



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



Reconciliation Action Plan

REFLECT

Issued: Sep 2023 – Sep 2024

We acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation, and the continuation of the cultural, spiritual and educational practices of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Photo: Native Gevilliea near Kirby Architects Office



“ We believe that the design of facilities should engage with the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which they are located. We seek opportunities to be informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultural elements, and landscapes.”

Kirby Roper

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kirby Architects welcomes this opportunity to present our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Kirby Architects are well known for our open, collaborative culture and ability to deliver projects.

We have a philosophy that architecture and design are important and that the quality of our environment profoundly affects how we live and express our culture and social values. We believe well-designed environments make people happier and healthier.

Preparing this RAP reflects our personal passion and commitment to learning more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cultures and knowledge. We are keen to explore, research, and engage with First Nations people so that we may better understand their histories, cultures and knowledge. We are very aware that we have not had the benefit of understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples perspective and that this is a gap in our knowledge and

practices that prevents us from knowing and understanding Australia's First Peoples and their lived experiences. Learning and listening will be a core focus of our RAP. We believe that First Australians have so much knowledge, and we look forward to learning how to respectfully engage with and acknowledge Traditional Custodians' considerations and values. We are excited and enthusiastic to learn more.

As a medium-sized practice, we want to know more and learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples context of home, environment and Country. We also think that will help us to communicate these values with our clients and help our clients to share in this knowledge.

We look forward to the learning journey ahead, and our team is keen to work with Reconciliation Australia and your community in a positive collaboration.

Kind regards



Kirby Roper

Director, Kirby Architects



STATEMENT FROM CEO OF RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL REFLECT RAP



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

Kirby Architects 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 Kirby Architects 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 Kirby Architects, 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

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Placeholder for CEO Reconciliation Australia Letter	4
Our Business	6
Our RAP	8
Our Partnerships	9
Our Plan	10
Contacts	12

OUR BUSINESS

Kirby Architects is a medium size architectural studio established over 25 years ago, in Melbourne on Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung Lands. We offer architectural and project management services.

The work of our practice encompasses projects in healthcare, public/community buildings and residential homes.

Our work extends across a wide area in Australia, extending to Mansfield - Taungurung Country, Geelong - Wadawurrung Country, Port Douglas - Dawul Wuru (Yirrganydji) Country and inner Melbourne suburbs on Wurundjeri and Bunurong Countries.

Our studio is located in Malvern, Kurnan on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples of the East Kulin nation.

We employ a tightly knit team of six people who all collaborate closely and bring knowledge of diverse backgrounds to our work. As a team we enjoy sharing and learning from each other and our experiences and cultures and bring these values to all aspects of the practice including this Reflect RAP.

Kirby Architects is not currently aware of any staff that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We will continue to encourage and support an inclusive workplace that is welcoming to people of all backgrounds and hope that through the journey of our RAP to increase employment opportunities for First Nations peoples.

Our studio has a strong focus on innovative future proofing, sustainability and equitable considerations, producing projects with lasting positive impacts to both the community and environments where they are situated.

We have a dynamic, nimble and flexible design process that allows us to passionately uncover the existing and future context and stakeholder perspectives We explore innovative and customised solutions for each project scenario.

For practice founder, Kirby Roper, her architecture practice is about making a lasting and positive impact through beautifully considered spaces that heighten the senses, alter human experiences, and shape the future.

Contemporary local facilities in Australia are increasingly valuable community places in regional and urban settings. We consider impacts on cultural heritage, economic viability and social significance for every project. Our projects embrace the local environment to have a sense of belonging and identity in their local context and can adapt to future change.

We believe that the design of facilities should engage with the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which they are located. We seek opportunities to be informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultural elements and landscapes.

This approach is supported by our unique skills and experience in cross-cultural design. A facility that is sensitive to cultural and linguistic diversity is better placed to support high-quality outcomes for all.



Kirby Architects are well known for our open, collaborative culture and ability to deliver projects.

We have a philosophy that architecture and design are important and that the quality of our environment profoundly affects how we live and express our culture and social values. We believe well-designed environments make people happier and healthier.

We think architecture should respond to the users' physical and spiritual needs. It also needs to respond to its urban context, the streetscape, the neighbourhood and climate and social context.

Because the whole of our environment is important to us, our interest spans from the detailed design of interiors through the built form to urban design and town planning.

We are enthusiastic and ambitious to design collaboratively on innovative and sustainable contemporary environments in Australia.

*A successful project
requires mutual
respect, clear lines
of communication,
and clearly defined
deliverables and
responsibilities, and
should enrich and
expand the experience
of all peoples.*



Rewilding Stonnington replanting the naturestrip at Kirby Architects Office with native plants

OUR RAP

As individuals and collectively as an architecture practice, the reconciliation journey for us is about growth, learning, awakening, challenging our long-held biases and beliefs, and developing lasting and meaningful relationships with Traditional Owners of the lands on which we operate.

As architects, we understand that the work we do must be rooted in place - developing a deeper understanding of Country and Cultures is important to us to continue evolving our practices.

We further acknowledge that we operate within a colonialist society; one which influences the way we see and move through the world. As a culturally diverse studio, we aim to better understand the effects of colonisation and learn more about how we can actively participate in decolonising our profession.

As a practice, we aim to further our knowledge of sustainability and regenerative design through a lens of traditional knowledge. This is also a journey towards designing with greater understanding and empathy and seeing our clients as being more than just 'the people who commission us'.

We will embark on this journey through active learning, honest discussion, relationship building and immersion in Country and Cultures.

Our RAP Working Group Members

Kirby Roper, Director (KR)

Marie Penny, Architect and RAP Champion (MP)

Annabelle Roper, Graduate of Architecture (AR)

Josh Christian, Graduate of Architecture (JC)

Ally Howie, Office Administrator (AH)

Sarah-Mae Saria, Student of Architecture (SS)

We are a practice that respects Traditional Owners and we have experience of working with First Nations people, focusing on respect and authenticity.

ENGAGING WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS - BARWON HEALTH

The design of health facilities should engage with Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land where they are located. An example of engaging with First Nations peoples is part of a current project for Barwon Health.

Kirby Architects established the stakeholder engagement agenda. Due to the pandemic, the meeting was a virtual meeting on Zoom. We took extra care to ensure that all voices were included and ensured the process with time for people to think and consider their answers. The information we gathered included their expectations of what does an inclusive and friendly approach mean to the stakeholder group.

As a result of the stakeholder process local artist Wadawurrung woman Kait James has been engaged. We're working with Kait on the project to extend Traditional Custodians representation to the external aspects of the hospital. The artwork will also be used in elements and motifs in the wayfinding signage throughout the building. Some of these ideas came up as a part of the stakeholder process and we found it valuable to be open minded. All stakeholders were keen to avoid a design response that was insubstantial or token.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Kirby Architects has had few interactions, consultations and engagement of services with Traditional Owners of projects. We recently had the privilege of working with Wadawurrung artist Kait James on a project in Geelong for Barwon Health, this was our first opportunity to get more involved with Traditional Owners. We found the process enriching and enlightening and we look forward to more interactions. We are curious in the process of our learning to identify ways in which we can create these opportunities

Currently we include an Acknowledgment of Country in our email signatures and on our website. We are implementing a change in address requirements for all documentation to include Acknowledgment of Country. We are now including traditional place names and countries on all templates, letters and drawings for both our studio address and addresses of projects.

We are keen to expand our knowledge and understanding of reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, how architecture can have an impact and what that change looks like in the architectural profession. We have been attending continuing professional development courses and lectures that are specifically designed to guide architects and designers in respect for Country and First Australians.

As individuals we have had some personal involvement in reconciliation. Practice Director Kirby has been closely involved in Rewilding Stonnington, a volunteer group replanting nature strips and public land with indigenous plant species whilst advocating for the inclusion of indigenous plantings in public areas. They work with a local Wurundjeri landscape designer to choose the plants and design the planting. One of their first projects was the nature strip and train station carpark in front of our studio.

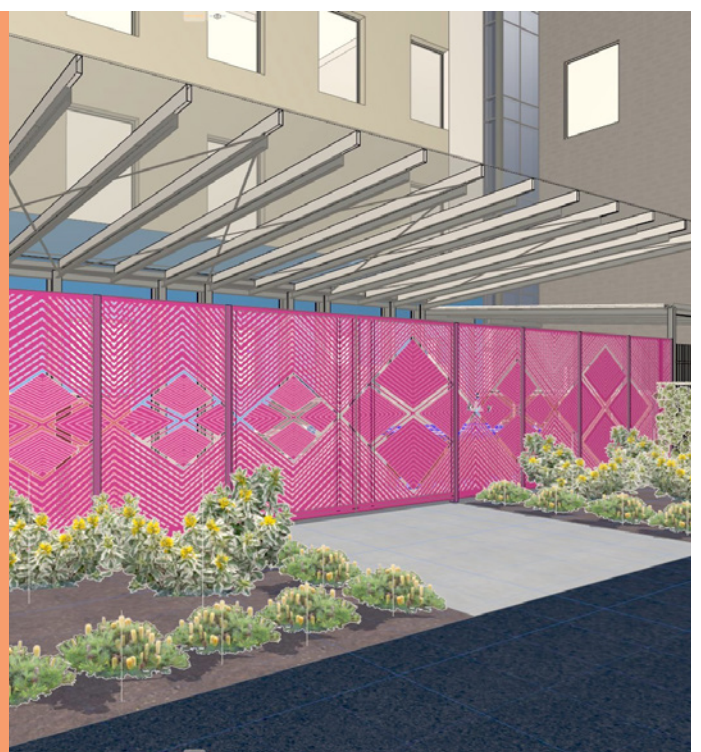
Other team members have engaged with and consulted Traditional Owners through university subjects with a practical and travel element that involved deep learning and research before meeting and yarning with Traditional Owners on Country, working together to build the projects their community needs.

"I was thinking about themes of place, healing and protection. The design is based on Wurdi Youang, more commonly known as the You Yangs, is the impressive granite mountain range that stands prominently in the Geelong landscape. Views from Wurdi Youang that look over Wadawurrung country.

Wurdi Youang is a very important place to the Wadawurrung people and was part of an ancient song line about how this area was created. It provided essential resources, including water from the ancient wells carved out of the big granite rocks. It was/is a place of healing and also male initiation.

To create the design, I've used traditional markings commonly found on Wadawurrung shields, possum skin cloaks etc. The diamond, chevron and herringbone style line work was widely used throughout the Kulin Nation. I've used fine lines and dashes instead of using dots/circles for the perforation, dots are not used in Victorian Indigenous art and it is thought of as being cultural appropriation to use dots outside of Central Australia"

Kait James



Work of Wadawurrung artist Kait James rendered in place on a project in Geelong for Barwon Health

OUR PLAN

KIRBY ARCHITECTS RAP ID 048866

REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN [SEP, 2023] - [SEP, 2024]



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.	Sep 2024	JC, Graduate of Architecture
	• Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Feb 2024	JC, Graduate of Architecture
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	Sep 2023	AR, Graduate of Architecture
	• RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June, 2024	AH, Office Administrator
	• Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June, 2024	AH, Office Administrator
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	Sep 2024	JC, Graduate of Architecture
	• Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Nov 2023	SM, Student of Architecture
	• Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Nov 2023	JC, Graduate of Architecture
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	• Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	Aug 2024	SM, Student of Architecture
	• Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	Nov 2023	AH, Office Administrator



RESPECT

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. 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.	Oct 2023	MP, Architect
	• Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Sep 2023	MP, Architect
2. 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.	Feb 2024	SM, Student of Architecture
	• Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Nov, 2023	SM, Student of Architecture
3. 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 2024	AH, Office Administrator
	• Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	AH, Office Administrator
	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2024	AH, Office Administrator



OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. 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.	Oct 2023	Director
	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Oct 2023	AR, Graduate of Architecture
2. 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.	Nov 2023	JC, Graduate of Architecture
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	Sep 2023	JC, Graduate of Architecture



GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Sep 2023	AR, Graduate of Architecture
	• Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Nov 2023	AR, Graduate of Architecture
	• Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Oct 2023	KR, Director
2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Oct 2023	JC, Graduate of Architecture
	• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Oct 2023	AR, Graduate of Architecture
	• Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	Oct 2023	AR, Graduate of Architecture
	• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Oct 2023	JC, Graduate of Architecture
3. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	• 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	AH, Office Administrator
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	AH, Office Administrator
	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	AR, Graduate of Architecture
4. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Mar 2024	AH, Office Administrator

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