



Reconciliation Action Plan

Reflect

September 2021 — October 2022



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

Victoria **Law**
Foundation

Cover Art

Flower(z)

How many times have you stopped to smell the ugly as well as the pretty? Apparently 'a rose by any other name would still smell as sweet'. Births, weddings, deaths are when they're gifted to you, your presents!

Snake(z)

Cold blooded; Warm hearted; Summer's heat; Exhausted body; Bed of petals; Breeze on sweat; Lick to touch; Lidless gaze; Parched fangs; Borderless boundary; Coloured spectrum.

"El Print De Cambios"

I'm proud to inform you that there is no one title for my painting. My interpretation of this piece has transformed itself into a subject that is part of all our everyday lives. Good vs. Evil. What I see represents both sides on a single square. How you see the square is up to you. My paintings change as you are looking at them; somehow they reflect the emotions of the viewer. Two people viewed this piece at once: one ran away from the fear of snakes, the other smiled and touched the flower.

Artwork Credit

Joseph Bray (Arrernte) 'Flower(z) & Snake(z)' 2018, 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.

Acknowledgement of Country

We are proud to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia, and to recognise their abiding connection to this land, its waterways and community.

The office of Victoria Law Foundation is on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. It is our privilege to pay respects to their Elders, and to all generations of Wurundjeri people who have nurtured this land for over 50,000 years and continue to do so today.

We believe that acknowledging the past is an essential step in building a better, more equitable future. We recognise the impact of colonisation, its legacy of injustice and the marginalisation of the Wurundjeri and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Victoria Law Foundation aims to break down the barriers to justice for all Victorians through our work in Research, Grants and Education. We are committed to making a sincere and positive contribution to a better justice system for all of us, especially those vulnerable, and in most need.

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan *September 2021 – October 2022*

Our business

Victoria Law Foundation aims to break down the barriers to justice for all Victorians through our work in Research, Grants and Education. We are committed to making a sincere and positive contribution to a better justice system for all of us, especially those vulnerable, and in most need. We are not a large organisation, with a staff of 20. We currently don't employ any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We are based in the Melbourne CBD, although we have a regional reach across Victoria through programs such as Law Week and Regional Law Talks. We now stream many of our events and programs so they can be accessed throughout Australia, and globally, although our primary focus remains on Victoria.

Our RAP

In 2019 the Victoria Law Foundation commenced developing a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to reflect the Foundation's values and commitment to reconciliation with our First Nation peoples.

Victoria Law Foundation has considered how our organisation might better engage with First Nations peoples and have identified the following opportunities to implement our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

Establish an effective governance structure, including RAP Working Group	Yes
Determine your organisation's vision for reconciliation	Yes
Scope and reflect on how the organisation can contribute to reconciliation	Yes
Improve relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and relevant stakeholders	Yes – ongoing
Build understanding of who, how, why and when to seek guidance and consult on our work	Yes – ongoing
Prepare business cases to senior leaders for future reconciliation initiatives	Yes

Our journey to date; practical steps

A staff RAP Committee was established to guide the process and resulted in all staff attending cultural awareness training delivered by the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association. The current RAP Committee consists of:

- Education Manager
- Business and Finance Manager
- Research – Communications
- Research Coordinator
- Teacher-in-Residence

The Executive Director is our RAP Champion, and the Board are kept informed.

The RAP Committee membership may vary over time.

This was followed by further staff consultation on how we could advance reconciliation through all our work areas. This staff conversation informed this Reflect RAP document.

We continue to expand the connections and relationships with First Nations organisations in order to ensure our programs are culturally sensitive and relevant to First Nations peoples. This is relevant to all of our programs: research, grants and education.

We developed this Acknowledgement of Country to use in our outward facing and internal meetings:

‘We are proud to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia, and recognise their abiding connection to this land, its waterways and community.

The office of Victoria Law Foundation is on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. It is our privilege to pay respects their Elders, and to all the generations of Wurundjeri people who have nurtured this land for over 50,000 years and continue to do so today.

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Our partnerships/current activities

Victoria Law Foundation is committed to a respectful and inclusive approach to engaging with First Nations people through our work as identified in the principles set out below.

- Cultural Awareness is an ongoing element of vision and practice. It should be in everything we do.
- To be an allied organisation that works with and for First Nations people
- Improve access to justice, for all Victorians.

The following actions in the VLF’s inaugural RAP came from a staff survey completed in late 2019. A total of 10 staff completed the anonymous survey, which asked participants to identify actions for reconciliation that could be implemented at a team level (for example, the Communications Team) and at an organisational level.

- Open all events, internal and external, with an Acknowledgement of Country
- Source an Acknowledgement of Country plaque for near the front door
- Adopt empathetic and appropriate language
- Acknowledgement of Country on websites, both Law Week and Foundation
- Acknowledgement of Country on all online public channels – social media, publications, Eventbrite
- Support First Nations artists through The Torch or other reputable First Nations art providers or artists.
- Promote existing education opportunities such as the Vic Bar intern scheme for year 10 and 11 Aboriginal Students

- Implement a statement of support for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander applicants for VLF positions
- Focused activity on increasing relationships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander support organisations
- Strengthen relationships with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander support organisations
- Support local Aboriginal organisations involved with justice issues through fundraising at the annual Legal Laneway Breakfast.

External activities

In Law Week we sponsor a number of events hosted by First Nations organisations. In 2018 this included a tour of culturally significant sites conducted by Tarwirri Indigenous Law students and Lawyers Association of Victoria.

We are currently engaged with Djirra to explore the potential for students to participate in our internship program.

In 2019/2020 Victoria Law Foundation funded VALS to produce a series of civil law videos, which are currently available on their website.

Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. 	<i>September 2021</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 	<i>September 2021</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. 	<i>April 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Committee members to participate in an external NRW event. 	<i>27 May-3 June 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	<i>27 May-3 June 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. 	<i>September 2021 November 2021 January 2022 March 2022 May 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. 	<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP organisations and identify other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	<i>April 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 	<i>April 2022</i>	<i>Research Communications</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 	<i>November 2021</i>	<i>Business and Finance Manager</i>

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. 	<i>November 2021</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. 	<i>Dec 2021</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. 	<i>Nov 2021</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 	<i>Nov 2021</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. 	<i>July 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. 	<i>July 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Committee to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	<i>First week in July 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>

Opportunities			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in business case options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander internships and employment within our organisation. 	<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an understanding of potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 	<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in business case options for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. 	<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Business and Finance Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate Supply Nation membership. 	<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Business and Finance Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate what services or supplies we can source from the Victorian Aboriginal Business Directory. 	<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Business and Finance Manager</i>

Governance			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP Working Group to meet regularly to support RAP implementation . 	<i>September 2021, October 2021, November 2021, December 2021, January 2022, February 2022, March 2022, April 2022, May 2022, June 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG. 	<i>June 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 	<i>June 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
11. Provide appropriate support for effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define resource needs for RAP implementation. 	<i>June 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. 	<i>June 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>

implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. 	<i>November 2021</i> <i>March 2022</i> <i>May 2022</i>	<i>Business and Finance Manager</i>
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	<i>September 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. 	<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Education Manager</i>

Victoria Law Foundation is committed to an ethical and inclusive approach to our organisation's RAP process beginning with this Reflect RAP and continuing with future RAPs. We will adhere to these principles using the structures and processes below.

Staff involvement

All staff will be informed and involved in decision making on our RAPs and invited to join the Committee, reflecting our commitment to ongoing education and Foundation-wide engagement.

Structure

- Agenda sent three days before each meeting
- Meeting minutes
- Follow up email from Chair after each meeting
- Bi-monthly meeting.

Board

A designated Board member will liaise with RAP Team, have input and receive meeting minutes and may attend RAP Team meetings.

Recommendations for the next phase

Composition

The Committee is open to all staff. It is comprised of at least two staff members, with a maximum number of four to ensure effectiveness.

Last updated August 2021

Length of Service

Committee members will participate in the committee for 12 months based on the financial year. Committee members can nominate to remain on the Committee for further terms.

Wherever possible, at least one member of the committee will remain on the RAP for at two years so there is continuity of knowledge and experience.

Workload

Committee members need to be able to dedicate up to three hours per week to the RAP and consider RAP work a priority like all other projects. This must be accounted for in work priorities and work.

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