

REFLECT Reconciliation Action Plan

June 2024 - June 2025



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

daStudio



Mount George Conservation Park located on Kurna & Peramangk Country

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Das Studio acknowledge that we live and learn on the land of the Kurna people of the Adelaide plains, and the saltwater Larrakia people of the Darwin region and harbour. We honour the ways in which their elders past and present have cared for and nurtured their lands, waterways and seas for millennia. We pay respect to all Traditional Custodians and Knowledge Holders as the very first place makers.

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RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA CEO STATEMENT

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

Das Studio joins a network of more than 2,500 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 Das Studio 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 Das Studio, 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



Waitpinga Cliffs located on Ngarrindjeri Country

OUR BUSINESS

Early in our existence, we came together to identify our shared values and to define our unifying vision to honour our responsibility to people and planet:

To strive for better, always.

Better processes, better relationships, better outcomes.

To respect and acknowledge history.

But always ask whether the way it is, is the way it should be.

To be generous with our time and with each other.

Because giving is better than taking.

To be makers.

Makers of spaces, makers of solutions, makers of joy.

To make each day better.

In this spirit, it is with humility, hope and conviction that we commence our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, as the foundations for our commitment to listening, learning and engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to contribute to Reconciliation through meaningful action.

Das Studio are an Architecture, Design and Landscape practice founded in 2018 by husband-and-wife duo Sara Horstmann and Dino Vrynios. Since inception we have gone on to employ a total of 22 studio members - all of varying disciplines and backgrounds, but all with shared values. To the best of our knowledge our workplace does not currently employ any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identifying staff at the time of publishing this RAP.

Our core business is the provision of architecture, interior design and landscape architecture services and we proudly do this from our studio located in Tarntanya on Kurna Country (Adelaide, South Australia) where we service projects locally, regionally and nationally. This includes a variety of new build, heritage & adaptive re-use, masterplans and interior fit-outs across the education, health, workplace, residential, retail, tourism and hospitality sectors.

As a collective of Architects, Designers and Professionals, we are mindful of the contribution we make to reshaping the built and natural environments, and the communities that exist within these realms. All our projects exist on First Nations Country, and every project we deliver requires consideration of the history of the lands that our designs sit upon, and respect for the future they contribute to.



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Our RAP Working Group

01 Rachel Pargeter
Associate | Senior Interior
RWG Chair

02 Sarah Thompson
Associate | Practice Manager
RWG Co-Chair

03 Dino Vrynios
Managing Director
RWG Champion

04 Allan Yeo
Associate | Senior Architect
RWG Member

05 Josh McCallum
Senior Architect
RWG Member

06 Edward Ramsey
Architect
RWG Member

07 Shannon Wark
Graduate of Architecture
RWG Member



04



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06



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OUR RAP

Das Studio was established and grown on the back of our shared values – our people inherently want to do good for others and lead within the industry from a place of social, environmental and economic betterment.

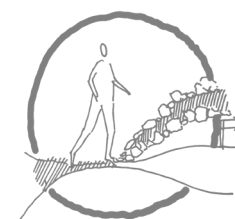
In the process of collectively defining our shared values and unifying vision our “make better” ethos was born:



Make Together

We seek out opportunity to collaborate with each other, and to form strong relationships outside the Studio.

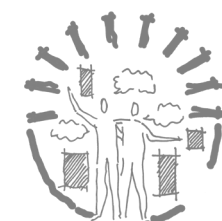
Understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights is in alignment with our values as a practice. In August 2022, as a whole studio we collectively agreed on the need and responsibility for our practice to better contribute to the preservation, restoration and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ Country and cultures.



Make the Way

We challenge convention and refuse to accept the way it is, as the way it should be.

This honest discussion was the spark for our Reconciliation journey and the logical next step to enacting meaningful change was to commence the RAP process through the formation of our RAP Working Group – a cross-section of leadership and disciplines to best represent a whole-of-organisation approach to the process.



Make with Joy

We love what we do so imbue our projects, relationships and studio space with happiness and humour.



Make Generously

We are generous with our time, our spirit, each other and the community.



King Head Cliffs located on Ngarrindjeri Country

OUR RAP

When deciding to commit to our first Reflect RAP we commenced the process in the way we would begin any project, via research and outreach.

We intend to approach implementing our Reflect RAP through the 3 Pillars of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities - underpinned by an embedded process of Governance & Reporting:



Relationships

We will seek out new and build upon existing collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop strong relationships based on trust and respect.



Respect

We will seek to respect and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights in our everyday.



Opportunities

We will seek the potential within our sphere of influence to increase opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Governance

We will continue to demonstrate our commitment to Reconciliation through transparent and accountable RAP Working Group practices that are supported by studio leadership and the whole team.



Thultharrung / Tolderol Wetland located on Ngarrindjeri Country

OUR PARTNERSHIPS / CURRENT ACTIVITIES

As we take the first steps on a path of turning intention to action in contributing to the advancement of reconciliation in Australia, we are mindful to ensure we embark upon the RAP process in a designful manner.

This was highlighted by our first and ongoing project with client Yadu Health Aboriginal Corporation to provide a new health facility to Ceduna, South Australia – enabling vital physical, social and emotional wellbeing services to the local communities including Kokatha, Mirning and Wirangu peoples. Early in the design process Managing Director Dino Vrynios and Project Architects Allan Yeo and Jenna Holder were hosted on Country over a two day period by local representative Warren Miller of Yadu Health Aboriginal Corporation to gain a deeper understanding of place.

As our involvement with both the project and organisation grew, experiences such as this and spending time in conversation with local Elders and knowledge holders on the historical impact of Yadu

and their vision for its future demonstrated the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and direct involvement in the design process.

We also looked internally to see what changes we could make towards greater cultural awareness and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. Members of the RAP Working Group Rachel Pargeter, Allan Yeo, Shannon Wark and Edward Ramsey undertook cultural awareness training sessions with Haydyn Bromley of Bookabee Australia in the infancy of our RAP. This was fundamental to establishing a decolonised baseline of knowledge to share with the wider RAP Working Group, with the intention of ensuring all current and future employees have access to the same education as a minimum.



Lake Alexandrina located on Ngarrindjeri Country

OUR PARTNERSHIPS / CURRENT ACTIVITIES

In improving our cultural awareness and internal practises, we welcome the recently updated requirement by the AACA National Standard of Competencies for Architects that Registered Architects build their knowledge of First Nations cultures to maintain Registration.

We will implement this requirement not only for Architects in our studio but for all staff members, ensuring equal access to education and truth telling to inform personal practice.

Through our education and engagement with Reconciliation Australia materials the RAP Working Group were empowered to implement our own written Acknowledgement of Country in email signatures, social media profiles, submissions, reports, presentations and verbally at staff meetings.

We are also in the process of working towards a physical Acknowledgement of Country displayed within the studio as a visible symbol of our commitment to Reconciliation. We mirror this externally, with implementation of Acknowledgement of Country and, where applicable, engagement with Traditional Owners to deliver a Welcome to Country at events organised by our studio.

We actively participate in and promote NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Weeks, along with observing other key calendar events such as National Close the

Gap Day and National Sorry Day. Staff are updated via studio wide emails and physical displays of collateral, as well as verbal presentations and discussion at our fortnightly 'Town Hall' staff meetings where we take the time to talk about ideas and events that are important to us and our community. We also provide all staff the option of choosing not to observe Australia Day (Invasion Day) if this does not align with their personal values.

In an additional measure to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses we are in the process of shifting to Supply Nation certified alternatives within the physical studio, and investigating where other services might be similarly procured.

We believe it is through conscious actions such as these that we begin to enact incremental change within our Studio as the foundation for contribution to Reconciliation within our sphere of influence and the wider Architecture and Design industry. It is with great anticipation that we commence our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.



Newland Head Conservation Park located on Ngarrindjeri Country



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.	Sept, 2024	Graduate
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Sept, 2024	Graduate
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2025	Associate (RP)
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June, 2025	Graduate
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June, 2025	Associate (RP)
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	June, 2024	Associate (RP)
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Oct, 2024	Associate (AY) / Architect (ER)
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Oct, 2024	Associate (AY) / Architect (ER)
	Research best practice architectural cultural engagement and co-design strategies.	March, 2025	Architect (JM)
	Join the Architecture & Design RING - industry network group to collaborate on work in the reconciliation space	July, 2024	Associate (RP)
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	Sept, 2024	Practice Manager
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	Sept, 2024	Practice Manager



RESPECT

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	August, 2024	Associate (AY)
	Define minimum and ongoing education requirements for all staff.	November, 2024	Associate (AY)
	Organise and execute a quarterly all staff film/ documentary viewing based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history/ culture/ storytelling/ current affairs.	June, 2024	Graduate
6. 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.	Sept, 2024	Architect (JM) / Architect (ER)
	Re-confirm staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June, 2024	Associate (RP)
	Design and install a physical Acknowledgement of Country display in Studio/s.	Sept, 2024	Architect (JM)
7. 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	Graduate
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June, 2024	Graduate / Architect (ER)
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2024	Graduate



OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. 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.	Sept, 2024	Practice Manager
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Sept, 2024	Practice Manager
9. 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.	June, 2024	Practice Manager / Architect (JM)
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	June, 2024	Practice Manager



GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Review RWG membership.	March, 2025	Associate (RP)
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June, 2024	Associate (RP)
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	December, 2024	Associate (RP)
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July, 2024	Practice Manager
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	August, 2024	Associate (RP)
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	June, 2024	Associate (RP)
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	August, 2024	Practice Manager
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	Practice Manager
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August annually	Associate (RP)
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 Sept, annually	Associate (RP)
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP.	March, 2025	Practice Manager

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Front/ Back Cover Image
Warriparinga Wetlands located on Kurna Country

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