



The National Justice Project

## *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan\**

April 2022 – April 2023

\*This RAP should be read in conjunction with NJP's Cultural Safety Policy and NJP's Anti-Racist Ethics of Practice.

## CEO Statement

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

The National Justice Project 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 the National Justice Project 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 National Justice Project, 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 for Reconciliation:*

The National Justice Project is a civil rights organisation dedicated to tackling systemic injustice and all forms of discrimination within government institutions.

We recognise that First Nations sovereignty over this land has never been ceded. We acknowledge and celebrate the living law, knowledges, cultures, histories, perspectives and languages which First Nations Peoples hold. We commit to working alongside First Nations communities to create a platform and amplify the sovereign voices of First Nations Peoples.

Our RAP vision is to see a country that meaningfully acknowledges its past. A country that has listened to, and does the work asked of them by, First Nations Peoples. Where self-determined services are properly funded to assist in addressing the intergenerational trauma caused by the actions of non-Indigenous people. Where both the wrongs of the past and current wrongs are acknowledged and actively addressed. Where we move together into the future in a unified way, as non-Indigenous people continue to listen and do the necessary work of reconciliation.

NJP recognises that throughout history the Australian legal system has been an instrument of violence and oppression against First Nations Peoples. NJP seeks to strengthen and promote dialogue between the Australian legal system and First Nations laws, governance structures and protocols.

By learning, listening and collaborating with First Nations Peoples, we hope to shape a better understanding of the injustices experienced by First Nations Peoples. Through strategic litigation and advocacy, we seek to create systemic and social change.

## *Our Business:*

The National Justice Project is a not-for-profit legal service. In the past year, we provided 18,928 hours of pro bono services.

Our long-term goal is to eradicate systemic problems of abuse and discrimination. We are committed to reconciliation and achieving social justice by ensuring everyone has the right to equal access and status under Australian law.

To these ends, we work collaboratively with our community partners, use the law strategically and provide a platform to amplify the voices of our clients, including our First Nations clients.

Our work includes:

- Taking on legal matters that challenge discrimination in healthcare, policing, prisons and detention;
- Advocating on behalf of families who have lost a loved one in custody;
- Seeking accountability for police misconduct; and,
- Engaging in policy & law reform.

Our office is based in Sydney; however, we have a national reach.

We currently employ 12 FTE Staff including 4 First Nations Staff. We are currently assisted by 18 non-Indigenous volunteers.

Our sphere of influence includes both internal and external stakeholders. Internally, we influence, and are influenced by, our volunteers, staff, executive, board members and advisory committee(s).

### *Our RAP:*

NJP recognises that, as a non-Indigenous organisation working on First Nations land in First Nations communities and as an employer of First Nations staff, we are accountable to working in a culturally appropriate and responsible way. We recognise that we must amplify the sovereign voices of First Nations Peoples. By producing a RAP, we are formally committing to improving our internal policies and practices to develop an organisational culture that models anti-racist practices and is respectful of First Nations values and principles.

NJP has established a Committee to develop and implement the RAP. The Committee members are:

- Lucy Schroeder (Dharug Woman, Paralegal);
- Karina Hawtrey (Gamilaroi Woman, Solicitor);
- Sophie Wenderoth (Paralegal);
- Emilia Salgado (Chilean of Mapuche descent, General Manager & RAP Champion);
- Steve Castan (NJP Chair); and,
- Ashleigh Buckett (Senior Solicitor & RAP Committee Chair).

The RAP Committee has achieved the following actions to date:

- Finalised, and had approved by NJP's board, our Cultural Safety Policy and Anti-Racist Ethics of Practice;
- Established a Cultural Safety complaints procedure;
- Arranged Cultural Safety training for staff on 16 & 23 November 2021;
- Developed a budget for RAP activities;
- Developed a protocol on informed consent for when clients are telling their stories;
- Arranged an Acknowledgement of Country plaque for the office;
- Updated our email signatures and website to include an Acknowledgement of Country;
- Established which meetings are to start with an Acknowledgement of Country;
- Adopted a policy that staff will work on the 26 January Invasion Day/Survival Day/Day of Mourning public holiday and take a day off in lieu to celebrate Mabo Day on 3 June;
- Approached First Nations community members to fill roles on the statutory board and the advisory board;
- Established an Indigenous Advisory Committee; and,
- Celebrated National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week, and other First Nations led events.



## RELATIONSHIPS

*NJP recognises our strong relationships with First Nations communities and people as foundational to our operations. NJP seeks to build, and build upon, strong relationships based on mutual understanding and two-way learning to increase justice outcomes for First Nations Peoples across the country.*

*Aligns with NJP theory of change pillar: 'Collaboration with our grassroots partners who inform our work and amplify it at the community level.'*

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
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.	April 2022	RAP Committee members (Solicitor & Paralegal)
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	April 2022	Solicitor & Paralegal
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April 2022	RAP Committee Chair and RAP Committee member (Paralegal)
	RAP Committee members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2022	RAP Committee Chair and Paralegal
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2022	RAP Committee Chair and Paralegal

Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	April 2022	General Manager
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	April 2022	General Manager
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	April 2022	General Manager
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	April 2022	RAP Committee member (Paralegal)
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	April 2022	General Manager & RAP Committee member (Paralegal)
	Implement anti-racist ethics of practice in conjunction with internal cultural safety training.	April 2022	RAP Committee Chair
Implement processes to allow for trauma informed practice.	Deliver trauma informed practice training for all staff.	July 2022	General Manager
	Ensure trauma training is included for all new staff and volunteers.	At biannual intakes (August 2022; February 2023) and as required	Volunteer Manager



## RESPECT

*NJP recognises that First Nations sovereignty has never been ceded. NJP acknowledges and celebrates the living law, knowledges, cultures, histories, perspectives and languages Australia's First Nations Peoples hold. NJP seeks to engage with and promote First Nations truth telling by listening to communities and using our platform to amplify our clients' voices.*

*Aligns with NJP theory of change pillar: 'Using the justice system to identify & remove racism and discrimination from laws, policies and institutions.'*

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	April 2022	RAP Committee Chair & NJP Chair
	Ensure events and professional development opportunities to learn about First Nations history are shared with all staff and volunteers through Microsoft Teams and that managers support staff and volunteers to participate.	Ongoing – review Jan 2023	RAP Committee members (Solicitor & Paralegal)
	Promote First Nations truth-telling documentaries and events throughout the organisation by ensuring they are shared with all staff and volunteers.	Ongoing – review Jan 2023	RAP Committee members (Solicitor & Paralegal)
	Substitute Invasion Day/Survival Day/Day of Mourning 26 January public holiday with a day off to celebrate Mabo Day (3 June) and ensure staff are aware of NJP's choice.	Reminders in January & June 2022, 2023	RAP Committee Chair & Volunteer Manager



Demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people by observing cultural protocols.	Promote the use of Acknowledgment of Country at all team meetings.	April 2022	General Manager
	Identify who the Traditional Owners are of the lands and waters of our office and encourage staff to identify the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters they live on.	April 2022	RAP Committee Chair
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.	First week in July 2022.	RAP Committee members (Paralegal & Solicitor)
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	First week in July 2022.	RAP Committee members (Paralegal & Solicitor)
	RAP Committee to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2022.	RAP Committee members (Paralegal & Solicitor)
Implement processes to improve cultural safety within the organisation.	Implement a cultural safety training program by engaging a training provider to prepare and deliver team sessions.	November 2022	RAP Committee Chair
	Develop volunteer induction cultural safety training video or content.	November 2022	General Manager & RAP Committee Member (Paralegal)
	Maintain a database of cultural safety resources available to all NJP staff and volunteers.	Ongoing – review Jan 2023	RAP Committee Chair



## OPPORTUNITIES

*NJP acknowledges the importance of supporting First Nations people to be leaders in their communities. NJP seeks out and embraces opportunities to support First Nations communities and amplify First Nations voices.*

*Aligns with NJP theory of change goal: 'A fairer, more equitable society'*

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Maintain, and if possible increase, First Nations employment and board membership.	Seek to continue the ING First Nations junior lawyer program	Annually – review in January 2023	General Manager
	Maintain relationships with First Nations Aurora interns/Indigenous cadetships program and universities to encourage First Nations interns.	Biannually – June 2022, December 2022	General Manager and Volunteer Manager
	Identify and approach suitable First Nations community members to fill roles on the statutory board and the advisory board.	Ongoing – review April 2022	General Manager and NJP Chair
Implement a First Nations employment strategy.	Develop a First Nations employment strategy to create identified positions for cultural mentor, volunteers, paralegals, lawyers and executive staff positions.	April 2022	General Manager and RAP Committee Members (Solicitor and Paralegals)
	Have the employment strategy approved by the executive and the board.	May 2022	NJP Chair
	Implement the employment strategy.	May 2022-April 2023	General Manager

Implement greater emphasis on experience working with First Nations Communities during HR recruitment processes particularly for identified positions.	Ensure a First Nations person is involved in recruitment panels where appropriate.	Ongoing – review January 2023	General Manager
	Develop questions to utilise during recruitment to identify understanding of First Nations culture and cultural competency.	April 2022	General Manager
Maintain and improve employment outcomes by maintaining, and if possible increasing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development (this will also depend on our workload and client base).	Develop a business case for maintaining and if possible increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation (this will also depend on our workload and client base).	April 2022	RAP Committee Members (Solicitor & Paralegal)
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	April 2022	RAP Committee Members (Solicitor & Paralegal)
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.	April 2022	RAP Committee member (Paralegal)
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	April 2022	RAP Committee member (Paralegal)



## **GOVERNANCE, TRACKING PROGRESS & REPORTING**

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Report achievements, challenges, and learnings to internal and external stakeholders.	Provide quarterly updates on RAP progress to staff, Board and volunteers.	June 2022, September 2022, December 2022, March 2023	RAP Committee Chair
	Report on RAP achievements and key learnings in the Annual Report.	January 2023	General Manager
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	April 2022	General Manager & NJP Chair
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	April 2022	General Manager & NJP Chair
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April 2022	General Manager & NJP Chair
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 2022	RAP Committee Chair
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	1 October 2022	RAP Committee Chair

## *Contact*

For more information about our Reconciliation Action Plan, please contact:

The General Manager  
National Justice Project  
Phone: 02 9514 4440  
Email: [info@justice.org.au](mailto:info@justice.org.au)