



Circle Green   
Community Legal

# Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

February 2023 – February 2024



# Acknowledgement of Country

Circle Green Community Legal acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work, and particularly the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of the land where our office is located.

We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this nation, and we pay deep respect to Elders past and present.

Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.

## Feature Artwork

### 'Our Connections'

Travelling through our country, meeting new family members, making new connections.

At gatherings, sharing and telling our stories to one another. Keeping our culture strong and respected.

### Artist Background

Kaya, I'm Mel, a Noongar Aboriginal Artist living on Whadjuk Country, Western Australia.

I was born in Nambour, Gubbi Gubbi Country in Queensland and moved to Western Australia at the age of 10. My Woods family heritage is from Gnowangerup, Goreng Country in South West WA.

Through a variety of mediums, I use paint as a tool to tell stories and share knowledge. Raised away from my Aboriginal heritage, I wasn't connected to my culture. Through painting I seek to rebuild that connection, with a self-taught practice that extends from acrylics on canvas to leather and enamel paints as well as large-scale mural based works.

I am incredibly passionate about sharing my heritage and culture to keep it alive, leading workshops and inspiring the younger generation by telling stories through art.

### **Melissa Spillman (Woods)**

Founder

Maarakool Art

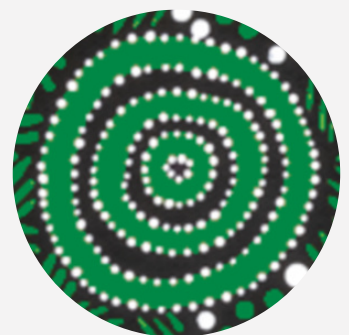
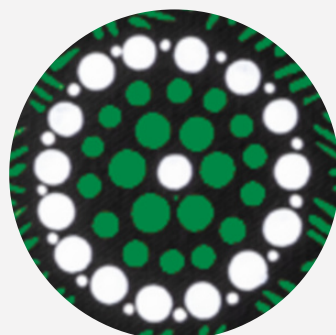


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# Message from Reconciliation Australia CEO

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Reconciliation Australia welcomes Circle Green Community Legal to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Circle Green 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 Circle Green 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 Circle Green, 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



# Foreword from Circle Green Community Legal Chairperson

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The enormity of the importance of this is not lost on myself or the Board of Circle Green Community Legal (Circle Green), and I am pleased to introduce our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

As a community legal centre that advocates for and supports people to obtain their legal rights, we have a moral imperative to play an active role in Reconciliation with our First Nations people in Western Australia.

Through colonisation of this beautiful country we are honoured to call home, we cannot lose sight of the living reality that First Nations people were made stateless by an imposed system on lands that were never ceded. As an organisation, we have a particular role to play in protecting and promoting the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ensuring they are treated fairly and equitably before the law. We acknowledge the First Nations legal centres and firms who have been active in this space for many years.

This is not just a document; it is a part of our culture as an organisation as we listen and grow in understanding. We bring to this process a humble acknowledgement of our limitations, and a willingness to use our power and privilege to implement a clear and measurable framework to transform intention into action that will impact our governance, process, and services.

Thank you to all those involved in developing our **REFLECT** Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We look forward to continuing to be guided by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and stakeholders, working with us to achieve Reconciliation.

**Emma Watton**  
Chair and Board  
Circle Green Community Legal



# Our Organisation

## Our Purpose

### **Accessible Justice.**

To create a system, place, and space to ensure a safety net of best practice legal advice, education, and advocacy in our specialist fields.

## Our Values

### **Fair and equitable**

We are committed to creating access to legal advice, education and advocacy so human and social rights can be upheld.

### **Holistic**

We deliver wraparound support that addresses people's needs to enable access to justice.

### **Collaborate for change**

We are stronger together. We collaborate with our clients, staff, partners, and government. We welcome partners who create better access to justice and permanent solutions.

### **Regenerate**

We create a support system for each other so we can create a better world.



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Circle Green Community Legal (Circle Green) is an independent, not-for-profit community legal centre in Western Australia. We provide state-wide specialist legal services in humanitarian, family and domestic violence, tenancy, and workplace law aimed at assisting people who are otherwise disadvantaged in their access to legal services.

Circle Green delivers legal advice, further assistance, representation, duty lawyer services, outreach, community legal education, and advocacy to improve access to justice for Western Australians.

Circle Green was formed by a merger of three established and reputable specialist community legal centres in WA: the Employment Law Centre of WA, The Humanitarian Group, and Tenancy WA on 1 October 2020 - the Noongar season of Kambarang, the season of birth.

A board of eight members governs Circle Green. We employ 60 people and engage approximately 24 volunteers, law clerks and secondees. It is unknown how many of our staff or volunteers identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Our office is based in Perth on Noongar Country of the Whadjuk people, and we have a state-wide reach.

Last year, we assisted 4,170 people, 4% of whom identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. We delivered 12,763 services, including legal advice, information, referrals, duty lawyer services, legal tasks, representation, and non-legal support. We presented 95 community legal education sessions and contributed to 61 law reform activities to advocate for fairer and just laws.

# Our Reconciliation Journey



Our purpose is **accessible justice** - to create a system, place, and space to ensure a safety net of best practice legal advice, education, and advocacy in our specialist fields.

We can only authentically work to achieve this if we honestly acknowledge our history and engage in reconciliation.

Circle Green is committed to an ongoing process of reconciliation. Our Reflect RAP is the first step in formalising our reconciliation journey.

With this RAP, we look forward to developing an emerging understanding of our role in progressing reconciliation in Australia, developing relationships and deepening our knowledge to lay the foundation for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

During our first year of operation (2020), we placed an Acknowledgement of Country as a preamble to our Constitution. 2021 was a significant year of establishment and consolidation for our new organisation; we reviewed and strengthened how we work and what we offer the community. Circle Green registered with Reconciliation Australia to begin the Reflect RAP in Kambarang, the season of birth and we reflected on and shared the Uluru Statement from the Heart across the organisation.

As part of our Strategic Plan 2022-2025, Circle Green seeks to actively contribute to reconciliation in Australia by implementing the Circle Green RAP. In April 2022, we established a RAP Working Group (RWG) to guide the development and lead the implementation of our RAP. The RWG consists of board members and legal and non-legal staff across various departments and service areas. Our RWG members are deeply committed to creating and embedding this RAP in our workplace.





### RWG members:

- **Alexander Wittkuhn**, Lawyer (Tenancy)
- **Chanda Parmar-Bonta**, Board Member
- **Chris Hogg**, Administration Coordinator (Workplace)
- **Lauren Wright**, Lawyer (Workplace)
- **Melissa De Abreu**, Board Member
- **Rosie Mayers**, Communications & Engagement Coordinator and RAP Champion
- **Sally Burston**, Finance Officer
- **Sara Kane**, Chief Executive Officer
- **Sarah Herford**, Lawyer (Workplace)
- **Sharna Wood**, Lawyer (Tenancy)

It is a key priority of the RWG to establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation within the group during our Reflect RAP. The RWG meets regularly and has, so far, developed a Terms of Reference and set a budget for RAP activities.

Our Communications and Engagement Coordinator is our RAP Champion, responsible for driving and championing internal engagement and awareness of the RAP. Our RWG prepared this plan, and the work has been endorsed by our board, CEO, and leadership team.

While developing our RAP, we have taken some initial steps toward reconciliation:

- We recognised and participated in several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community initiatives and events, including during NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week.
- We developed and implemented an internal policy allowing employees the flexibility to work on the 26 January public holiday in lieu of an alternative date.
- We arranged training for staff and volunteers on how to deliver an authentic Acknowledgement of Country with Acknowledge This!
- RAP updates are a standing item in all management meetings.
- Online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training is provided to all staff and volunteers as part of their induction process.
- We ensure an Acknowledgement of Country is delivered before all training, events, and meetings and incorporate a Welcome to Country into all major events such as conferences.

# Our Partnerships & Current Activities

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Circle Green has worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations since our establishment.

In 2022, we collaborated with the Aboriginal Family Law Service (WA), advocating for a dedicated Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People in Western Australia.

We are currently working in partnership with the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia (ALSWA) on our Workplace Respect Project, which aims to deliver legal services and community education to reduce the prevalence and impact of workplace sexual harassment and discrimination in Western Australia. We are recruiting an Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer to engage and build relationships within the community, increase First Nations engagement with the project, and strengthen our organisational capacity to ensure access, equity, and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a culturally appropriate way.

We will continue to reflect on how we can meaningfully contribute to reconciliation, enhance our awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and traditions, and create and maintain a more respectful and culturally competent workplace.

We look forward to strengthening our current relationships and developing and maintaining strong, meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations through implementing our RAP.

# Our Reconciliation Action Plan

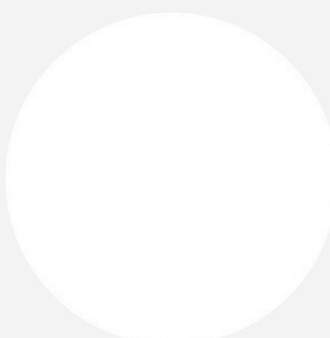


## Relationships

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.	February 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	March 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2023	Lead: Communications & Engagement Coordinator Support: RWG
	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	CEO

## Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	February 2023	CEO
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	July 2023	Lead: Corporate Services Manager Support: Human Resource Officer
	Conduct a review of our Human Resource Manual and Governance Manual to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	August 2023	Lead: Corporate Services Manager Support: Human Resource Officer





# Respect

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 and create a budget to increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.	May 2023	Corporate Services Manager
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	April 2023	Human Resource Officer
	Develop and implement a cultural awareness training program for 12-24 months drawing on existing training opportunities.	August 2023	Human Resource Officer
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 using resources and with guidance from Reconciliation WA.	April 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June 2023	Lead: Communications & Engagement Coordinator Support: Leadership team
	Continue to work with First Nations artists to develop pieces for Circle Green, and display these with an appropriate acknowledgement of the artist and artwork.	Feb 2023 – Feb 2024 Review: Sept 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator

## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Define our intent and outcomes sought by participating in NAIDOC Week.	May 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
	Articulate and promote Circle Green NAIDOC Week intent (as developed by RAP Working Group) to our board, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders.	June 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
	Raise awareness and share information amongst our board, staff, and volunteers about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
	Introduce staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	First week July 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week July 2023	Lead: CEO Support: Communications & Engagement Coordinator



# Opportunities

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	Lead: Corporate Services Manager Support: Human Resources Officer
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	August 2023	Lead: Corporate Services Manager Support: Human Resources Officer
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.	October 2023	Corporate Services Manager
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	March 2023	Lead: Corporate Services Manager Support: Administration Officer
	Investigate local First Nations suppliers that could supply Circle Green services and/or products.	June 2023	Lead: Corporate Services Manager Support: Administration Officer



# Governance

Governance			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	February 2023	CEO
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	February 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RWG
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	May 2023	Lead: Communications & Engagement Coordinator Support: RWG
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	March 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RWG
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	March 2023	Lead: CEO Support: Communications & Engagement Coordinator
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April 2023	Lead: CEO Support: RWG
	Provide RAP implementation updates as a standing item in CEO report to the board and as part of the board meetings.	February 2023 – February 2024 Review October 2023	CEO



## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
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 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	November 2023	Communications & Engagement Coordinator





# Circle Green Community Legal

## Contact details

For public enquiries about our RAP, please contact:

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