



Reconciliation Action Plan
October 2023 – March 2025



Our offices are on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country. Our work gives us a special insight into the value of place and home, and we respect the Wurundjeri people's ongoing connection to Country, culture, and community. We also acknowledge the connection of all First Nations peoples on whose Country Victoria is today situated. We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and pay our respects to Elders past and present.



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Message from Reconciliation Australia

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



Artwork

Title: *Walking on Country
Underneath the Stars.*

Artist: Mukjarawaint, Yorta Yorta

Story: The yellow oxide dots represent children and the red dots adolescents and young people. The white dots on the outer edge represent Elders guiding and the individual's journey along the way - learning about culture, lore and land.

Our Business

Tenants Victoria is the peak body for the state's renters and the specialist tenancy-law community legal centre in Victoria. We are a not-for-profit organisation with a Board of Directors that is responsible for the strategic direction and compliance with our obligations under our Constitution.

Founded in the 1970s by renters, we continue to empower renters and make sure their voices are heard in our advocacy. We work in partnership with other community legal centres and housing sector organisations, and strategically with government to inform policy development and enhance service delivery.

Our vision is for safe, secure, and affordable homes for Victorian renters in a fair housing system. All renters should be able to afford a home that allows them to live full lives and contribute to their communities. Our services to renters include information, legal representation and advice, financial counselling, and outreach. We focus on helping renters facing hardship and disadvantage.

We aim to make the housing system fairer in several ways. We advocate for practices and attitudes that respect renting and for policies and laws that support the rights of renters and, through training, increase the skills of the community workers who assist renters.

Tenants Victoria employs about 30 staff and works with about 20 volunteers. All staff and volunteers are based in our office in the CBD of Melbourne, travelling to other locations as needed. None of our current staff or volunteers identify as First Nations Australians.

Our partnerships/ current activities

Tenants Victoria works with Aboriginal controlled organisations including Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Djirra and Aboriginal Housing Victoria. We would like to work with other organisations as partners and look forward to reflecting on strengthening and establishing our relationships with First Nations stakeholders.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan



Our ambitious *Strategic Plan*

2021 -2026: a time to transform drives our role as the peak body for renters to build our responsiveness to the high demand from them for information and support. As a social justice organisation that actively engages with the people we serve and the issues they face in their everyday lives, we want to commit to the formal process of reconciliation.

Over recent years we have been intentional in our approach to our reconciliation journey in many small but significant ways across our organisation. This groundswell from staff has validated our decision to embark on the formal reconciliation process. We look forward to putting our learning into action.

This RAP process will guide us as a whole organisation on our reconciliation journey to learn how to better work in partnership with First Nations organisations and understand how we can better support First Nations renters.

Tenants Victoria will build our engagement opportunities with First Nations stakeholders to seek guidance and advice. A RAP working group will be established to oversee the implementation and governance of our RAP, with regularly report to our RAP champion, the CEO. The RAP working group will report regularly to staff and our Board on progress against the RAP, and the organisation will include an update on progress in our Annual Report.

Approximately 30 per cent of Victorians rent their home, yet 53 per cent of First Nations Victorians are renters.

Housing Statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 2021 [abs.gov.au](https://www.abs.gov.au)

At Tenants Victoria we must ensure we have the understanding, skills, and attitude to support First Nations renters in culturally safe and appropriate ways, and to establish and maintain solid partnerships. This compelling rationale is the starting point that guides us as we engage formally in our reconciliation journey by developing our first Reflect RAP.

We began our formal journey to our first RAP in consultation with NJAC; a specialist First Nations consultancy. All staff were encouraged to participate in a cultural safety audit, training, and workshops and to work together to write our first Reconciliation Action Plan. Prior to the collective development of our RAP, we have embarked, together, on a learning journey about what reconciliation means, why it is important, what we are individually and collectively committing ourselves to and our responsibilities. NJAC facilitated truth-telling training and reconciliation workshops to ensure a clear understanding of a critical pillar of reconciliation which is historical acceptance.

Having a clearer understanding of our collective history as a nation and an organisation-wide understanding of the RAP framework has inspired Tenants Victoria to deeply reflect on how we can actively and effectively contribute to reconciliation, now and into the future. Reconciliation is everybody's business.



Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	Identify First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	April 2024	Director, Community Engagement
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	July 2024	Director, Client Services
	Prioritise attending First Nations gatherings and events to strengthen our relationships	April 2024	CEO
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external National Reconciliation Week event.	27 May- 3 June 2024	CEO
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.	27 May - 3 June 2024	CEO
	Ensure Tenants Victoria provides visible, public signs of support for National Reconciliation Week	27 May- 3 June 2024	CEO
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff and volunteers	December 2023	Board Chair
	Include our RAP within our induction process for new staff and volunteers	April 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	September 2024	Director, Community Engagement, RAP Working Group
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	October 2024	Director, Community Engagement
	Publicly promote Tenants Victoria's support for reconciliation	April 2024	CEO
	Review office environment for visual signs for support of reconciliation.	December 2023	Director, People & Corporate Services
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	December 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	December 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services



Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	June 2024	Director, Client Services
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	June 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
	Explore opportunities for ongoing cultural learning.	June 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
6. Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners / Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	February 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgment of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	May 2024	CEO
	Draft a standard Acknowledgment of Country and ensure consistency across all Tenants Victoria communications. This includes our organisational statements in written and digital formats and publications, and practices of acknowledging Country verbally in formal meetings.	December 2023	CEO
	Develop a calendar that highlights significant dates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and circulate to staff	April 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
7. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC week.	June 2024	Director, Community Engagement
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
	RAP working group to participate in an external NAIDOC week event.	First week in July 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
	Encourage and support all staff to participate in an external NAIDOC week event.	First week in July 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services



Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Develop a business case for First Nations employment and participation across all levels of Tenants Victoria organisation.	February 2025	Director, People & Corporate Services
	Build understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
9. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from First Nations owned businesses.	December 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
	Investigate Supply Nation membership	August 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services
	Investigate Kinaway membership	August 2024	Director, People & Corporate Services



Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP	Form a representative RAP Working Group to govern RAP implementation.	November 2023	CEO
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group.	November 2023	CEO
	Establish a minimum of two First Nations members of the RAP working group.	May 2024	CEO
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	December 2023	CEO
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	November 2023	CEO
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	October 2023	CEO
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March 24	Director of Innovation
12. 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 important RAP correspondence.	June annually	EA to CEO
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP impact measurement questionnaire.	1 August annually	EA to CEO
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	CEO
	All staff members to be kept regularly informed about our RAP commitments and progress	Dec 2023, April, July, and Dec 2024	CEO
	Investigate First Nations organisations or advisors we could engage with to conduct external evaluation of our Reflect RAP progress.	February 2025	Director, People & Corporate Services
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP	December 2024	EA to CEO



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