



*Making cities meaningful.*

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# A letter from Karen Mundine



*Reconciliation Australia welcomes Left Bank Co. to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.*

Left Bank Co. 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 Left Bank Co. 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 Left Bank Co., 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

# Our business

Left Bank Co. is a collective of urban and cultural planners, architects, policy makers, and engagement specialists who help our clients create unique yet realistic outcomes for cities. We work with project leaders to navigate the complexities of city-making and prepare big ideas for successful delivery.

Broadly, we negotiate the often-complex use of space in ways that support both amenity and equity. We create projects that provide economic, social, cultural and environmental value. We do this through three core business offerings:

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# Our business



## Cultural and creative strategy

*Weaving connection and meaning into place*

Cultural infrastructure and creative space are vital to places where connection and meaning flourish but they are some of the most complex assets to design and deliver successfully. We develop realistic strategies for visionary, viable and high value creative spaces – strategies grounded in demand-side evidence and future-facing operational and property models.

We deliver:

- creative precinct and venue feasibility studies
- visioning, concept development and briefs
- masterplan options studies and charrettes
- sector engagement reports
- alternate property model advisory services



## Stakeholder engagement

*Connecting the dots to craft ideas together*

When working with complex urban systems, it can be difficult to step back and capture broad perspectives on the big picture. We bring city-making expertise to conduct dynamic qualitative research that clears the path forward. By simultaneously generating, testing and refining ideas with stakeholders, we support decision-making that is realistic, politically viable and clearly reflective of collective agreement.

We deliver:

- stakeholder engagement plans
- engagement reports and insights
- business and institutional strategic plans
- policy research and analyses
- strategy workshops
- forum and panel design and mediation
- human-centred design processes



## Bid strategy and design procurement

*Positioning projects for the right audience*

In a procurement context, precise communication is critical to defining and achieving the urban outcomes being sought. We bring a detailed understanding of the protocols that underpin city-making to guide the production of high quality communications. Working on both sides of the procurement process, we assume the audience's position to craft language that brings the unique value of an opportunity or proposition front and centre, providing the clarity and structure needed to set the project up for success.

We deliver:

- competitive bid strategy, coordination and production
- unsolicited bid strategies that demonstrate uniqueness
- competition, development, masterplan and design briefs
- design excellence advisory services
- public-facing vision documents
- new business strategy

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## Our business

*Left Bank Co. has desks at a shared office location on Gadigal land in Sydney's Inner West. One of our staff is currently located in Melbourne and works in a shared office on Wurundjeri land there.*

At the time of endorsement, Left Bank Co. employs four people in Australia. At this point, the size of our business and highly specialised nature of our service offering has limited our ability to directly employ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. However, we recognise that this inability does not extinguish our agency in championing First Nations perspectives in our industry.

As providers of professional advisory services, we often work with a team of consultants. We regularly collaborate with First Nations partners and majority-owned businesses as head consultants, and advocate for early and quality engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to ensure that representation is carried from inception through the project to inform outcomes.

We are lucky to have worked on projects with global reach. Our most consistent work is concentrated along Australia's east coast with the majority of projects in and around Sydney and Melbourne but our work has also taken us abroad both physically and virtually – working for international clients and leading study tours for local architects and urbanists.

# Our RAP

First and foremost, Left Bank Co. is developing a RAP because we believe it's the right thing to do. We have benefitted both professionally and personally from the development of Sydney and Australia, and recognise this development occurred without the consent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and under harmful colonial regimes that impacted over 60,000 years of continuing cultures – intentionally at times and incidentally at others. Reconciliation is an important path for all Australians to walk so that we can move forward together – aware of the past and ongoing effects of colonisation, in pursuit of healing, and ensuring historical practices do not resurface.

As urban strategists, all of our work relates to land and its changes in use, ownership, value, access and experience. We strive to serve communities close to these changes in pursuit of more meaningful, equitable and resilient urban outcomes for people. Understandings of Country add richness to these outcomes and to our work more broadly.

We approach the implementation of our RAP with great anticipation for the learnings and relationships that we will grow through this journey. Left Bank Co. director Michelle Tabet will be our RAP Champion. We have configured the actions and deliverables across the four areas of relationships, respect, opportunities and governance into three general phases of work over the next 12-18 months that constitute the Left Bank Co. Reflect RAP.

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# Our RAP

## Phase 01 Establishment

The first phase of work will be about establishing the baseline information, processes and assessments that will set up our RAP implementation for success. It will see the operations processes of implementation, such as assessment and reporting systems, formalised so that they run smoothly throughout, as well as the identifying the communities and stakeholders that we will engage with on our reconciliation journey. Additionally, in this phase we will formalise those deliverables already progressed in our reconciliation journey to date as outlined over the page.

## Phase 02 Development

This phase of work will involve individual and collective development through completing the deliverables focused on research into best practice and participation in reconciliation and NAIDOC week events. From this foundational growth, we will be able to build partnerships with communities and stakeholders identified in the establishment phase, understanding that by working together, we will accelerate our reconciliation journey and impact.

## Phase 03 Self assessment

This phase is an opportunity to look back on Left Bank Co.'s growth over the year and review our ongoing needs and capabilities with regard to reconciliation, in the context of our broader business strategy. In this phase we will conduct the 'Reflect' activities that are core to this stage of our reconciliation journey, such as the development of business cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and procurement.

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# Our partnerships and current activities

## Community partnerships

Left Bank Co. has a number of informal partnerships with professionals in the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through industry relationships. They generally take the form of collaboration and referral on a project basis. Over the course of our Reflect RAP, we will work to both formalise these existing professional partnerships and nurture those that we create with our local community.

## Internal activities/initiatives

We currently undertake the following internal activities to progress our engagement with reconciliation:

### *Training*

All staff take an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competence Course online upon joining the team. This ensures all employees have a minimum knowledge baseline from which to consider both our projects and our processes. It has also given each staff member the opportunity to consider their personal and individual professional role in reconciliation through goal-setting, self-assessment and reporting on progress.

### *Sharing suppliers and providers*

Left Bank Co. staff share a knowledge bank of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers for either our own procurement needs or for recommendation on projects in which we have also been procured. As we've grown, so has this list of suppliers as each staff member brings their own experiences with different organisations. We look forward to formalising this in a register over the implementation of our RAP, along with recommended Indigenous readings, media sources, events and opportunities to build partnerships.



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# Our partnerships and current activities

*Prior to the endorsement of our first RAP, Left Bank Co. had progressed a number of the Reflect RAP actions and deliverables, largely through our commitment to staff education.*

Having reviewed our cultural learning needs, director Michelle Tabet added the Centre For Cultural Competence Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competence Course to our induction training that all Left Bank Co. staff complete. Implementing this measure has levelled up the knowledge base across all employees, and represents our progression of these Reflect RAP actions to date:

- Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.
- Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.
- Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.
- Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

Our core business offering often places us within a team of consultants on projects that require high quality First Nations consultation or engagement. Whilst we are not a First Nations consultant or engagement body, because the outcomes of this type of engagement directly affect the overall outcomes of the project, it is in our interest to do everything we can to ensure that it is conducted with sufficient time and resource to produce quality results. To do this, we ourselves identify relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our sphere of influence, and review consultation outcomes on projects to confirm that opportunities for quality engagement have not been neglected. Thus we have also progressed the first deliverable under Action 1: Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

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# Our partnerships and current activities

*Prior to the endorsement of our first RAP, Left Bank Co. had progressed a number of the Reflect RAP actions and deliverables, largely through our commitment to staff education.*

Additionally, at less than five employees, the size of our business has meant that the following deliverables have been progressed in the lead up to the endorsement of our first RAP:

- Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.
- Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.
- Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.
- Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.

This is reflected in the timeline allocations that make up our RAP commitment. However, we recognise that having progressed some deliverables does not mean they no longer require actioning. Many will continue to progress through the implementation of our Reflect RAP and our ongoing reconciliation journey.



# Our RAP commitments

## *Relationships*

<i>Action</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
01 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.	March 2023	Associate
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	March 2023	Junior strategist
02 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	Junior strategist
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2023	Junior strategist
	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	Junior strategist
03 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Continue to communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff as they join the team.	March 2023	Director
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2023	Junior strategist
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	March 2023	Junior strategist
04 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	May 2023	Junior strategist
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	May 2023	Associate



## Our RAP commitments

### *Respect*

<i>Action</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
05 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.	March 2023	Director
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	April 2023	Associate
06 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.	March 2023	Junior strategist
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	March 2023	Junior strategist
07 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.	May 2023	Junior strategist
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2023	Junior strategist
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week of July 2023	Junior strategist



## Our RAP commitments

### *Opportunities*

<i>Action</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
08 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.	January 2024	Associate
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	November 2023	Junior strategist
09 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.	January 2024	Associate
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2023	Junior strategist



# Our RAP commitments

## *Governance*

<i>Action</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
10 Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	March 2023	Junior strategist
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	April 2023	Junior strategist
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	March 2024	Associate
11 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	May 2023	Junior strategist
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	March 2023	Junior strategist
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	March 2023	Director
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April 2023	Junior strategist
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 out on important RAP correspondence.	June, annually	Junior strategist
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	01 August, annually	Junior strategist
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Junior strategist
13 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	April 2024	Junior strategist

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RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



*Making cities meaningful.*