

# Reflect

## Reconciliation Action Plan

May 2021 - April 2022



**ETHOS  
URBAN**



*Gungahandji Mandingalbay Yidinji People's Masterplan, QLD*  
Source: Ethos Urban

*Cover: Indigenous Cultural Landscape Garden, South Eveleigh Precinct, NSW*  
Source: Mirvac

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

In the spirit of reconciliation Ethos Urban acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.





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# 1.0 Introduction



## **Statement of Endorsement from Reconciliation Australia Chief Executive Officer, Karen Mundine**

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

Ethos Urban 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 over 2.3 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 Ethos Urban 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 Ethos Urban, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.



### **Message from the Chair of the Ethos Urban Board, Amanda Kenny**

As Chair of the Board, I am proud to present our first Reflect RAP. This document demonstrates a commitment to begin our journey towards reconciliation and to strengthen our relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Recognition of the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has gained significant momentum over recent years. However, there is more to be done, particularly within the built environment and the development industry. Ethos Urban is keen to be a part of the reconciliation movement and the move towards greater equality for First Nations people.

For over 25 years our experts in urban advisory, design and approvals have been trusted by government, the private sector and not-for-profits from right across Australia to help them confidently realise their ambitions for change. With this document we will be seeking to broaden our impact and strive to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples where we can.

This will be through the work that we do, changes to the way we operate and also through better educating our team about issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our unconscious biases.

I look forward to working with our RAP Working Group (RWG) in the next phase of our reconciliation process and the implementation of the RAP over the next 12 months.



Community Building, South Eveleigh Precinct, NSW  
Source: Mirvac

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## 2.0 Our Business

### **About Ethos Urban**

Ethos Urban is an Australian firm, with over 25 years of experience in urban advisory, design and approvals. Ethos Urban employs approximately 130 people across Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, whilst our work extends across Australia. As a planning and design firm, we strive to be the trusted voice in decisive moments and seek to improve everyone's experience of living. Cities, communities and places are dynamically complex, and everyone has a stake in the decisions that continually recreate them. At Ethos Urban, we believe that reaching better decisions will make a difference, helping individuals and communities to prosper. Across all our offices, we are continually adapting our strategies to challenge and shape urban change in a way that encourages positive outcomes for all. At present, we do not employ any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff, however this is something that we are striving to change with the actions set out in this RAP.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility at Ethos Urban**

As we grow, Ethos Urban is building momentum in our corporate social responsibility journey. However, we have always strived to maintain and operate in line with company and stakeholder values, adapting business strategies and practices to provide positive outcomes for many. This includes providing pro-bono planning and design work, such as the Rebuilding Mogo Study following the extensive bushfires in 2019 and 2020. Ethos Urban will continue to improve and build upon our ongoing corporate social responsibility, to harness our influence for good.

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## 3.0 Our RAP

This is the first time that Ethos Urban has prepared a RAP. The process commenced following strong desire from our team for Ethos Urban to recognise our cultural responsibility in our attitudes and in our day-to-day business operation and in our project work. It marks the start of a journey and commitment to better understanding our realm of influence and what we can do to improve our own cultural awareness within the company and also make a positive contribution towards reconciliation within the sphere of influence that we have in our workspace.

This desire stems from our role as a consultancy, advising on built environment outcomes across Australia. Our work often results in changes to communities, places and how land is used. We believe it is important that we recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through engagement and in our work to create better places.

In addition to increasing cultural awareness within the company, we intend to gain a better understanding of our own personal biases and how this may impact the way that we work and interact within the places which we plan for and live in. We intend to encourage and support personal and professional engagement with Aboriginal cultural heritage programs and activities.

As part of the early steps in developing a RAP, we distributed a companywide survey to capture people's knowledge of what a RAP is and how they think Ethos Urban can make a positive contribution internally and externally. The results have identified the need for our RAP to champion diversity, inclusion and cultural change in the workplace and not just be the introduction of a new policy. The findings from the survey generated ideas in which Ethos Urban can work towards achieving greater cultural responsibility in our day-to-day business operation and in our project work and these are identified as actions in this RAP.

In addition to the survey, we have introduced employees to the reconciliation journey by participating in the 7-steps to Practical Reconciliation training which is a programme run by Evolve Communities<sup>1</sup>. This training provided employees with an overview of:

- Reconciliation and RAPs
- Diversity, identity and stereotypes
- Our shared history
- Communication, cultural baggage and unconscious bias
- Family and kinship, sorry business and cultural leave
- Close the gap and privilege
- Becoming an Ally

As part of developing our RAP moving forward, we have identified a commitment to further training to gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

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Our RAP has been prepared and will be implemented by our RWG members:

- Paul Beatty (Director)
- Jennie Buchanan (Director) (RWG Champion)
- Ella Coleman (Urbanist) (RWG Chair)
- Allison Heller (Director)
- Camille Kirwan (Associate Director)
- Juliet Louw (Urbanist)
- Hannah McDonald (Senior Urbanist)
- Ping Chien Ng (Senior Urbanist)
- Anna Nowland (Principal)
- Henry Wallis (Principal)
- Liz Webster (Senior Urbanist)

Our RAP Champion, Jennie Buchanan, will be taking the lead role in ensuring that the commitments and actions outlined in this plan are undertaken. Jennie will be responsible for ensuring that reconciliation remains high on the Ethos Urban agenda, both internally and externally.



*Untitled (red gum slabs) by Jonathan Jones*  
South Eveleigh Precinct, NSW  
Source: Mirvac

Located in the Lobby of Axle, Jonathan Jones' *Untitled (red gum slabs)* is a site-specific artwork created in response to South Eveleigh's rail history, proximity to the railway network, and both local and state Indigenous heritage. The old red gum slabs used in this artwork were originally harvested in the Koondrook/Barham region on the Murray River, some over 100 years ago.



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## 4.0 Our Partnerships / Current Activities

Ethos Urban does not currently have any ongoing partnerships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses or organisations. However, many of our team have worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on various projects. Examples of this project work from recent years are listed in this section of the RAP.

In starting this journey, we have already begun to increase our business activities related to reconciliation. NAIDOC Week 2020 was celebrated nationally, with resources shared to support further engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and reconciliation activities.

More broadly, planning and policy and practice increasingly recognise the importance of Traditional knowledge and cultures in land management. We support this shift and wish to contribute to more projects driven and supported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

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## Redevelopment of South Eveleigh Precinct, NSW

Our NSW engagement and planning teams have been advising the South Eveleigh development team since 2015 on the redevelopment of the South Eveleigh Precinct in Sydney, NSW. Due to its proximity to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Redfern we have been engaging with that community in all the work that has been done.

The heritage interpretation overlay in the public domain and in the building designs include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements such as a native rooftop farm, a cultural garden and a digital interpretation element. The project will also involve ongoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement with educational programs and tours within the Precinct.

Further to this, the project includes an ongoing community grants scheme which will also support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and groups. A number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations are involved in ongoing stakeholder advisory groups that have been set up for the project.



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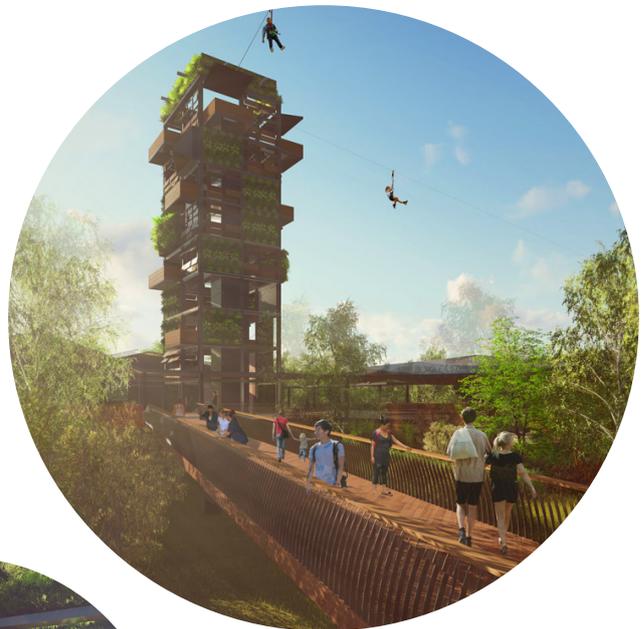
### **Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji (GMY) People's Masterplan, QLD**

Our QLD team is currently coordinating with the GMY peoples and Federal, State, and Local Governments on this project to prepare a masterplan which will enable the GMY peoples to live on Country with greater economic opportunities and prosperity.



### **Mandingalbay Yindji Aboriginal Corporation's Eco-Cultural Infrastructure Tourism Project, QLD**

The project involved the development of a property-based management plan, project visioning, assisting with the concept development and the approval of a development application for an Aboriginal eco-cultural tourism development at Trinity Inlet, immediately opposite the Cairns CBD in QLD. Ethos Urban also undertook engagement with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups for the project, which is the first of its kind that is owned and operated by Traditional Owners in the area.



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### **Cultural Path Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, QLD**

This project involved the preparation of a concept plan for a 'cultural path' to safely connect Cherbourg to the nearest township (Murgon) by foot, bike, or scooter. Ethos Urban provided landscape architecture, planning, and engagement services for the project.



### **Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy - Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, QLD**

Our involvement in this project was through community and stakeholder engagement to support Phases 1 and 2 of the project. Engagement involved meetings with Yarrabah Leadership Forum, which comprises Elders and other Aboriginal stakeholder representatives.



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## Hanging Rock Strategic Plan, VIC

The aim of this project was to prepare a 50-year strategic plan for the Hanging Rock Precinct. The Precinct has many tourism and recreational roles for the local, regional and state-wide community, and extensive heritage and environmental significance.

The project included consultation (led by Extent Heritage) with the three Traditional Owner groups with connections to the Precinct: the Taungurung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Wurundjeri clans. For the first time the stories of the three tribes were recorded and presented in the Plan. A landscape assessment of the Rock and its surrounds were undertaken and key viewpoints and viewlines, including those of significance to the indigenous communities, were identified for protection.

The Plan provides a strong and cohesive approach to future land use, governance, funding and environmental issues, and was supported by all parties. The Plan was launched by State Ministers and the Mayor of Macedon Ranges in a ceremony at the Rock.



## 5.0 Action Plan

Relationships				
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	(1a) Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	June 2021	RWG Member	
	(1b) Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	September 2021	RWG Member	
	(1c) Develop a list of five ways the company could increase our working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, stakeholders, communities and business partners for consideration for implementation by the Group Leadership Team (GLT).	September 2021	RWG Members	
	(1d) Establish a central location for collaboration/engagement opportunities and stakeholders so that this information is easily accessible to all staff and can be utilised in forming future partnerships in project work.	May 2021	RWG Chair	
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	(2a) Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.  Share events and content (articles, podcasts, etc.) for employees to engage with.	May 2021	RWG Chair	
	(2b) RWG members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2021	RWG Chair	
	(2c) Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2021	Group Director (People Support, Culture & Change)	
	(2d) RWG host NRW event and register NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	3 June 2021	RWG Chair	
	(2e) RWG and senior staff who have attended external events to 'report back'.	14 June 2021	RWG Chair	

Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	(3a) Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff, and through staff, to our clients and stakeholders.	May 2021 (as part of the launch following RAP approval)	Lead: RWG Chair  Support: GLT
	(3b) Provide regular updates regarding opportunities to be involved in the RAP, the progress of tasks and milestones completed and upcoming events.	Monthly update	Lead: RWG Champion  Support: RWG Chair
	(3c) Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	October 2021	RWG Chair
	(3d) Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. Locally to each state and nationally.	October 2021	RWG Chair
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	(4a) Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.  Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	November 2021 (as part of the audit of policies and procedures)	Group Director (People Support, Culture & Change)

<b>Respect</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	(5a) Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	July 2021	RWG Members
	(5b) Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	July 2022	Lead: RWG Chair  Support: Learning & Development Coordinators
	(5c) Investigate options for more advanced and in-depth cultural awareness programs for RWG and key company leaders.	October 2021	RWG Chair
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	(6a) Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	July 2021	RWG Chair
	(6b) Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	July 2021	RWG Champion
	(6c) Integrate Acknowledgment of Country and recognition of local Traditional Owners into Ethos Urban reports and communication.	July 2021	RWG Chair

<b>Respect</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	(7a) Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	Week of 28 <sup>th</sup> June	RWG Champion
	(7b) Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	Week of 28 <sup>th</sup> June	RWG Champion
	(7c) RWG to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2021	RWG Champion
8. Celebrate/recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance	(8a) Create and communicate a calendar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance to all staff.	June 2021	RWG Chair
	(8b) Share information internally (e.g. on an intranet) about each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander date of significance.	June 2021	RWG Chair
	(8c) Host a 'lunchtime learning session' to coincide with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance.	June 2021	RWG Chair

Opportunities			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	(9a) Develop and implement recruitment practices which actively seek Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates.	May 2022 (as part of the audit of policies and procedures)	Group Director (People Support, Culture & Change)
	(9a) Research best practice and policies that contribute to improved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes.	February 2022	RWG Chair
	(9c) Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities and develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	February 2022	RWG Chair
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	(10a) Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	By 30 June 2021	Office Support Managers (OSMs)
	(10b) Investigate Supply Nation membership.	September 2021	OSMs
11. Procurement	(11a) Investigate local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement options for each state office through Supply Nation ( <a href="https://supplynation.org.au/">https://supplynation.org.au/</a> )	September 2021	RWG Members (with assistance from OSMs involved in procurement)

<b>Governance</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
12. Establish and maintain an effective RWG to drive governance of the RAP.	(12a) Maintain RWG to govern RAP implementation.	April 2022	RWG Champion
	(12b) Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June 2021	Draft by RWG member(s), endorsed by GLT/Board
	(12c) RWG to meet at least once a month on Microsoft Teams (or similar virtual platform) to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Commence May 2021	Lead: RWG Champion  Support: RWG Chair
	(12d) Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	April 2022	Lead: RWG Champion  Support: RWG Chair
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	(13a) Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	May 2021	RWG Chair, budget to be approved by GLT/Board
	(13b) Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments By providing quarterly presentations to the GLT to engage, seek feedback and endorsement on RAP commitments.	5 July, 4 October, 3 January and 4 April in 2021 and 2022	Lead: RWG Champion  Support: RWG Chair
	(13c) Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	May 2021	RWG Chair
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	(14a) Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2021	RWG Champion
15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	(15a) Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	February 2022	RWG Chair



Redevelopment of South Eveleigh Precinct, NSW  
Source: Mirvac

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