

JANUARY 2023 - JANUARY 2025

Reconciliation Action Plan



spowers

Acknowledgement

Spowers respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we design and work - the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples of the Kulin Nation.

Spowers would like to thank the Reconciliation Australia Team and Helena Plazzer (Program Manager of RAP Development and Outreach) for their guidance during the continual development of our RAP.



Artwork

Seen throughout our RAP is the indigenous artwork 'Connections' by Leah Cummins, a Mayi woman from North Western Queensland.

"Connections is the story of our country, (Mayi Country). The journey we take while connecting back with country, many tracks and waterholes where we rest our heads while we travel. The larger circles are those resting places where many gather to sit and tell the stories of our dreaming. The smaller circles are small waterhole where we replenish our spirits and guide us back home again."

Leah Cummins



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

Spowers 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 Spowers 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 Spowers, 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



About Spowers

Spowers is an award winning Architecture and Interior Design firm based in Naarm/Melbourne, Australia.

Our mission is to create spaces that inspire and elevate people's experience in the buildings they live, work, learn and care in.

We believe in high performance buildings and align our design philosophy with the triple bottom line of social, environmental and economic factors.

We are committed to building a connected community which actively champions diversity and inclusion to help people thrive.

With a holistic design approach, we collaboratively work with our clients to deliver memorable outcomes and strategically aligned projects that reflect our clients values and objectives.

From project inception to completion, our senior personnel maintain meticulous involvement, ensuring the high level of detail and experienced stewardship that defines every Spowers project.

Testament to Spowers' enduring design excellence, is our repeat clients. The impact of our final designs, the efficiency of our projects, clear communication, are our authentic point of difference.

Spowers provides Architectural, Interior Design, Master Planning, Urban Planning and Project Management Consulting Services to clients in Australia and internationally, in the following sectors:

- Commercial
- Community
- Educational
- Health
- Residential
- Seniors' Living
- Workplace.

Spowers is a medium sized practice, established in 1895. There are currently no Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members of staff employed by Spowers. We aspire to improve and increase employment outcomes throughout the duration of this and future RAPs.

Our RAP - Reflect

Reconciliation Australia's RAP framework provides us with a structured approach to build and encourage reconciliation.

There are four (4) types of RAP that an organisation can develop - Reflect, Innovate, Stretch & Elevate. Each is designed to suit an organisation at various stages of its reconciliation journey.

Spowers began our Reconciliation process by committing to a Reflect RAP. A Reflect RAP includes scoping and developing relationships with First Nations stakeholders, deciding on our vision for reconciliation and exploring our sphere of influence. We received formal endorsement of our Reflect RAP in February 2023.

We hope that the development of our RAP will not only aid our team, but also our consultants and clients to work towards furthering a commitment to diversity, inclusion and social justice by building respectful relationships creating meaningful opportunities with First Nations peoples.

We hope to continue to better ourselves and assist those we work with to create, support, and deliver a culture that understands, values and respects the true history of this country, the cultures and contributions of First Nations peoples.

From the beginning of our reconciliation journey, Spowers understood the importance of establishing a RAP Working Committee.

This Committee consists of 6 team members from all levels of the organisation, including Spowers Directors Annie Robinson, Robert Pahor and Scott Allardyce.

RAP Working Committee:

- Scott Allardyce, Design Director
- Georgina Gascoigne, Studio Manager
- Craig Mackay, Company Secretary
- Robert Pahor, Director
- Annie Robinson, Design Director
- Andrew Rutt, Associate Director, Quality & Environmental Manager

Spowers has appointed Georgina Gascoigne RAP Champion. She will be responsible for driving and championing internal engagement and awareness of the RAP.



Our Partnerships & Current Activities

Spowers has ongoing business relationships with Greenaway Architects, Mantirri Design, Muru Office and Excell Waste Solutions.

On projects throughout Victoria, we are, or have been engaged with the following traditional owners either as stakeholders, cultural heritage management plan consultants, advisors and site administrators:

- Gunditj Mirring
- Millewa-Mallee
- Wadawarrung
- Wurundjeri
- Yorta Yorta

We include Acknowledgement of Country in all tender submission and presentations, email signatures and other marketing collateral.

We are committed to our reconciliation journey and collaborating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to achieve meaningful outcomes.

It is important to Spowers that we partner/engage/work with like-minded organisations.

We hope to energise our peers and the broader industry to make changes in how they think and conduct their work.

We are working towards furthering our commitment to diversity, inclusion and social justice. We are committed to building a connected community which actively champions diversity and inclusion to help people thrive.

We hope to continue to better ourselves and assist those we work with to create, support and deliver a culture where equity is a way of life.



Image: Rare Trades Centre Entry Transition, Sovereign Hill Museum Association, in Ballarat on Waddawurrung Country.



Proposed Yarning Circle, La Trobe University, Shepparton Campus on Yorta Yorta Country.



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.	Jan 23 - Jan 24	Directors Company Secretary
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Jan 23 - Jan 24	Directors Associate Director
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 24	Studio Manager
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May 24 - Jun 24	Studio Manager
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May 24 - Jun 24	Studio Manager
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	Apr 24	Directors Studio Coordinator
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	On-going for each project	Directors Company Secretary
	Identify other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Jan 24 - Jun 24	Directors Company Secretary
	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	Jan 24 - Jun 24	Quality Manager Studio Manager Company Secretary
4. Promote positive race-relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	May 24 - Jun 24	Quality Manager Studio Manager Company Secretary

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.	May 23 - Dec 23	Directors Company Secretary
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Jan - Jun 24	Directors Company Secretary
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.	Mar 23 - Sept 24	Director
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Jan - Jun 24	Director
	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	Jul 24	Studio Manager
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	Jun 24	Director Studio Manager
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	Jul 24	RAP Committee



Opportunities

Governance

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.	Sep 24	Studio Manager Company Secretary
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Sep 24	Studio Manager Company Secretary Directors
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.	Mar 23	Studio Manager Company Secretary
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	Feb 23	Studio Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Sep 23	Directors Studio Manager
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Sep 24	Directors, Studio Manager
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Oct 24	Directors Studio Manager
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Jan 23	Directors Company Secretary
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Jan 23	Directors Company Secretary
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	Jan 23	Company Secretary Studio Manager
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Jan 23	Quality Manager Company Secretary
	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.	Jun 23	Studio Manager
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.	Sep 24	Studio Manager
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	Sep 24	Studio Manager
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Nov 24	Studio Manager



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