

# Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

August 2023 > 2024





**Linden New Art is built on the land of the Boon Wurrung People of the Eastern Kulin Nation.**

**Linden acknowledges the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan of the Boon Wurrung as the traditional custodians of this land and pay respects to their ancestors and their Elders past, present and emerging.**







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Cover Image > Karla Dickens, *My Mother's Keeper* [installation view], 2020. Image courtesy of the artist and Andrew Baker Art Dealer. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

Image Page Three > Nicole Monks, *birli nganmanha (eating together)* [installation detail], 2021, grass tree resin, kangaroo skatt, charcoal, driftwood, river reed, shell, acacia and kangaroo teeth, echidna quill and eucalyptus, dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

Image Left > Delvene Cockatoo-Collins, *A Mermaid in the Bay* [installation view], 2022, linen, natural fibres including tawalpin - cotton tree and banksia, quampie shells, dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist and Mob in Fashion. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.



# Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

## Inaugural Reflect RAP

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

Linden New Art 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 Linden New Art 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 Linden New Art, 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



# Statement from CEO and Director of Linden New Art

## Inaugural Reflect RAP

Linden New Art is deeply committed to fostering meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We recognise and honour their enduring connection to the unceded land, sea, sky, and waterways we now call Australia.

We are committed to reconciliation and through our engagement with First Nations communities, we aim to create an inclusive and equitable space that amplifies Indigenous voices and supports their artistic and cultural expressions. We aim to meet the objectives articulated by First Nations people in multiple forums, including *The Uluru Statement from the Heart*.

Linden New Art stands prominently within a stately white mansion, situated on the lands of the Yalukut Weelam clan of the Boon Wurrung people. Our building is a physical symbol of colonial settlement, entailing the profound histories of dispossession and displacement endured by the local First Nations community. As an organisation it is our responsibility to acknowledge and confront this history.

This RAP will be the cornerstone of how we do this, guiding our endeavours, shaping our programming, creating employment opportunities, and informing the inclusion of First Nations individuals within our Board. It will indicate the ways we will deepen our connection with Aboriginal communities locally and nationally, to ensure their voices influence our strategic decision-making. Linden understands that meaningful reconciliation is an ongoing process, and as such, this RAP is a living document that will continue to evolve ensuring we remain engaged and continue to move forward with purpose.

We recognise the persisting impact racism has on the lives of Aboriginal people and we are committed to eliminating this inequity. We pledge to being respectful and culturally aware, strongly call out racism, and active in educating our audiences.

It is a privilege to present our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The development of this RAP has enabled us to reflect on our past achievements, and more importantly, will guide us into the future to provide better opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and ensure we embed real action through everything we do as an organisation.

This RAP is driven by our respect for Aboriginal people and reflects my personal, and the organisation's collective, commitment to reconciliation. We take up the request outlined by the authors of *The Uluru Statement from the Heart* to walk with First Nations people "in a movement of the Australian people for a better future."

### **Vincent Alessi**

Chief Executive Officer and Director

Linden New Art





# Our Business

Linden New Art, established in 1986, is a public gallery located in the Melbourne bayside suburb of St Kilda.

Originally a historic home, Linden is a unique gallery whose architectural restrictions become starting points for artists to explore, respond and create. It has a changing program of exhibitions with a focus on brave new work by Australian contemporary mid-career artists; exhibition-related events; and public and educational programs targeted towards a diverse audience, all which aim to engage, inspire, and challenge.

Our vision is to become one of Australia's leading contemporary art spaces, supported by our key mission objectives to:

- Support the curation of new art by mid-career artists.
- Inspire, provoke, and contribute to conversations and debate.
- Advance artists' careers through mentoring, connections, and exposure.
- Offer a welcoming space where artists, visitors and the community can come together in a site of historical and cultural significance.
- Celebrate First Nations culture and heritage.
- Build upon our proud heritage of enriching the cultural fabric of St Kilda, Melbourne, and Victoria.

Linden New Art has 7 full time equivalent staff, who are managed by a board of 9. Linden does not currently have any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples on staff or the board. The organisation does engage First Peoples in artistic and independent-curatorial roles for specific projects.



# Our Reconciliation Action Plan

As an organisation we strive to democratically facilitate creatives, creativity, and conversation. This RAP is being developed to aid us in unpicking the inequality inherent in our current systems, and to develop new models of equity that allow us to truly become an inclusive organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Linden New Art has a proud history of programming First Nations Artists, whose work depicts the complexity and multiplicity of contemporary First Peoples' lives and philosophies. Although we have a strong connection with our individual Artists, we know we do not have strong enough connection to our local communities and need to develop this relationship to see participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at all levels of activity.

We want to be decisive and follow talk with action, to be held accountable, and to make real changes now. We want to embed new thinking and being at all levels of our organisation and be proactive in decolonising our outputs, structures, and material site. This RAP is a restart after a change in staffing and the unsuccessful execution of a 5-year engagement plan that was both too broad and too specific and lacked direct accountability. We are excited to have Vincent Alessi as our organisation's RAP champion and our Curator taking on the role of RAP working group chairperson.

We understand that exclusion and bias is both historic and current, and as an organisation we must commemorate both struggle and success. That we must take time to ask and then listen, to relinquish power and decision making, and to inform and affect those around us.

# Our Partnerships + Current Activities

Linden New Art has a strong history of presenting contemporary First Nations Artists in our program and this will continue to be a pillar of our output and identity.

Outside of solo exhibitions, we have developed, in partnership with Melbourne Fringe, a yearly commission for First Nations Designers to develop a major work to be exhibited in Design Fringe. As part of our yearly Linden Postcard Show we offer free entry to First Peoples and a First Nations specific award. We have Acknowledgements of Country embedded in our digital and physical spaces and we arrange for a Welcome to Country for all major or applicable events.



Image > Lillardia Briggs-Houston and guests with her work *Gubudha (Reed)*, 2022, reed, linen, thread, dye, dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist and Mob in Fashion. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.



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



Image > Robyn, Siân and Danièle Hromek, *Djinjama: Defying the Grid* [installation detail], 2021, twine, natural dyes, gum, nuts, casuarina nuts and emu feathers, dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.





# 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.	January, 2024	Gallery Manager
	· Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	January, 2024	Director
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.	August, 2023	RWG Chair
	· Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	August, 2023	Gallery Manager
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	Gallery Administrator
	· Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June, 2024	RWG Chair
	· RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July, 2024	RWG Chair

Image > Lillardia Briggs-Houston, *Gubudha (Reed)* [installation detail], 2022, reed, linen, thread, dye, dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist and Mob in Fashion. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.



# 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.	March, 2024	Director
	· Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	March, 2024	Director
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.	April, 2024	Director
	· Investigate Supply Nation membership.	April, 2024	Gallery Manager



Image > Robert Fielding, *Jackaroo*, [installation detail], 2019. reclaimed water tank panel, sandblasted. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.



# 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.	August, 2023	Gallery Manager
	· Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	August, 2023	Gallery Manager
	· Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	August, 2023	RWG Chair
2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	· Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	September, 2023	RWG Chair
	· Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	September, 2023	Director
	· Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	September, 2023	Director
	· Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September, 2023	Gallery Administrator
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	RWG Chair
	· Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	RWG Chair
	· Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	RWG Chair
4. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	· Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	January, 2025	RWG Chair



Image > Baluk Arts, *Elements* [installation view], 2019. Image courtesy of the artists and Baluk Arts. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.





Image > Robert Fielding, *Holding*, [installation view], 2019. c-type prints on lustre paper, Framed. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

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