



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

COLIN
BIGGERS
& PAISLEY
FOUNDATION

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

OCTOBER 2018 - OCTOBER 2019



MANAGING PARTNER'S INTRODUCTION

At Colin Biggers & Paisley we believe in strong, active participation in our communities. We also believe that leadership is important, particularly on issues aligned with our core values of loyalty, respect, integrity and balance.

I am very proud to present our first Reconciliation Action Plan. Reconciliation is an opportunity for this generation to create positive change and help achieve greater justice and social equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our RAP is an expression of our commitment to the cause of reconciliation in this great country. Starting with our own workplace, we will use our skills, knowledge, expertise and influence to create an inclusive society for all.

We are proud of the relationships we have developed with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community partners, including, the Arts Law Centre of Australia, Tribal Wave Regional Assembly, Woor-Dungin, Career Trackers, as well as Women's Legal Service, Marrickville Legal Centre, Justice Connect and many others.

Pivotal to the success of these relationships is that we are guided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities themselves.

I very much look forward to making our contribution to the national journey towards reconciliation.



Nick Crennan

Managing Partner
Colin Biggers & Paisley

OUR BUSINESS

Founded over a century ago, Colin Biggers & Paisley is one of the oldest legal practices in the country. We are primarily focused on delivering a full range of legal services to the insurance, construction, property and business services sectors in Australia and abroad.

With offices in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney, we have a significant China Practice, a growing Middle East Practice, strong networks in the Australia-Israel business community, and a founding membership of ADVOC (international legal network).

Throughout our history we have remained focused on providing excellence in legal advice, service, systems and outcomes. Whilst construction, property and insurance are our main practice areas, we also have a strong presence in banking and finance, education, agriculture and mining, transport and logistics, and we provide legal services to all levels of government. Our core values of balance, respect, loyalty and integrity underpin everything we do.

Our determination to be a responsible business led us to establish the Colin Biggers & Paisley Foundation in 2015.

The Colin Biggers & Paisley Foundation comprises pro bono legal services, community partnerships including volunteering, charitable contributions and responsible business practices. We focus our efforts in promoting and protecting the rights of women, children and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We commit to promoting a truly diverse workforce and culture, that is inclusive of everyone and gives all of our people the opportunity to build and advance their careers in a way that is aligned with our core values. Building a culturally competent workforce is important within the practice. We focus our efforts particularly on promoting understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. We do this through a dedicated cultural awareness program of formal training, social activities, book clubs and events. Our partnership with CareerTrackers ensures that we are

supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into the legal profession - and into our practice.

We currently have more than 67 partners and 470 staff spread across our three offices. Our staff are made up of a diverse range of cultures and we employ a number* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all levels of the organisation - from partner to paralegal.

* We are aware that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not always self-identify in our staff on-boarding questionnaire or in our 2017 inclusion and diversity survey. As detailed in this RAP, we are working to establish a more accurate baseline measure of the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. This will enable us to develop initiatives to best support our people and their cultures

An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, featuring a dense cluster of skyscrapers and a large body of water in the background. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text. The text is in a bold, dark blue font. The overall image has a light blue tint.

**Colin Biggers & Paisley
is one of the oldest legal
practices in the country**

OUR **RAP**

WHAT DOES “RECONCILIATION” MEAN TO US?

For us at Colin Biggers & Paisley reconciliation means trying our best to understand the histories, cultures and experiences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have had in Australia, and using this understanding to guide positive action.

The positive actions that we are taking to promote reconciliation include:



Adopting a set of principles to guide our practice to work in a respectful and impactful way with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and people.



Supporting an inclusive culture in the practice to create unity in our community and positive race relations.



Promoting, protecting and enhancing legal rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our pro bono program focusing on access to justice, the rule of law, equality and non-discrimination.



Using our business as a mechanism to provide opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a proactive way to redress historical imbalances in our community.



Equipping our people with knowledge about different histories and cultures so that they can choose to be active champions of reconciliation at work, with our clients, in the legal profession and in the broader community.

Principles guiding the Colin Biggers & Paisley Foundation's partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- Being guided by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our work to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Empowerment to build capacity in communities
- Collaboration
- Respect for rights
- Inclusion - we all have a role to play
- Diversity of thought - valuing different skillsets and approaches
- Using our business to make a positive impact
- Adding value rather than replicating the work of others
- Participation in evidence led community programs
- Understanding and applying International best practice

Our aspiration: All lawyers aim to contribute at least 50 hours of pro bono legal services per year towards disadvantaged members of our community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. All of our people aim to connect with our community through Colin Biggers & Paisley volunteering options for at least two days per year.

Why are we developing a RAP?

The focus of the Colin Biggers & Paisley Foundation is to promote and protect the rights of women, children and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As a legal practice, we strive to use our skills and our business as a mechanism to provide opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to redress historical imbalances in our community and to promote access to justice.

The natural evolution of our involvement in the community, through partnerships and programs, is the development of this Reconciliation Action Plan, guided by local communities and our own RAP Champions to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



What do we want our RAP to achieve?

- Articulate our commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Enhance the culture in our practice.
- Focus our action on the three areas identified by Reconciliation Australia's RAP framework; relationships, respect and opportunities to ensure we are creating impact where it is needed.
- Increase our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and people in the areas of pro bono legal services and community partnerships particularly in the areas of culture, self-determination and housing.
- Guide our business in providing opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the areas of employment, procurement and commercial partnerships. This is our opportunity to play our part in creating positive economic and social futures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

RAP Champions

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships consultative group champion this RAP. Members include:

- Nick Crennan, Managing Partner
- Dunstan de Souza, Senior Partner
- Duane Keighran, Partner
- Andrew Murray, Partner
- Stephen Thompson, Partner
- Marlo Perry, Responsible Business Manager
- Kerry O'Brien, Solicitor

In addition to the consultative group, who have developed this RAP, the Colin Biggers & Paisley Foundation Ambassadors and Advisory Group have championed the adoption of the RAP by the practice.

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**Colin Biggers & Paisley
formally commenced working
with Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander communities**

OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY TO DATE

In 2015, Colin Biggers & Paisley formally commenced working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and people.

CASE STUDIES OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Colin Biggers & Paisley has undertaken a number of projects to protect the legal rights of, and promote access to justice for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We have a particular focus on protecting cultural rights.

“ *The pro bono and fund-raising support of Colin Biggers & Paisley for Arts Law and our Artists in the Black service has been outstanding. The CBP lawyers have been passionate about the work and it is the first time Arts Law has received such significant fund-raising support from a firm. It has had a real impact on our ability to deliver to our Indigenous clients nationally.* ”

Robyn Ayres

CEO, the Arts Law Centre of Australia.

Partnership with the Artists in the Black program at the Arts Law Centre of Australia

During 2017 and 2018 Colin Biggers & Paisley strengthened our partnership with the Arts Law Centre of Australia. Through their 'Artists in the Black' program we were able to help deliver targeted services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists nationally.

In FY18, our Foundation contributed the following to the Arts Law Artists in the Black program:

15 clients from the Artists in the Black program assisted to resolve their legal issues

152 hours of legal services (July 2017 - May 2018) provided to these clients amounting to the value of around \$50,000. During FY17 the Foundation contributed 165 hours of pro bono assistance amounting to a value of around \$70,000. Our commitment to supporting Artists in the Black clients is sustainable and ongoing.

Raised over \$100,000 through the Artists in the Black Challenge in 2017 and 2018. Funds raised have enabled the Arts Law Centre to employ one additional solicitor in their team to service Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients through the Artists in the Black program. The Challenge involved 12 of our people, including our Managing Partner, trekking through Kakadu (2017) and Central Australia (2018). The trek was complemented with cultural immersion experiences with Traditional Owners and connections with Aboriginal Arts Centres.

Pro bono program with a strategic focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients

Our extensive pro bono program has a strategic focus on providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, organisations and businesses with legal services.

During FY18, 23% of our pro bono legal services were delivered under our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples focus.

We have participated in a number of pro bono clinics in regional and remote communities delivered through our partner the Arts Law Centre of Australia. These clinics have provided legal advice to dozens of individuals - particularly in the areas of estate planning.

Partnership with Woor-Dungin

The Colin Biggers & Paisley Foundation has a partnership with Woor-Dungin to enhance capacity in Aboriginal Owned and Controlled Organisations.

Woor-Dungin is a coalition of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, philanthropic foundations and donors, and pro bono service providers working in partnership to enable Aboriginal organisations to access the resources and support they require to achieve self-determination.

One initiative that we have supported is the Aboriginal Women's mentoring program, "Maarni". The Maarni program was developed specifically for Aboriginal women identified by Woor-Dungin's partner organisations as leaders.

“ Like lots of small NFPs, income generation is always in the back of our minds as it is vital to supporting our planning and growth. We have lots of calls on our programs but not always the funds or staff to respond. We are fortunate to have some amazing pro bono corporate partners, donors and volunteers who provide fantastic support. Through their work, they really 'walk the talk' and are a great example of how to show support for reconciliation in a practical way. ”

Christa Momot

Community Development Manager,
Woor-Dungin

Sponsorship of the Australian Disputes Centre Scholarship

The Australian Disputes Centre is an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to advancing alternative dispute resolution knowledge and skills across Australia and the Asia Pacific.

In May 2014, the Australian Disputes Centre launched its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mediation Training Scholarships Program, an initiative that offers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders the opportunity to be trained to the national mediation standards.

The aim of the program is to promote mediation as an alternative form of dispute resolution in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. By training Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mediators, organisations and communities benefit from a mediator who understands the local culture and perspectives.

Colin Biggers & Paisley is pleased to support one scholarship annually for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander woman to participate in the program.



CASE STUDIES OF OUR INTERNAL ACTIVITIES

CareerTrackers partnership to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interns
CareerTrackers is a national non-profit organisation supporting the long-term career aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students. It provides a unique avenue to match the need for corporate diversity by creating internship opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students. CareerTrackers engages students during their study and links them with employers who offer a multi-year internship. The aim is to prepare students for success at university, their chosen profession and in their respective communities.

Colin Biggers & Paisley is proud of our ongoing relationship with CareerTrackers. We have participated in the 2016 and 2017 program. We are pleased that one of the interns has now become a paralegal in the practice.

Cultural awareness program to build cultural competency

During 2017 and 2018, Colin Biggers & Paisley created a dedicated program to enhance the cultural awareness and competency of our people. Activities have included (in each of our three offices):

- Cultural awareness training
- SBS Reconciliation Film Club screenings to raise awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' histories, cultures and contemporary issues
- Events for NAIDOC Week during 2018 involving our clients and our people
- Local cultural history walks
- Continuing Legal Education training modules on working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients
- Subscription to Koori Mail available for all of our people

Inclusion and diversity survey to establish baseline of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people

In 2017, Colin Biggers & Paisley conducted our first Inclusion and Diversity Survey. This has been a useful exercise to gather baseline data on the number of our people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Indigenous businesses used in our procurement

In 2018, we commenced our journey to incorporate more Indigenous businesses* in our procurement. We have participated in Supply Nation events and revised our policy on ethical and responsible procurement to include a focus on using Indigenous businesses where possible.

*Indigenous business is the term used by peak body, Supply Nation.



RELATIONSHIPS

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish a RAP Working Group	Form a RAP Working Group that is operational to support the implementation of our RAP, comprising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and decision-making staff from across our organisation.	December 2018	Foundation Leader
Build internal and external relationships	Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey. This will include organisations within the legal profession, our clients and community organisations.	December 2018	Responsible Business Manager
	Develop a list of RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey. This will include organisations within the legal profession, our clients and community organisations.	February 2019	Responsible Business Manager
	Participate in legal profession, corporate and community networks focuses on reconciliation - e.g. Legal Profession Reconciliation Network.	October 2019	Foundation Leader

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Encourage our staff to attend a NRW event within our practice, our clients or the community.	May 2019	Foundation Leader
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources, reconciliation materials and a copy of our RAP to our staff.	27 May - 3 June 2019	Responsible Business Manager
	Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2019	Responsible Business Manager
Raise internal awareness of our RAP	Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness among all staff across the organisation about our RAP commitments. This plan will give consideration to staff induction processes, an internal campaign to launch the RAP, CBP intranet and existing communications from the Managing Partner and Foundation Leader.	December 2018	Communications Manager
	Develop and implement a plan to engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP. This plan will give consideration to existing communication channels such as partners meetings, annual planning days and goal setting.	December 2018	Foundation Leader



RESPECT

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development	Develop a business case for increasing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements within our organisation. This will include an emphasis on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and lore and intersections with the Australian legal system.	March 2019	Foundation Leader
	Identify and promote opportunities for our people to participate in local cultural and historical learning in each of our three locations; Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. Mainstream these opportunities into new starter induction processes and annual practice group strategy days.	April 2019	Responsible Business Manager
	Capture data and measure our staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	April 2019	Human Resources Consultant (QLD)
	Conduct a review of cultural awareness training needs within our organisation. This will give consideration to the cultural competency required to support our clients and community partners.	June 2019	Learning and Development Manager
Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	Explore who the Traditional Owners are of the lands and waters in our local area.	October 2018	Responsible Business Manager
	Scope and develop a list of local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our organisation's sphere of influence.	November 2018	Responsible Business Manager
	Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols).	March 2019	RAP Working Group

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.	First week in July 2019	Communications Manager
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local area; Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.	First week in July 2019	Responsible Business Manager
	Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2019	Responsible Business Manager
Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to retain and strengthen culture	Maintain our relationship with the Artists in the Black program run by the Arts Law Centre. This includes the provision of pro bono legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, Arts Centres, annual fundraising drive to fund a specialist lawyer in the Artists in the Black program, and other collaborations.	October 2019	Foundation Leader
	Direct pro bono legal services to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples retain and protect the legal rights to their culture.	October 2019	Foundation Leader



OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Investigate increased opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be employed within our organisation	Develop a business case for increasing the diversity of our people by increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed within our organisation.	March 2019	Foundation Leader and Director Human Resources
	Conduct a review of our recruitment and retention approaches to ensure we are inclusive in our approach.	March 2019	Talent Acquisition Specialist
	Identify current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and development opportunities. This is conducted with the purpose to retain staff and is executed in a consultative, inclusive and employee-led way. It is not mandatory for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in a formal program beyond the ordinary opportunities for all of our people.	April 2019	Director Human Resources
	Employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as interns, with a view to further employment opportunities post-university, including through our participation in CareerTrackers programs.	October 2019	Foundation Leader and Director Human Resources

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Investigate opportunities for businesses owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be included in our procurement and preferred suppliers list.	Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	March 2019	National Corporate Services Manager
	Develop a business case for procurement from businesses owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.	March 2019	Foundation Leader and National Corporate Services Manager
	Investigate opportunities to become a member of Supply Nation.	December 2018	Responsible Business Manager
Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, businesses and organisations with our core business	Investigate the opportunity to partner with First Australian's Capital to support businesses owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that are in a start-up phase, with pro bono legal services.	April 2019	Foundation Leader
	Investigate opportunities to grow our pro bono work in areas aligned with our core business for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and community owned and controlled organisations.	May 2019	Foundation Leader
	Investigate opportunities to partner with our clients and the legal profession on initiatives to increase our support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, businesses and organisations.	March 2019	Partners on the RAP Working Group



GOVERNANCE AND TRACKING PROGRESS

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Build support for the RAP	Define and put in place resourcing needs for our RAP development and implementation.	December 2018	Foundation Leader and Director Human Resources
	Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.	October 2018	Managing Partner
	Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2019	Foundation Leader

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Review and Refresh RAP	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia, our RAP Working Group, internal stakeholders, community partners and other organisations to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	July 2019	Foundation Leader
	Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review.	August 2019	Foundation Leader
	Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement.	October 2019	Foundation Leader

THANK **YOU**

We would sincerely like to thank our clients, existing community partners and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships consultative group for guiding Colin Biggers & Paisley in our efforts towards creating an Australian community that is inclusive and promotes reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

CONTACT **DETAILS**

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