

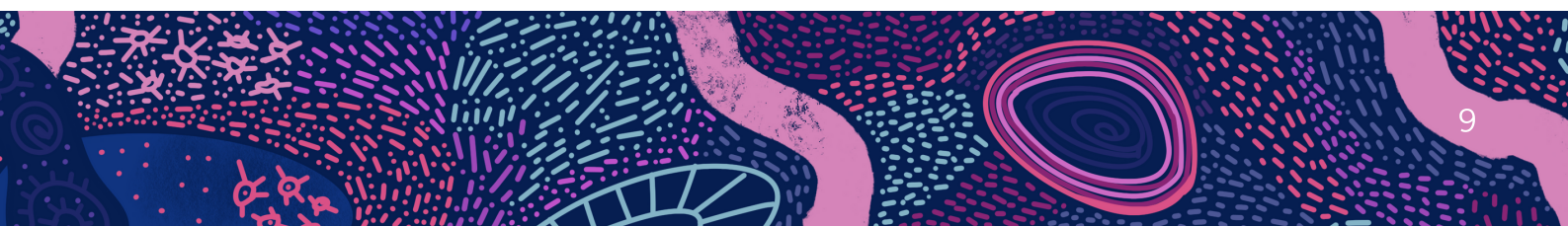
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	November 2022	Lead: Executive Director Support: Management team, RWG
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	November 2022	Lead: Executive Director Support: Management, Executive Support
	Explore cultural learning opportunities for staff and senior leaders	September 2022	Lead: Exec Support Support: RWG, Director of Advocacy & Development
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	October 2022	Lead: Executive Director Support: Management Team/HR
	Community development team to undertake cultural safety training for legal education work	November 2022	Lead: Director of Advocacy & Development Support: Executive Support
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2022 ongoing	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RWG, Executive Support





Respect

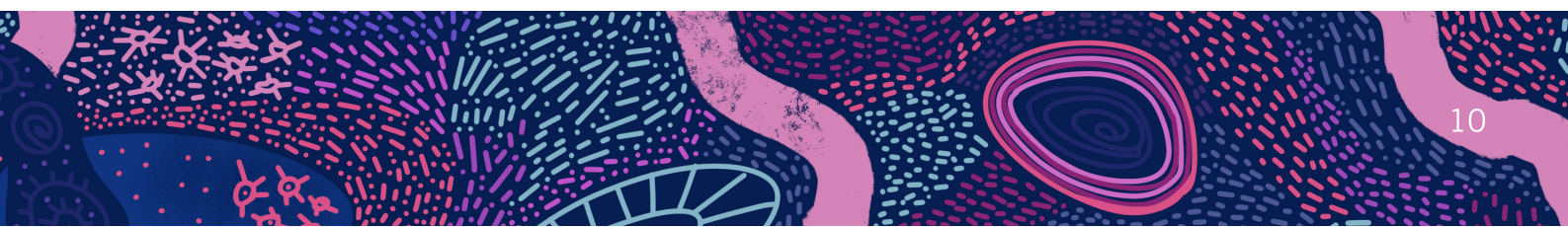
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Executive Support
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2023	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RWG, Director of Advocacy & Development
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2023	Lead: Executive Support Support: RWG





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.	November 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Director of Operations, HR, RWG
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	October 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RWG, Director of Advocacy & Development
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 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Executive Support, RWG
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	October 2022	Lead: Director of Operations Support: Executive Support, RWG





Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	September 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Board
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	September 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Board, RWG
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	September 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Board
	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	September 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Management team, Executive Support
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	September 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Board, Executive Support, RWG
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	September 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: RWG
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September 2022	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Director of Advocacy & Development



Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	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	Executive Support
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August, annually	Executive Support
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Lead: RAP Champion Support: Executive Support
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	June 2023	Lead: Executive Support Support: Director of Operations, RWG

