



Reconciliation Action Plan

July 2022 – June 2023



The IPA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise the important contributions that First Nations peoples make within our communities.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Timothy Buckley

Tim has a rich and diverse heritage of Oceanic First Nations peoples — Aboriginal (Mununjali), Australian South Sea Islander and Māori. Raised in the country on Darumbal land, he learnt firsthand that we are all connected to the natural world and the many challenges his communities faces as a result of ongoing colonisation and the impact of modern Western culture. He is also a proud member of the LGBTQIA+SB community. Living between many spaces, he has an acute awareness of complex social issues, understanding how to sensitively navigate the intersection between race, culture, gender, sexuality, and spirituality.

He has more than 15 years' experience working in creative roles at agencies, corporations, media, government and most recently not-for-profits organisations as an artist, consultant, creative director, designer, and photographer. He has led teams developing impactful projects both locally and across the globe.

In 2019, he started his own business Rareland, creating a safe space to make, create and collaborate with a focus on closing the gap and effecting positive change in his communities. He is continually inspired by the resilience and spirit of First Nations people in their continued fight for rights and recognition, in particular LGBTQIA+SB people, and the natural world which gives us all life.

About 'Camaraderie'

As a small business owner, I personally know many of the challenges involved with navigating the path to financial stability and success, especially so being Aboriginal. We must overcome additional hurdles in building financially sustainable, healthy businesses. Every relationship we forge on this journey is important, particularly with our accountants. As they are our trusted providers of financial services, their advice regularly influences our decision-making. Learning the ropes of business management, knowing you have real support with someone by your side who is by your side – a sense of camaraderie – is invaluable in achieving your goals.

As the IPA is embarking on their Reconciliation Action Plan journey, improving awareness and understanding of these challenges by taking meaningful actions to support First Nations peoples, is the first step in making a real difference in the everyday lives and future of our communities.

Working together, every step we take towards reconciliation we build a brighter, more inclusive world.



Andrew Conway

Chief Executive Officer
Institute of Public Accountants.

NOTE FROM THE CEO

RESPECT is central to the IPA's value system. A clear and targeted approach to reconciliation connects to respecting our people, membership, and the wider community.

Therefore, I am proud to announce that the IPA is joining the collective, coordinated effort to achieve reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, marked by the release of our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

With the support and guidance of Reconciliation Australia, the RAP Working Group has developed an aspirational vision for reconciliation that holds the IPA accountable to be an accessible, connected, and welcoming professional association for First Nations accountants. I extend a special thank you to Victorian Divisional Advisory Committee President Tory O'Brien, who has volunteered her time, shared her experiences, and assisted the Working Group in delivering the RAP.

This process has highlighted how the IPA can foster an inclusive and welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the IPA community. Furthermore, it has raised awareness of the systemic barriers that prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from pursuing accountancy.

The pleasing thing is that the work is already beginning. After identifying gaps in our database, we are upgrading our systems to provide members and staff with the option to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Furthermore, IPA staff are receiving guidance on the importance of the Acknowledgement of Country protocol, following training completed by members of the RAP Working Group.

As we take this initial step towards reconciliation and deliver on our RAP commitments, I encourage all IPA members to engage with us on this journey to a more sustainable and equitable future.



REFLECT RAP

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the Institute of Public Accountants to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The Institute of Public Accountants 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 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 the Institute of Public Accountants 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.

Institute of Public Accountants, 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





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OUR BUSINESS

The Institute of Public Accountants (IPA) has over 46,500 members and is one of three legally recognised professional accounting bodies in Australia. The formation of the IPA Group in 2015 made our organisation the largest small-to-medium enterprise (SME) focused accounting body in the world. With this focus:

Our reason for being is to improve the quality of life of small business.

Our vision is for every small business to have an IPA member by their side.

To improve the quality of life of small business, the IPA offers practical continued professional development (CPD), events, resources, and support to members, as well as an advocacy platform that is in the best interests of members, the profession, and the general public. The Institute is also leading the promotion of mental health awareness in the small-to-medium enterprise (SME) sector, working with Deakin Business School and other Australian professional associations to provide mental health training to SME advisors.

Underpinning these efforts are our values of RESPECT, capturing our interaction and engagement with members, the internal culture of the organisation, and how we work together as a team. Guided by this framework, the IPA is committed to building a diverse community of public accountants that is welcoming to all who have a passion and proficiency in accounting.

The IPA Group contains the IPA, the Institute of Financial Accountants (IFA) in the United Kingdom, IPA China, and the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT), making us one of the largest accounting organisations in the world, with members in over 80 countries. The IPA is an International

Federation of Accountants (IFAC) top 20 organisation, as well as a full member of the Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants (CAPA).

The IPA employs 67 individuals across Australia, with 47 based out of Head Office in Victoria, 7 in New South Wales, 4 in South Australia, 5 in Queensland, 3 in Western Australia and 1 in Tasmania. At the time of publishing, no IPA staff members have voluntarily self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples. As we implement our Reconciliation Action Plan, we will develop culturally sensitive opportunities for staff to make this identification, as well as integrate this method into our staff onboarding process.

The IPA has five offices in Australia:

- Wurundjeri Woi Worrung Country (Melbourne, VIC)
- Yuggera and Turrbal Country (Brisbane, QLD)
- Gadigal Country (Sydney, NSW)
- Kurna Country (Adelaide, SA)
- Wadjak Country (Perth, WA)

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

As the IPA continues to operate with an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) focus, reconciliation has been identified as an important commitment to elevate the diversity and inclusion of the IPA community, as well as the accounting profession.

The IPA has developed a RAP to formally establish an approach to reconciliation that is genuine and impactful, ensuring accountability through the setting of timelines and the assignment of responsibilities. Reconciliation has also been identified by the IPA as a journey and outcome that is strongly linked with our value of RESPECT. The IPA's reconciliation journey will lead us to develop relationships with First Nations stakeholders in our local areas, as well motivate us to foster a culturally competent workplaces that are safe and welcoming for the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The IPA envisions a future in which both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples can thrive in business and commerce. Within our sphere of influence, this includes the enhancement of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to pursue accountancy, as well make IPA the professional body of choice for First Nations businesses and accountants across the country. The objectives of our Reflect RAP initially focus on the engagement of employees and members across three key dimensions:

Race relations: Conduct cultural awareness training and other education to address any unconscious biases within our organisation or membership.

Equality and equity: Increase awareness of the inequalities faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As an organisation, explore ways to create opportunities to increase equality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples. For example, the exploration of a Supply Nation membership will create opportunities for us to purchase stationery, catering, and other supplies from First Nations owned businesses

Historical acceptance: Review perspectives on Australia's history, with an aim to accept the wrongdoings of the past and commit to ensure they never happen again. The systemic socio-economic challenges and various institutional barriers limit opportunities and pathways for First Nations peoples to become accountants or build businesses. As of 2020, Northern Territory Treaty Commission director, Steve Rossingh, stated that there are around 100 known Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander accountants.¹ An extended consequence of this lack of representation within the profession is that First Nations small business owners have limited access to advisers with shared lived experiences and connection to Country.

IPA CEO Andrew Conway is committed to embedding the principles of reconciliation throughout the organisation, a commitment shared by the IPA Board of Directors. Cultural competency training will underpin the foundations of learning among our employees as part of Reflect RAP journey.

The RAP Working Group will govern the implementation of the RAP.

The IPA RAP Champion is the Group Executive, People & Wellbeing, who will champion the RAP internally across the organisation to communicate our vision for reconciliation and engage employees in the delivery of our RAP commitments.

The RAP Working Group (RWG) includes First Nations representation, and consists of the following:

- Group Executive, People and Wellbeing
- Divisional Advisory Committee President, Victoria
- National Events Project Coordinator
- Internal Communications Advisor
- Sustainability & Policy Advisor
- Member Engagement Manager, QLD

As a professional association, the IPA has the additional reach of our 45,000+ membership base. Thus, there will be regular communications and opportunities for members to engage and contribute to our broader vision of reconciliation, as it becomes more refined over time. This greatly extends our potential sphere of influence.

In the past, the IPA has taken part in joint initiatives offering support such as business planning and accounting services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. However, without the structure and accountability that stems from the development of a RAP, the momentum behind the initiative was not sustained. Therefore, the implementation of this RAP and a dedicated Reconciliation Working Group is expected to improve the direction and sustainability of this work.

¹ - Charles Darwin University. (2020).

<https://www.cdu.edu.au/news/calculating-pathway-indigenous-accountants>



OUR PARTNERSHIPS & CURRENT ACTIVITIES

In 2021, the IPA recognised NAIDOC Week. This involved posts on our internal intranet discussing the meaning of NAIDOC Week and the theme 'Heal Country'. In addition to this, we also published an article on our Public Accountant online hub, providing IPA members with resources to learn, support and reflect on the meaning of the week. Furthermore, IPA Group CEO, Andrew Conway, provided an overview of the 'Heal Country' theme in our Continued Professional Development (CPD) webinars throughout NAIDOC week. It is our aspiration to build on this in 2022-23 by ensuring we also take the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and encourage IPA staff to attend local events.

The RAP working group has been informing the IPA community of the importance of reconciliation and what a RAP will help us achieve. This has included employee information sessions and internal announcements to raise awareness of our reconciliation journey and to provide opportunities for future participation.

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 2022	<i>National Events Project Coordinator</i>
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	January 2023	<i>Sustainability & Policy Advisor</i>
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	27 May – 3 June 2023	<i>Internal Communications Advisor</i>
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2023	<i>Executive Assistant to the CEO</i>
	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	
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	July 2022	<i>Internal Communications Advisor</i>
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey, including IPA members.	October 2022	<i>Member Engagement Manager, QLD</i>
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2022	<i>Member Engagement Manager, QLD</i>
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	January 2023	<i>Sustainability & Policy Advisor</i>
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	February 2023	<i>Group Executive, People and Wellbeing</i>

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.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within the IPA.	August 2022	<i>Group Executive, People and Wellbeing</i>
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	September 2022	
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.	December 2022	<i>National Events Project Coordinator</i>
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2022	<i>Group Executive, People and Wellbeing</i>
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.	July 2022, July 2023	<i>Internal Communications Advisor</i>
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2022, July 2023	
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2022, July 2023	<i>Member Engagement Manager, QLD</i>

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.	March 2023	<i>Sustainability & Policy Advisor</i>
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	August 2023	<i>Group Executive, People and Wellbeing</i>
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.	April 2023	<i>National Events Project Coordinator</i>
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	May 2023	

GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	July 2022	<i>Sustainability & Policy Advisor</i>
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	July 2022	<i>Supported by: National Events Project Coordinator</i>
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	July 2022	
	RAP Working Group to convene monthly.	July 2022	<i>Group Executive, People and Wellbeing</i>
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July 2022	<i>National Events Project Coordinator</i>
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	July 2022	<i>Group Executive, People and Wellbeing</i>
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	July 2022	<i>Sustainability & Policy Advisor</i>
	Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	July 2022	<i>Group Executive, People and Wellbeing</i>
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date to ensure that we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June annually	<i>National Events Project Coordinator</i>
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	April 2023	<i>Sustainability & Policy Advisor</i>



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