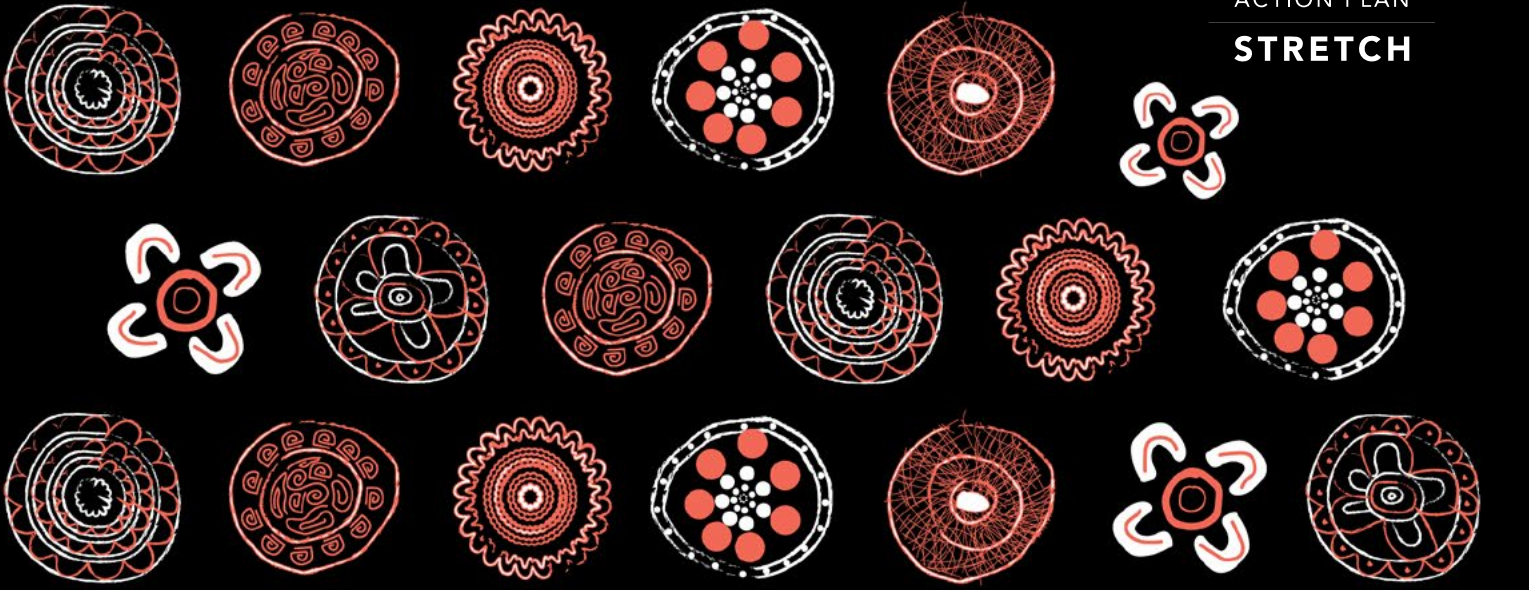


Ashurst



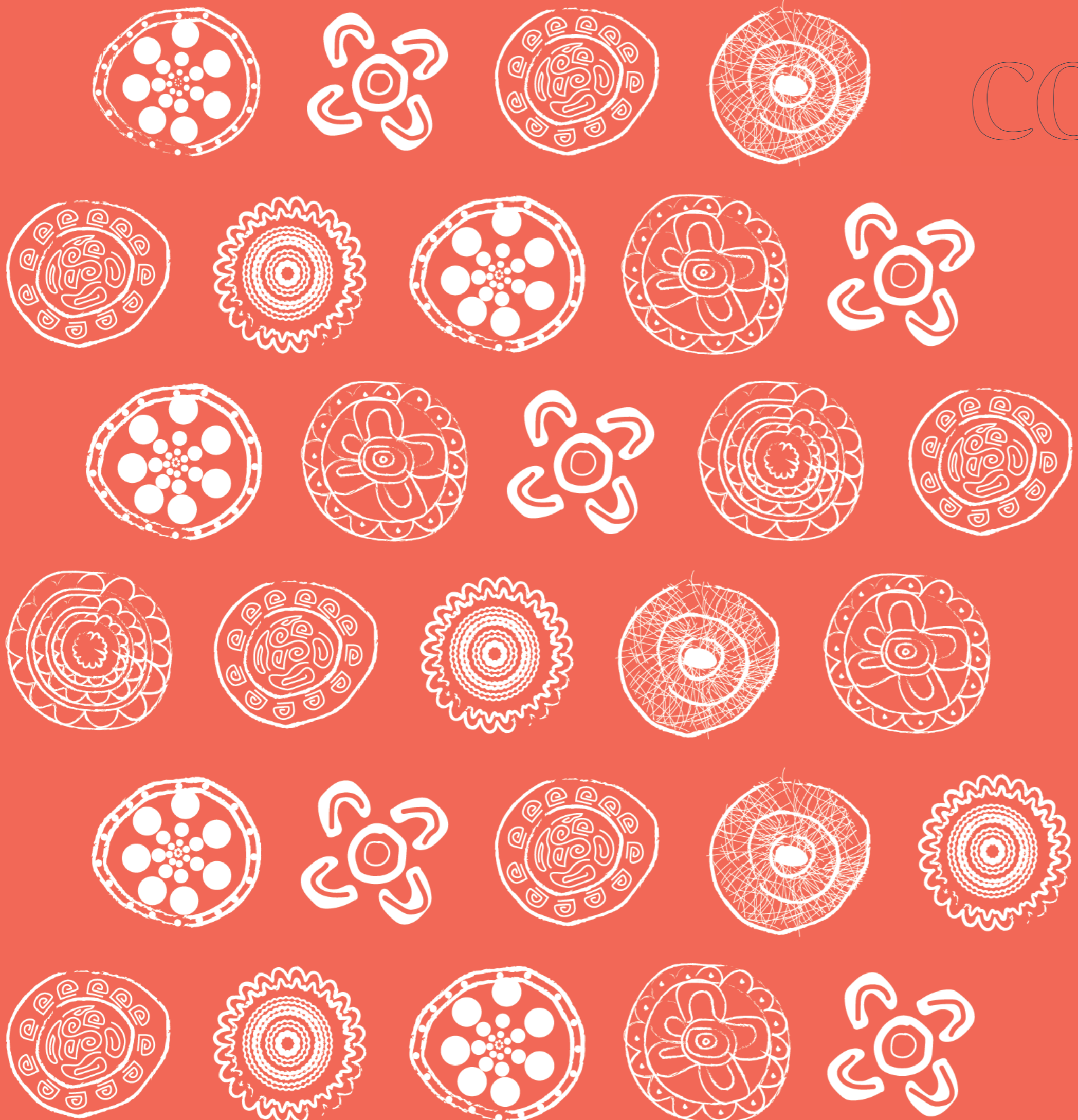
# Ashurst Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

1 May 2023 – 30 April 2025



Outpacing change

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# About our front cover and design

## About the Artist: Mandy Braddick

– (Interviewer: Trent Wallace, Ashurst's First Nations Lead)



Mandy Braddick  
First Nations Artist

Mandy, who's your mob and where do you live currently?

*I am a South Coast NSW woman. I come from the Wandandian tribe and Gumea and Dharawal language groups.*

When did you start Wojamin Creative and where did you get that name?

*I started my business towards the end of my degree at university in 2010. While at university studying design, I started to get approached for specific Indigenous design jobs that embodied the Indigenous needs of the community it would represent. Back then, qualified Indigenous designers were very limited and non-Indigenous designers were working a lot with Indigenous art and content that at times clients would feel were not representing their cultural needs appropriately. My business niche was formed from my Indigenous cultural understanding and my western knowledge of design communication. Wojamin is an Indigenous nickname my mum gave me.*

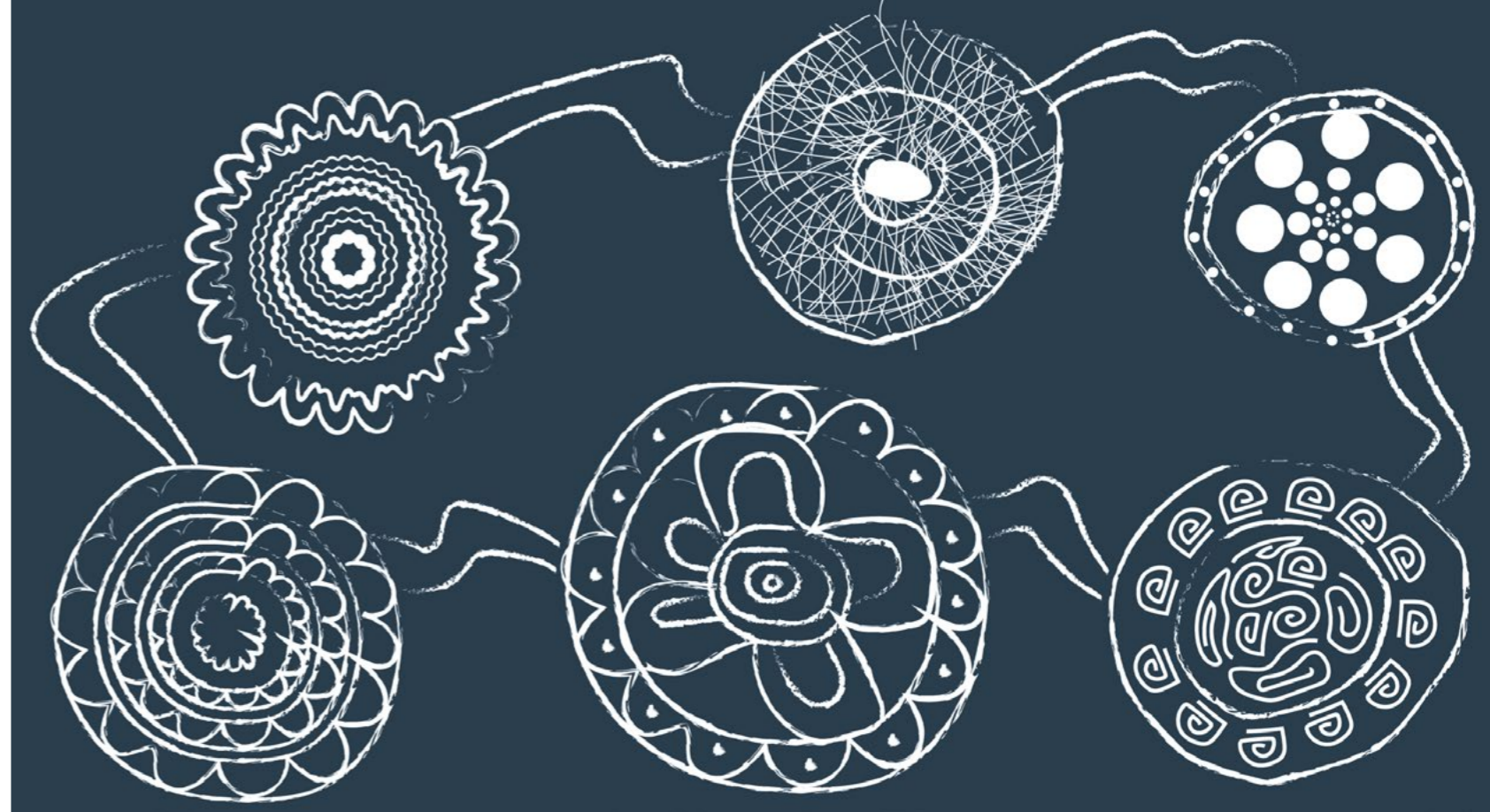
Can you tell us more about the culturally ethical principles attached to First Nations art and design?

*Respectfully understanding that the difference between Indigenous art and other types of art is that Indigenous art has a specific communication meaning and story that leads to a specific message. Non-Indigenous art is interpretative, but Indigenous design is a communication method with specific meanings and reasons for objects, colours, and patterns included for the purpose. The ethical treatment of art/design work is setting a clear understanding between the artist and the end producers. Discussions can be around:*

- *what the artwork means (the story);*
- *asking can anything be changed/moved around;*
- *display position of the artwork in whole format (landscape/portrait);*
- *acknowledging the artist; and*
- *symbolism.*

**Culturally safe design principles are essential to any successful program. Can you yarn to me a bit about our art and the process behind it?**

*Indigenous design involves a story, it involves selecting appropriate layouts, texts and symbolism to achieve what is needed for the intended audience. Storytelling through art, pattern making and colour systems are reflective of where a designer/artist is traditionally from. Culturally safe design principles evolve from the knowledge of the artist and artistic elements they are used to creating with. The guidance by the artist on how to display or treat artwork/design should be set in line with the agreement between artist and end purchaser.*



**Is establishing an authentic relationship prior to agreeing to engage in a design piece essential to you?**

*Establishing a respectful relationship with a client is important, as well as understanding a client's story and message, as all representations come together to create a contemporary design that suits a purpose. I enjoyed working with staff members from the Ashurst team, from the meetings to the final conversations, this design job has had a really great sharing and collaborative feel.*

**By providing us with this art, there comes a huge responsibility – particularly culturally for me – to ensure the principles and themes within it are honoured and respected. What hopes do you hold for this piece of work and what tips can you give allies to engage with it (including the symbology) respectfully?**

*Establishing the rights of use and understanding how artwork can be used is important (this can be assisted by ensuring an artwork style guide is in place). These are the important conversations that are good to have at the start for quoting and briefing, as well as during the creation stage, so that the final product meets the client's expectations, and also keeps respectful use ongoing during the longevity of the artwork's agreed use.*

## Notes on language

In this document, we use the term "First Nations" to describe people who identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

This is considered by many to be inclusive and is currently used widely. However, we recognise the right of each person to identify how they wish, and that broad terms such as these are unable to reflect the diversity of the First Peoples of Australia.

We acknowledge that some people may prefer to be identified by their clan or language group name, and that others may prefer to be identified in other ways. Language has its limitations, and we apologise for any offence caused by the use of broad terms to refer to First Nations people in this Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We continue to learn, to listen and to reflect on how we can make language as inclusive as possible.

In this document, we also use the language of "reconciliation". However, we are conscious that this term is also contentious, and that terms such as "reparations", "relationality", "reciprocity", "responsibility" and "regeneration" may be preferred. Many people do not think "reconciliation" accurately reflects the process that Australia needs to undertake in order to support better relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations Australians. Again, we do not intend any offence by the use of the term "reconciliation". For us at Ashurst, the term means everyone working together to create a better, more equitable Australia.

# Our business

**Ashurst is a leading global law firm with world class capability and a prestigious global client base. For over 200 years Ashurst has advised corporates, financial institutions and governments on their most complex transactions, disputes and projects.**

Ashurst has 31 offices in 18 countries and offers the reach and insight of a global network, combined with the knowledge and understanding of local markets. With 450+ partners and 3900+ people working across 11 different time zones, the firm is able to respond to clients wherever and whenever required. As a global team, Ashurst has a reputation for successfully managing large and complex multi-jurisdictional transactions, disputes and projects and delivering outstanding outcomes for clients. In Australia, Ashurst employs over 1500 people across its offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Perth and Brisbane.

As at September 2022, approximately 0.5% of Ashurst people identified as a First Nations person based on voluntary survey data. We are committed to retaining and improving First Nations representation in Ashurst's workforce through a number of initiatives outlined in this RAP, including:

- ensuring a culturally safe workplace culture through appropriate policies and procedures, First Nations led cultural learning activities, and frequent opportunities for sharing First Nations perspectives and stories through newsletters, online blogs and podcasts;
- working to remove employment and opportunity barriers to ensure that First Nations people can access the legal profession and business community;
- involving First Nations people who work at Ashurst in the review and development of recruitment, retention and employment strategies aimed at increasing First Nations representation in Ashurst's workforce;
- ensuring appropriate remuneration and recognition is given to First Nations people working at Ashurst for cultural work performed for the benefit of the firm; and
- continuing to expand scholarship and internship opportunities for First Nations young people.

# Our vision for reconciliation

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey that means different things to different people. We recognise that the process of reconciliation should be guided by the aspirations of First Nations people and communities.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart makes clear that truth-telling is essential to achieving reconciliation. To us, participating in truth-telling means listening to First Nations people and supporting their ambitions in good faith and on equal terms. It means recognising that only First Nations people and communities can identify and devise solutions to the unique challenges they face.

We acknowledge the view held by some First Nations people that the (RAP) program is a form of symbolic, rather than substantive, reconciliation. As our First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer, Ruby Langton-Batty, explains:

“Some people in our community feel that RAPs are a performative corporate endeavour which override the important steps of truth-telling, justice, restitution, and structural reform that are essential to reconciliation”.

While developing a RAP in itself will not achieve substantive change, it is a first step in a long journey towards reconciliation. By developing this RAP, Ashurst is stating its commitment, in writing, to that long term journey.

This 2023 RAP represents our commitment to building meaningful relationships with First Nations people, organisations and communities, and to support their work. It is also an opportunity to reflect on our work with First Nations people and communities, and for continuous learning and improvement.

Our vision for reconciliation is to create a more united and equitable country by listening to and working with First Nations people and communities.

## The action areas we will focus on are:

1. **Community leadership (“grassroots”)**
2. **Access to justice**
3. **Economic participation and prosperity**
4. **Policy and advocacy**
5. **Looking forward: doing better and doing more**



## The core principles underpinning our implementation of these action areas are:

### Sovereignty:

We live and work on Country over which First Nations people hold an ancient and unceded sovereignty.

### Listening and learning:

Relationships must be placed at the centre of all we do. Our responses to community needs should always be led by the views of the relevant community. We should always start from a position of listening to affected individuals and communities.

### Awareness:

We acknowledge privilege and its role in perpetuating systems of structural inequity and oppression, and we aim to actively engage with the true history of Australia.

### Consistent action:

We recognise that reconciliation must hold value and importance in our day-to-day operations, and that engaging with First Nations people should be embedded in our business functions.

### Cultural safety and cultural understanding:

We address racism in all its forms and enforce cultural inclusivity and understanding in our work.

### Collaboration:

We are aware of the cultural load carried by First Nations employees and communities.

### Humility:

We allow ourselves to be wrong, make mistakes and reflect on opportunities to improve.

### Transparency:

We make ourselves accountable to affected individuals and communities, and we encourage forums for open discussion.

# RAP leadership circle

(as at 1 May 2023)



**Mark Brennan**  
Partner



**Sarah Byrnes**  
Senior Social Impact Manager,  
Asia Pacific



**Wyatt Cook-Revell**  
Lawyer



**Tony Denholder**  
Partner



**Martin Doyle**  
Lawyer



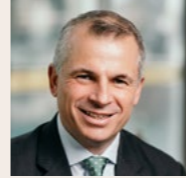
**Andrew Gay**  
Partner



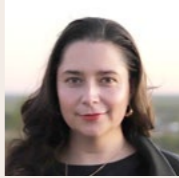
**Will Houston**  
Procurement Lead



**Rob Jamieson**  
Consultant



**Paul Jenkins**  
Global Chief Executive Officer



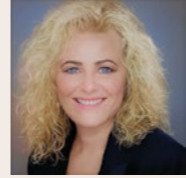
**Ruby Langton-Batty**  
Pro Bono Lawyer



**Sarah Morton-Ramwell**  
Partner, Global Head of Pro Bono  
and Social Impact – Co-Chair



**Madeleine Motion**  
Global Co-Head of Inclusion,  
Diversity & Belonging



**Leah South**  
People & Culture Director - APAC



**Trent Wallace**  
First Nations Lead – Co-Chair

The RAP Leadership Circle is supported by an internal First Nations Employees Network.

We are also supported by external First Nations consultants and are grateful to Professor Jack Beetson (Adjunct Professor, Australian Centre for Agriculture and

Law, University of New England) and Russell Dunn (Native Title & Cultural Heritage Consultant) for their advice and perspective, and for sharing their knowledge.

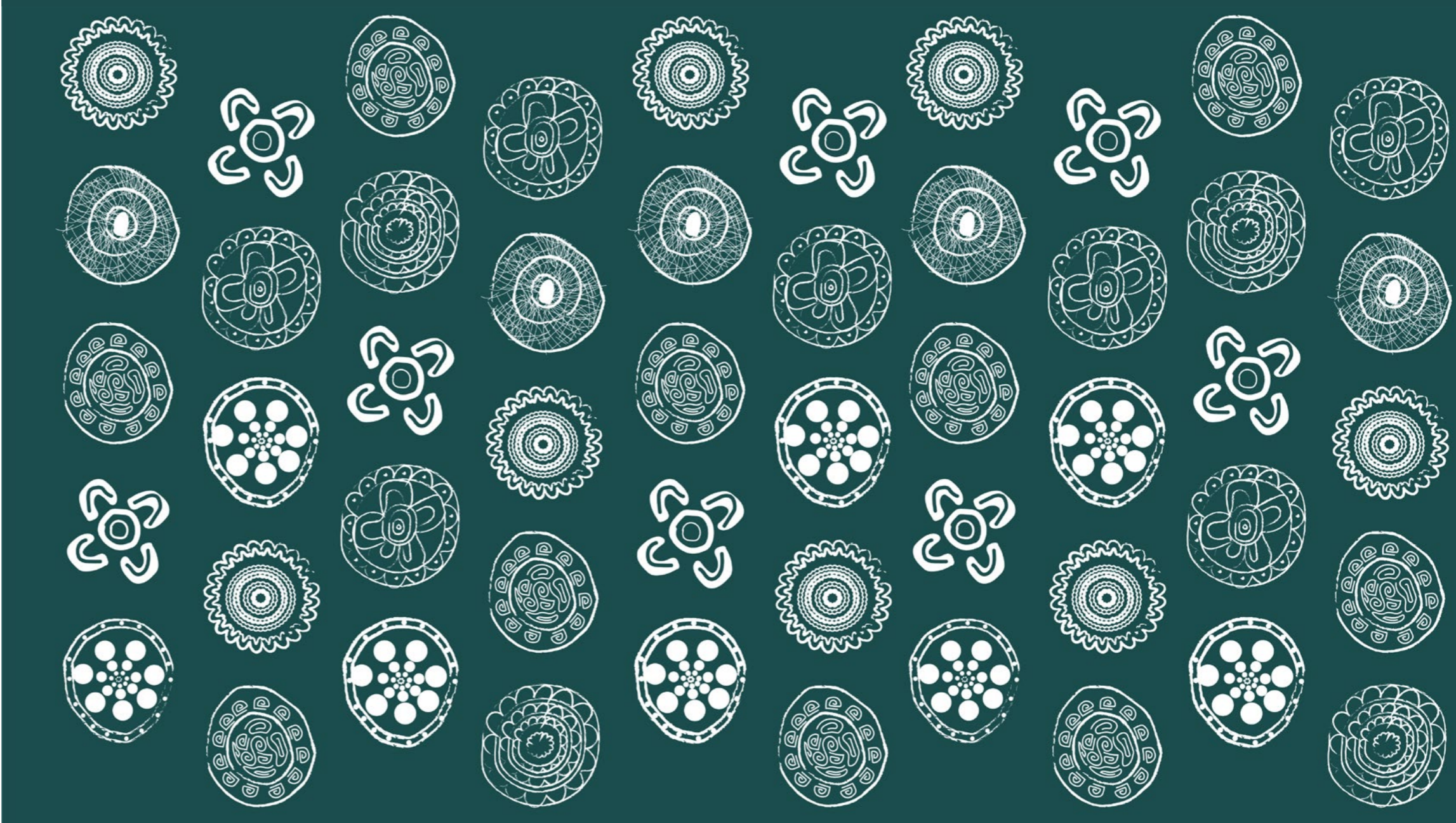
# Ashurst's reconciliation journey

## Our history of working with First Nations communities.

Our journey of legal support for and with First Nations people and First Nations led organisations began in the early 1970s, when our lawyers supported the establishment of the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) in Redfern, NSW. The ALS was the first free legal service in Australia, and established a volunteer roster of lawyers to provide legal assistance to First Nations people. ALS's initial volunteer lawyer cohort was largely made up of lawyers from, or who would become part of, our Australian business.

From the 1970s onwards Ashurst continued to provide pro bono legal services to First Nations people and organisations throughout Australia, including the Aboriginal Housing Company, North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA), and what is now ALS (NSW/ACT).

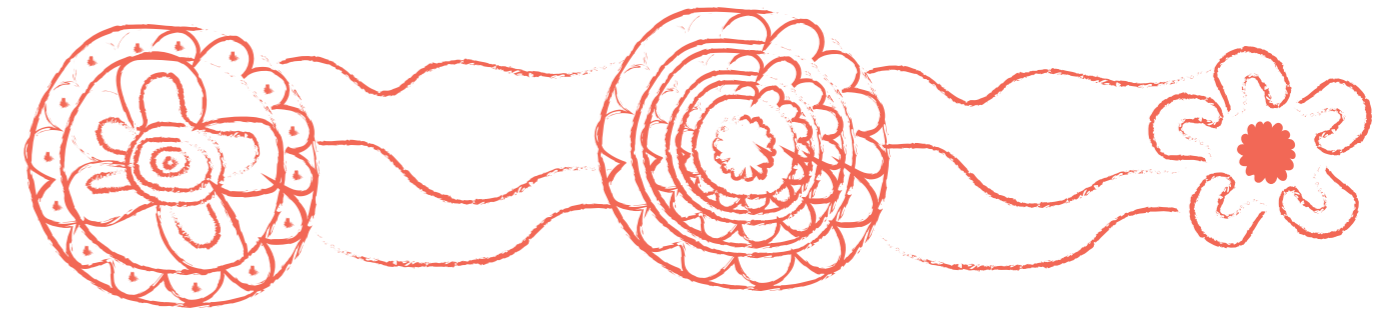
Our deep relationships with key First Nations community organisations continue to this day. For example, we provide NAAJA with ongoing ad hoc legal support and a rotating, permanent full-time secondee in their Katherine office.



**“Ashurst has been providing NAAJA with pro bono legal assistance for over 20 years. This includes sending highly skilled lawyers to the Katherine office every six months. This year we will be welcoming our 35th Ashurst secondee to the Katherine civil team. In addition, Ashurst regularly take on individual client referrals in areas of law where Ashurst can offer particular expertise as well as law reform and policy work for NAAJA. We are grateful for the invaluable contribution Ashurst has made to NAAJA and our clients over the years and look forward to continuing to work with Ashurst.”**

- Sally Sievers (Managing Lawyer – Civil Section NAAJA)

# Our RAP history



## Our first RAP (2013 - 2016) set out four major objectives:

1. to work with First Nations communities and organisations using our skills and resources (legal and non-legal) to help to build capacity within those communities and organisations;
2. to effectively assist First Nations people and organisations with their legal needs and to contribute to the development of the law to reduce disadvantage for First Nations people;
3. to employ First Nations lawyers and business services staff and increase employment opportunities for First Nations people generally, particularly in the law; and
4. to increase the awareness and recognition of First Nations cultures, achievements and challenges among our people and partners.

At the beginning of 2016, we formed a network of RAP Champions in each of our Australian offices.

## Our second RAP (2018 - 2020), at Stretch level, set out three major objectives:

1. to build strong relationships with First Nations individuals and communities, based on trust and mutual respect, to share experiences and learn from one another;
2. to build a foundation of respect, mutual trust and integrity in our journey towards reconciliation in Australia; and
3. to work with First Nations people and communities to remove barriers to educational and employment opportunities, increasing First Nations people's access to legal services and ensuring that our business reflects the diversity of our Australian community.

Around this time we also launched a guide for individuals wishing to engage more meaningfully with reconciliation.

The global disruption caused by COVID-19 impacted our business and our ability to invest resources into the development of a new RAP. During 2020 - 2022 we focussed our efforts on community-led crisis response and ensuring our people were well supported to continue delivering core services whilst adapting to life during the pandemic. During this time we prioritised assistance to First Nations communities and we adapted and progressed commitments made under our 2018 - 2020 RAP. As the COVID-19 situation began to stabilise, we were once again able to turn our time and resources to the development of a new RAP which is reflective of the new business environment in which we operate, incorporating lessons we have learned over the pandemic.

We now build on the work performed under our previous RAPs, with the launch of our third RAP.

## Key challenges since launching our 2018 - 2020 RAP

Since launching our last RAP in 2018, due to COVID-19, we have experienced disruptions in our ability to work with First Nations communities and stakeholders as we had planned.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted our ability to complete RAP deliverables best achieved through face-to-face contact. However, COVID-19 related disruptions provided opportunities for introspection, change and improvement in some of our ways of working.

For example, within Ashurst we were able to pivot our face-to-face cultural learning programs to an online environment. We also began to deliver educational opportunities through the firm's social media, live webinars, monthly "Let's Yarn!" blogs and podcasts, which featured eminent guests such as Andrea Maison OAM and His Honour Judge Matthew Myers.

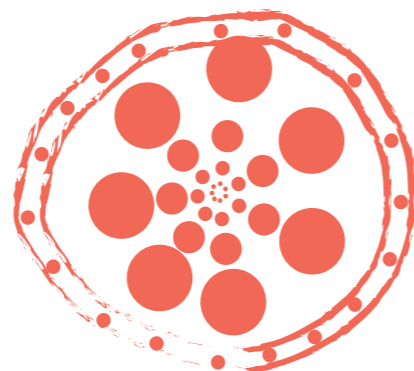
## Key achievements since launching our 2018 - 2020 Stretch RAP

Since we launched our second RAP in 2018, we have reflected on commitments made and opportunities for improvement to inform the implementation of a range of successful initiatives, including:

- increasing provision of pro bono legal services to First Nations organisations and communities;
- creating roles for First Nations lawyers to lead First Nations work;
- increasing our offering of early career opportunities for First Nations lawyers and young people;
- working in partnership with community organisations to develop mentoring programs for First Nations high school students;
- developing a suite of educational opportunities for Ashurst's people to find out more about First Nations communities and culture;
- engaging in community development activities; and
- developing a First Nations procurement strategy.



# Pro Bono



## Pro Bono case work

Over the last five years, we have performed over 34,000 hours of pro bono work for First Nations individuals, organisations and communities, valued at over AU\$18.9 million in legal fees using our standard rates. Ashurst took on a range of civil law matters including advice on employment and discrimination, credit debt and financial abuse, trust law and litigation, advocacy support, lease agreements, corporate and tax advice, intellectual property advice, research, case studies and law reform.

The firm takes on First Nations pro bono work through national networks built on decades of engagement with First Nations led organisations. We recognise the importance of cultural nuance and tone, and our First Nations Lead and First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer often advise lawyers in connection with this work to ensure that our day-to-day engagement with clients and the deliverables we produce for them are culturally safe. Through our pro bono practice we also assist First Nations businesses with their legal needs in order to help facilitate economic growth and development.

## Examples of our pro bono work include:

- working with a First Nations owned and operated firm to build capacity within their firm;
- conducting research for the Australian Human Rights Commission on Coronial Inquiries in relation to First Nations children;
- reviewing the implementation of recommendations by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody into Victorian legislation, policies and practices;
- establishing First Nations businesses to assist in wealth creation and employment opportunities for First Nations Peoples;
- assisting in the creation of First Nations not-for-profit organisations;
- Justice Reinvestment initiatives;

- assisting a peak Community Legal Centre body with drafting a submission to government on the First Nations Voice to Parliament; and
- employment, contract and corporate governance advice.

## Pro Bono Secondments

We recognise that frontline service providers hold key expertise in working with vulnerable people and marginalised communities. As noted above, we provide a rolling full-time legal secondee to NAAJA to work directly with First Nations clients, as well as further secondments to other First Nations organisations when requested.

## Advocacy and law reform

In 2017, we introduced our Law Reform Project to assist community organisations with advocacy and law reform activities. A focus of this program has been on justice issues impacting First Nation communities, with particular attention paid to the over-representation of children in the juvenile justice and care and protection systems. Since 2017, 278 Ashurst volunteers have completed over 10,500 hours of pro bono work for First Nations clients through the Project.

## First Nations People Leading First Nations Work

### First Nations Lead

The role of “First Nations Lead” is to ensure our First Nations work is prioritised and our key principles embedded across our work and business. This position is held by Trent Wallace, who is a Wongaibon person and is a qualified lawyer. His work is focused on developing and embedding First Nations initiatives both internally and in collaboration with our commercial clients.

“For Ashurst, First Nations work has been at the core of the social justice focus in Australia since the 1970’s. When I was approached to become the First Nations Lead at Ashurst, I was thrilled to bring my lived experience as a First Nations person and lawyer – the role was a global first in the legal profession and I’ve been pleased to see the social justice sector assigning value to lived experience.”

- Trent Wallace, First Nations Lead

### First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer

The role of “First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer” is held by Ruby Langton-Batty.

Ruby is a proud descendant of the Iman and Bidjara people (central Queensland) and is based in Sydney. As the First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer, she is working alongside other Ashurst lawyers to deliver culturally coherent, effective, and durable pro bono legal advice to First Nations clients.

”To me, impact means empowering our clients to pursue social and economic equity. It’s a great privilege to have the opportunity to support my community in my legal career.”

- Ruby Langton-Batty, First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer

Ruby’s work is aimed at increasing the number of pro bono hours the firm delivers to First Nations clients and amplifying the impact of those hours, with a focus on community engagement and governance.

## Opportunities for First Nations lawyers and young people

Since 2018, we have grown our early career opportunities for First Nations young people by:

- creating an annual three-month First Nations Pro Bono and Social Impact Cadetship;
- creating an annual two-week First Nations Legal Internship program;
- entering into a partnership with CareerTrackers;
- establishing two new scholarship programs; and
- developing an Ashurst mentoring program for First Nations university students and early-career lawyers.

### Pro Bono and Social Impact Cadetship

This First Nations-identified cadetship has run annually since 2020 and is flexible to accommodate either university students or newly admitted lawyers. The cadetship runs for three months and exposes cadets to the work that we do in the national pro bono and social impact space. We have had candidates based in Sydney and Brisbane.

### First Nations Legal Internship

Our First Nations Legal Internship is a two-week paid program, designed to give First Nations law students exposure to a commercial legal environment. This opportunity is available to all First Nations law students who are not in their first or final year of study. This has worked successfully in Brisbane for several years and we are looking to mirror this program in our other offices.

### CareerTrackers

In 2021, we commenced our partnership with CareerTrackers. Since this time we have had two First Nations interns join us in Sydney and Brisbane.

### Yalari Scholarship

In 2022, our Yalari scholarship was established. Yalari is a not-for-profit organisation offering education scholarships for First Nations children from regional, rural and remote communities.

### Ashurst and the Department of Transport and Main Roads First Nations Law Scholarship

This scholarship was established with the Queensland University of Technology in partnership with the Department of Transport and Main Roads to assist First Nations law students to progress in their studies and reach their full potential. Recipients are also offered the opportunity to undertake a paid internship for six weeks at Ashurst and the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

### Ashurst First Nations Mentoring Program

In its inception, this was an informal process of community engagement and word-of-mouth referrals facilitated by our First Nations Lead, whereby we would connect interested Ashurst lawyers with First Nations law students and First Nations early-career lawyers.

Through the support of internal stakeholders, this has evolved into a more formal process and will involve networking opportunities, bi-annual catch ups, and providing advice and ensuring barriers are removed to the job application process.

### School-based Mentoring

Ashurst is a proud partner of the Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN), a group of over 200 low socio-economic status schools and over 40 leading businesses working together to address educational disadvantage through structured workplace mentoring and business/school partnerships.

In 2020, ABCN rolled out a First Nations-focused pilot of its "GOALS" mentoring program, which is designed to encourage the completion of high school and widen the aspirations of students in their middle years of high school.

Working alongside ABCN, our First Nations Lead, Trent Wallace, conducted a full review of the program to embed cultural safety and community engagement elements. He also advised mentors from Ashurst and another participating business on how best to work with First Nations students participating in the program (including in a virtual setting).

### Educating Ashurst's people

#### Cultural Awareness

We have developed a suite of educational opportunities for Ashurst's people, ranging from webinars and podcasts, to monthly blogs. We are ready to continue seeking improvement opportunities and ensure we are active as an ally, including by advocating for First Nations people.

### Anti-Racism Hub

Globally, Ashurst is committed to taking a public stand against racism. For this purpose we have established the Anti-Racism Hub which is an educational space for Ashurst's people containing content to raise awareness and understanding of the history and implications of racial inequality.

### Community Development

#### Emergency Crisis Response

Our First Nations Lead is also Co-Chair of the Legal Profession Reconciliation Network, which comprises multiple firms (national and international) and community organisations. This network banded together to support First Nations communities in rural, remote and regional areas affected by COVID-19 outbreaks and floods. As part of this support, Ashurst provided financial support, pro bono legal assistance and donated requested goods, including personal protective equipment.

#### Partnership with the Australian Museum's Unsettled exhibition

In 2021, we were delighted to announce our partnership with the Australian Museum's exhibition "Unsettled". Unsettled uncovered the untold histories behind Australia's foundation story, guided by First Nations curators Laura McBride and Dr Mariko Smith. Through this Sydney-based partnership, we platformed and prioritised First Nations lived experience and knowledge. Corporate partnerships for this exhibition ensured that entry was free for all to attend. The exhibition provided a powerful learning opportunity for our people, clients and the broader community.

### Inclusion of First Nations businesses in Ashurst's Procurement and Diversity & Inclusion Supplier Strategy

Ashurst recognises the importance of supporting the First Nations economy through the utilisation of First Nations owned and operated businesses in our supply chain. This promotes a prosperous, vibrant and sustainable First Nations business sector in Australia. To this end we have been members of Supply Nation since 2018 and have been working to prioritise procurement from First Nations businesses as part of our Procurement policies and practices.

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2018 Became a member of Supply Nation.

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2019 Participated in Supply Nation and the Business Council of Australia's "Raising the Bar Workshops".

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2021 Launched Procurement Strategic Goals which include the key goal of increasing spend with First Nations suppliers.  
Created the role of "Procurement Lead" in Australia. This position is held by Will Houston, member of the Ashurst RAP Leadership Circle.

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2022 Launched the Procurement and Diversity & Inclusion Supplier Strategy, further refining our procurement strategy.  
Activities undertaken to achieve our goal of increasing spend with First Nations suppliers include:

- providing First Nations supplier engagement workshops and sessions to key functions within the business;
- participating in First Nations and diverse supplier roadshow events (in partnership with Supply Nation); and
- developing First Nations supplier mapping for our Events and Operations teams for all Australian offices.

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2023 For Ashurst's Financial Year 22/23, the firm more than doubled our committed First Nations procurement spend as compared to the previous financial year.

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We continue to work closely with Supply Nation to help key stakeholders within Ashurst identify opportunities to increase our procurement spend with First Nations suppliers.

We are proud of what we have been able to achieve since our last RAP and we are excited about the future.

**“Working with and purchasing from First Nations and diverse suppliers drives better dialogue and innovative thinking in our supply chain and way of working. By thinking differently and exploring those suppliers, we have a wider, more in-depth conversation about our services and goods internally. In turn, that not only has seen us achieve better social outcomes for First Nations and diverse people, but more interesting and meaningful thinking on how we do business and how suppliers support that and the way we examine that. We are just at the start of the journey with First Nations suppliers and incorporating those social procurement objectives into Ashurst's daily thinking.”**

- Will Houston, Procurement Lead

# Supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart

In 2019, Ashurst was one of 18 leading law firms in Australia which issued a joint public response supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Our Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner, Sarah Morton-Ramwell, has commented that,

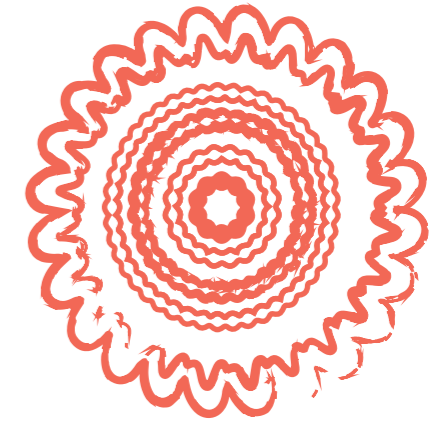
**“Ashurst is committed to supporting reconciliation in Australia. We have a long history of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations, and we are very proud to express our support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart”.**

We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart’s call for the establishment of a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament and a Makarrata Commission, to undertake processes of treaty making and truth telling.

We recognise that the Uluru Statement from the Heart is a call to action. In the lead up to the 2023 referendum, we will:

- continue to listen closely to the First Nations communities we serve and work alongside, and support them in the lead up to the referendum; and
- share information about the importance of the Uluru Statement from the Heart within the firm.

# Our commitments in this Stretch RAP



## Relationships

Good relationships and real inclusion are fundamental principles of operation at Ashurst – and they start with listening. Without these critical principles being lived every day, we cannot achieve real, lasting, positive outcomes. We want to be a firm that represents the beautiful and rich diversity of the countries in which we operate and in Australia, it is essential that we nurture strong relationships with First Nations Peoples, and that all work we do to support First Nations individuals and communities is First Nations led.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.</b>	Develop new relationships with First Nations organisations and work together to ensure cultural safety and continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.	April 2025	First Nations Lead, First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer
	Implement, review and regularly update an engagement plan to work with First Nations organisations and communities.	May 2024	First Nations Lead, First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer
	Continue involvement in Reconciliation Australia's Corporate Partnership Program, which is designed to develop mutually beneficial, two-way relationships between finalists of the Indigenous Governance Awards and organisations participating in the RAP Program.	April 2024	First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono & Social Impact Partner
	Establish and maintain a number of formal two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency</li> <li>• Supply Nation</li> </ul>	July 2023	Pro Bono Counsel, First Nations Lead, First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer
	Publish Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week (NRW) resources and materials on our global intranet.	May 2023 and 2024	Head of Internal Communications in consultation with the First Nations Lead

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Build relationships through celebrating NRW within Ashurst.</b>	RAP Leadership Circle to partake in at least one external NRW-focused initiative each year, to ensure recognising First Nations cultures and marking important historical dates is business-as-usual.	27 May - 3 June 2023 and 2024	RAP Leadership Circle Co-Chairs
	Encourage and support Ashurst's people, including senior leaders, to participate in at least one external initiative or learning experience to mark NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner
<b>Build relationships through celebrating NRW within Ashurst.</b>	Organise at least one firm-wide NRW-focused initiative each year.	27 May - 3 June 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead, Social Impact Senior Manager
	Register NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">NRW website</a> .	27 May - 3 June 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead
<b>Promote reconciliation as an everyday process through our sphere of influence.</b>	Implement a firm-wide approach that makes clear that for many people 26 January is not a day of "celebration" and Ashurst people are able to work on 26 January and take another day of cultural or religious significance off per the Ashurst Leave Provisions Policy.	December 2023 and 2024	People & Culture Director - APAC, Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging in consultation with the First Nations Lead
	Implement strategies to educate and engage all Ashurst's people to drive reconciliation outcomes as part of embedding our business-as-usual approach. For example, through our First Nations podcasts, webinars and online materials.	July 2023	First Nations Lead, RAP Leadership Circle
	Continue to communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	May 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner
	Continue to implement strategies to share our approach with clients, our community partners, and the broader business community, so that we may all work together to achieve positive outcomes with First Nations organisations and communities.	April 2024	First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner, RAP Leadership Circle
	Collaborate with at least two of our commercial clients, Reconciliation Australia's cohort of RAP organisations, and others to implement ways to advance practical reconciliation.	30 April 2025	First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Promote reconciliation as an everyday process through our sphere of influence.</b>	Continue to collaborate with the legal profession on initiatives to improve access to the profession, and remove employment and opportunity barriers for First Nations people (for example, through the Legal Profession Reconciliation Network).	July, October 2023 January and April, July and October 2024 January and April 2025	People & Culture Director - APAC, First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner
	Host or sponsor at least one networking event exclusively for First Nations staff.	May 2024	First Nations Lead
	Continue to share monthly blogs on key themes and topics, and continue to promote opportunities to become involved in First Nations work through Ashurst's internal updates.	April 2024	First Nations Lead
<b>Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Work with commercial clients to identify collaboration opportunities (for example, through the Law Reform Project, mentoring programs and other initiatives).	April 2025	First Nations Lead, First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner
	Continue to ensure that People & Culture policies and procedures are strong with respect to anti-discrimination measures.	May 2024	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC, Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging
	Engage with all our people to continuously improve our anti-discrimination policies and procedures in our internal policies.	May 2024	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC, Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging
<b>Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Continue to implement and communicate our anti-discrimination principles and procedures in line with our internal policies.	May 2024	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC, Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Continue to provide ongoing education opportunities for all our people on the effects of racism.	May 2023	People & Culture Director - APAC, Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging with advice from First Nations Lead
	Continue to take a public stance against racism.	April 2024	First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner, Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging
	Develop internal tools to support how our business undertakes cultural due diligence with respect to work performed and services offered and procured.	April 2025	First Nations Lead, Office of General Counsel, Director Risk & Compliance, Procurement Lead

## Respect

**Demonstrating respect for all people is an essential principle for how we operate at Ashurst. It is incumbent on all of us who care deeply about driving forward the process of reconciliation in Australia that respect is demonstrated every day, through actions not words, by committing to an ongoing journey of understanding and learning. By learning more and listening, we can better understand various perspectives, and work together in an authentic way.**

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	Conduct a review of First Nations cultural learning needs across the firm's Australian offices and develop a "cultural learning strategy".	May 2024	Global Director, Learning & Organisational Development with advice from First Nations Lead
	In consultation with First Nations staff at Ashurst, invite local Traditional Owners and/or First Nations advisors on the implementation of a "cultural learning strategy".	May 2024	First Nations Lead
	Implement and communicate a "cultural learning strategy" for our people.	May 2024	First Nations Lead
	Ensure all RAP Leadership Circle members, People & Culture managers, senior executives and all people joining Ashurst have opportunities to undertake cultural learning on a regular basis.	May 2024	RAP Leadership Circle Co-Chairs
	Encourage and offer Ashurst people who engage with Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property to undertake a bespoke training course.	May 2024	First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer and Global Director, Learning & Organisational Development
	<b>Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	Provide opportunities for senior leaders and staff to undertake on-Country learning experiences led by Traditional Owners, in partnership with First Nations led organisations.	August 2023 and 2024
	Provide all of our people globally with monthly opportunities to learn about First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights.	April 2024	First Nations Lead
	Ensure global and office-specific internal updates regularly include First Nations updates and opportunities including opportunities to engage with First Nations people and communities.	May 2023	First Nations Lead

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Demonstrate respect to First Nations Australians by observing cultural protocols.</b>	Continue to implement and communicate our cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	May 2023	First Nations Lead, Office Managing Partners, Events Managers
	Invite all Ashurst people in Australia to incorporate an Acknowledgement of Country in their Ashurst email signature.	May 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocols during at least one significant event each year, for example our event to mark NRW.	April 2024 and 2025	First Nations Lead, Office Managing Partners, Events Managers
	Engage with Traditional Owners to develop appropriate cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country, to be used in online contexts.	May 2024	First Nations Lead
	Encourage all Ashurst people to include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	April 2024	First Nations Lead, Office Managing Partners
	Support Ashurst's people, including senior leaders, to provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at all public/internal events and online webinars.	April 2024	RAP Leadership Circle, Office Managing Partners, Events Managers
<b>Demonstrate respect to First Nations Australians by observing cultural protocols.</b>	Display an Acknowledgement of Country plaque in the reception area in each of our six Australian offices.	April 2024	First Nations Lead; Head of Operations
	RAP Leadership Circle representatives to participate in an at least one external National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week initiative each year, and encourage attendance at other relevant events throughout the year.	July 2023 and 2024	RAP Leadership Circle Co-Chairs

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Engage with First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week and other culturally significant dates throughout each year.</b>	Review human resources policies and procedures to remove barriers to Ashurst people participating in NAIDOC Week.	May 2024	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC
	Support Ashurst people to participate in at least one NAIDOC Week initiative in their local area and other days of significance throughout the year.	July 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead
	In consultation with our First Nations clients and community partners, support at least one external NAIDOC Week initiative each year, and other days of significance throughout the year.	July 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead
<b>Ensure that respectful and culturally appropriate language is used in all internal and external communication containing First Nations content.</b>	In collaboration with a First Nations-owned consultancy, develop new communication templates and materials to ensure these are culturally safe, inclusive and demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples.	May 2024	First Nations Lead, Head of Expertise APAC
	Establish a culture where the First Nations Lead is included in the development of communications containing First Nations content.	October 2023	First Nations Lead, Head of Internal Communications, Senior PR Manager

## Opportunities

In 2020, Ashurst adopted the firm-wide goal of putting diversity at the heart of everything we do and long before this, we committed to working together with First Nations Australians to ensure opportunity gaps that all too often exist are finally closed. We remain deeply committed to taking tangible steps to ensure we are working towards achieving this critical outcome – equality and equity cannot be achieved without it.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Continue to prioritise access to justice and legal assistance for First Nations individuals, organisations and communities, through our Australian pro bono practice.</b>	Achieve 10,000+ hours of First Nations-related pro bono work by the end of Ashurst's Financial Year 25/26.	April 2025	First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner
	Support First Nations organisations through our Law Reform Project, to advocate for structural/systemic reform.	April 2024	First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer
	Establish at least one additional pro bono secondment with a First Nations organisation.	May 2024	First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer
	Develop flagship First Nations pro bono project(s) in collaboration with First Nations community stakeholders.	April 2025	First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer
<b>Deliver First Nations Pro Bono Legal Services.</b>	Update our Global Pro Bono Policy to demonstrate prioritisation of First Nations voices in all First Nations pro bono work, particularly with respect to legal research and law reform.	October 2023	Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner
	Implement guidance for what pro bono work is counted toward the First Nations pro bono hour targets.	May 2024	First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer
<b>Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	Engage with our First Nations colleagues to consult on the effectiveness of our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. Implement the feedback from this process where possible and give reasons to those consulted if implementation is not possible.	May 2024	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC, Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	Finalise our First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	Finalise by May 2024, review in April 2025	First Nations Lead, Senior Manager Early Careers
	Advertise job vacancies to more effectively reach First Nations candidates and ensure that promotional materials are culturally safe and inclusive.	May 2023	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC, Director Talent Acquisition & Workforce Planning
	Continue to review People & Culture and recruitment policies and procedures to remove any barriers to First Nations participation in our workplace and actively identify opportunities for culturally safe and inclusive participation.	October 2023	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC, Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging; Director Talent Acquisition & Workforce Planning
	Provide People & Culture team with ongoing training and other support to develop capabilities to ensure all recruitment and professional development is culturally safe.	July 2023	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC
	First Nations people who work for Ashurst to be supported to take on management and senior level positions.	Review in February 2024 and 2025	First Nations Lead People & Culture Director - APAC
	Increase First Nations employment rate to 1% of the firm's workforce in Australia.	April 2025	First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner, Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging, People & Culture Director - APAC

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Support First Nations people in their education and career journeys.</b>	Continue our scholarship partnership with Yalari and Queensland University of Technology.	April 2024 and 2025	First Nations Lead
	Continue partnership with CareerTrackers.	April 2024 and 2025	Co-Head Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging, People & Culture Director - APAC
	Continue Ashurst First Nations Legal Internship in Brisbane.	April 2024 and 2025	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC
	Expand Ashurst First Nations Legal Internship into Melbourne, Perth, Sydney and Canberra offices.	April 2025	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC
	Continue to sponsor the Ashurst Prize for Excellence at University (First Nations JD Students) at the University of Western Australia.	August 2023	People & Culture Director - APAC, Early Careers Senior Manager, Office Managing Partner
	Continue our Ashurst and the Department of Transport and Main Roads First Nations Law Scholarship at the Queensland University of Technology (for a minimum three-year period).	August 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead
	Encourage Partners to explore the development of additional scholarship opportunities for First Nations students in partnership with priority clients, recognising that financial support forms a key pillar for completion of academic qualifications.	October 2023	First Nations Lead, Global Head of Pro Bono and Social Impact
	Continue our First Nations Legal Clerkship opportunities in Perth, and expand these into Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Canberra.	April 2025	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC, Senior Manager Early Careers
	Continue our First Nations Pro Bono and Social Impact Cadetship.	December 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner
	Hold a Quarterly meeting between the First Nations Lead, the Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging, and the People & Culture Director - APAC to review and progress our initiatives to support First Nations people in their education and career journeys.	July and October 2023 January, April, July and October 2024 January and April 2025	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC, Global Co-Head of Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging

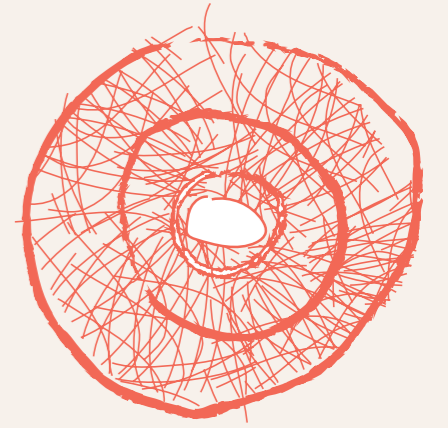
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	Implement the goals set out in Ashurst's 2023 Procurement and Diversity & Inclusion Supplier Strategy.	April 2024	Procurement Lead
	Review the Procurement and Diversity & Inclusion Supplier Strategy in discussions with Pro Bono and Social Impact team.	May 2024 and 2025	Procurement Lead
	Continue Supply Nation membership.	October 2023 and 2024	Procurement Lead
	Educate and build awareness across the business on First Nations suppliers.	April 2024	Procurement Lead
	Provide ongoing education to drive firm-wide behavioural changes in relation to spend and First Nations businesses in collaboration with Supply Nation.	April 2024	Procurement Lead
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from First Nations businesses. For example, by exploring opportunities to support First Nations business to develop Modern Slavery policies that meet market expectations.	May 2024	Procurement Lead
	Develop genuine ongoing commercial relationships with at least four additional First Nations businesses.	April 2025	Procurement Lead
	Prioritise maintaining commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	April 2025	Procurement Lead
	Review and map our existing contracts and spend in Australia, to identify opportunities to increase procurement from First Nations organisations and look towards a "continuity of services" approach to our spend.	May 2024	Procurement Lead



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	Deliver guidance that will sit alongside our Global Procurement Policy to embed First Nations spend as a key consideration and engrain this into our purchasing and sourcing activities.	May 2024	Procurement Lead
	Ensure participation of First Nations businesses in our supplier roadshows and pitching for work nationally and across all offices.	October 2023	Procurement Lead
	Train all relevant people within Ashurst in culturally sensitive contracting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation.	April 2025	Procurement Lead, Office of General Counsel
	Continue working with Supply Nation to achieve our goal of 50% participation of First Nations businesses in Australian Requests for Proposal.	April 2025	Procurement Lead
	Work alongside Supply Nation to develop a plan for how we can assist First Nations businesses with their legal, risk, and governance needs (for example, by exploring opportunities to support First Nations business to develop Modern Slavery policies that meet market expectations).	May 2024	First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner, Division Head Risk Advisory
<b>Provide support to the First Nations LGBTIQ+ community.</b>	Develop at least one new community partnership with an organisation which supports First Nations people who identify as LGBTIQ+ and platforms a diversity of First Nations voices and leaders.	May 2024	First Nations Lead, First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer, Spectrum Network
	Run an awareness raising event for at least one First Nations LGBTIQ+ community organisation.	April 2025	First Nations Lead, Spectrum Network

Governance			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Maintain an effective RAP Leadership Circle to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	Maintain at least 25% First Nations representation on the RAP Leadership Circle.	April 2024 and 2025	RAP Leadership Circle Co-Chairs
	Apply a Terms of Reference for the RAP Leadership Circle.	May 2024	RAP Leadership Circle Co-Chairs
	RAP Leadership Circle to meet quarterly throughout the year to drive and monitor RAP implementation, and project-specific meetings to take place for relevant sub-groups as needed.	July and October 2023 January, April, July and October 2024 January and April 2025	RAP Leadership Circle Co-Chairs
	<b>Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	Embed resource needs for RAP implementation.	May 2023 and 2024
	Embed key RAP actions into performance expectations of all of our people in Australia including senior management.	April 2025	First Nations Lead, People & Culture Director - APAC
	Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April 2024	Social Impact Senior Manager
	Ensure a member of the Ashurst Board and/or Ashurst Executive Team, remain part of the RAP Leadership Circle.	April 2024 and 2025	RAP Leadership Circle Co-Chairs
	Provide regular RAP updates to members of the Ashurst Board and Executive Team, and provide regular RAP updates to all Ashurst people.	April 2024 and 2025	First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner

# Message from Ashurst



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead
	Develop a culturally safe survey(s) for our First Nations community partners and pro bono clients to give honest feedback about their experiences with Ashurst on a regular basis.	July 2023 and 2024	First Nations Lead, First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer
	Report RAP progress to all Ashurst people and senior leaders quarterly.	July and October 2023 January, April, July and October 2024 January and April 2025	First Nations Lead, Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner, Procurement Lead
	Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings.	May 2024 and 2025	First Nations Lead
	Continue to participate in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2024	First Nations Lead
<b>Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	December 2024	First Nations Lead
<b>Reporting and Accountability.</b>	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	May 2025	First Nations Lead

**I wish to acknowledge and thank the First Nations individuals and organisations who assisted in the formulation of this RAP. I thank them for their fearless pursuit of equity and in particular, access to justice.**

This RAP recognises the rich diversity of thought across First Nations communities, and platforms and prioritises First Nations voices because our lived experience is valid expertise. I also recognise that the concept of "reconciliation" looks and means different things to First Nations individuals and communities. As an Aboriginal person who grew up in regional Australia, I observed the frustration of local communities feeling invisible and thankfully, my position is varied and often requires being a conduit between community and corporate Australia. As a firm, we took our time in developing this RAP due to the rapidly changing situations across the globe. We had to reflect on the world in which we are operating and evaluate the role we could and should play in First Nations advancement. This was also a period of extensive learning and yarning across the firm to ensure we are a culturally safe environment and that advocates recognise that their role is to listen to First Nations people as only we hold the solutions. I am proud of the sense of community within this firm and am pleased to offer this RAP as an authentic commitment to First Nations advancement. This document is not a tool of moral exhibitionism, rather, it is a living piece of literature that is used as a tool for meaningful engagement in truth-telling, inclusion, and other processes of reconciliation.



**Trent Wallace**  
First Nations Lead

Since colonisation, First Nations leaders have time and time again approached the Australian State to ask for genuine reconciliation processes in good faith. These requests have time and time again been rejected. Reconciliation Australia was established in 2001 as part of the Howard Government’s policy of “practical reconciliation”.<sup>1</sup> This was seen as a radical departure from the consistent calls by First Nations leaders for land rights, treaty processes, and structural reform (including constitutional recognition) because it framed reconciliation as being primarily concerned with alleviating disadvantage through economic development and participation.

“Practical reconciliation” has been critiqued for three key reasons. Firstly, it ignores First Nations People’s human rights – which have since been substantially spelt out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, it strips the disadvantage experienced by First Nations people of its historical context and fails to acknowledge the contemporary, ongoing consequences of this history.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, it does not require institutions of colonial and economic power to make concessions – rather First Nations people are expected to conform to the exigencies of these institutions.<sup>4</sup> The “practical reconciliation” of socio-economic parity has always been of critical importance for First Nations people. However, socio-economic parity should be seen as one of the natural outcomes of substantive reconciliation, rather than itself the pathway to reconciliation.

RAPs can and do create change for the better within the corporate sector’s sphere of influence. Through engaging in the RAP process, the corporate sector can forge pathways for First Nations leadership, improve supply chain diversity, and build awareness of Australia’s true history. As a law firm, Ashurst has the opportunity to deliver top-tier pro bono legal services to First Nations people and communities. I see a genuine commitment from Ashurst to walk with First Nations people and to take meaningful action to advance reconciliation.

Representation and changing attitudes matter. However, true reconciliation must begin with addressing the power structures of the Australian State that continue to disempower and dispossess First Nations people. The Uluru Statement from the Heart calls for the establishment a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament and a Makarrata Commission to undertake processes of treaty-making and truth-telling.

The Albanese Government’s commitment to a referendum to enshrine a Voice to Parliament represents, for perhaps the first time since the Mabo decision, willingness by the Australian State to compromise. We are at this crucial junction for our nation because of the tireless efforts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders to continue negotiating with the Australian State in the face of endless rejection.

With the referendum fast approaching, I am quietly optimistic that a “yes” vote will be successful, and that it will be a significant step towards our shared goal of genuine reconciliation.



**Ruby Langton-Batty**  
First Nations Pro Bono Lawyer

1. John Howard, ‘Practical reconciliation’ in Michelle Grattan (ed), *Reconciliation: Essays on Australian Reconciliation* (2000) 88-96.
2. Garth Nettheim, ‘Human Rights and Indigenous Reconciliation in Australia’ (2007) 10(2) *Flinders Journal of Law Reform*, 161.
3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, *Social Justice Report 2001*, (2001: HREOC) 28-29.
4. *Ibid*, 221.



**Our RAP journey started with the launch of our first Innovate RAP (2013 - 16), however, our work with First Nations Peoples and organisations extends back to the 1970s, and we are deeply proud to have served First Nations pro bono clients for over 50 years.**

Our RAPs have provided us with frameworks to formalise our role in reconciliation and ensure a whole of business approach. With the successful close off of our last Stretch RAP (2018 - 2020) we were faced with a world in a far different position than it was in at the time of the 2018 launch. Throughout the pandemic, we have focused on listening to our stakeholders to ensure we continued to understand their changing needs, and have taken bold steps to ensure our support is targeted and impactful.

It is in that spirit, and with respect and recognition of the many challenges faced by communities over the last few turbulent years, that we have created our second Stretch RAP. Throughout its design process we have remained mindful of the unique role we play as corporate citizens and as trusted advisors to our clients in Australia and globally, and as we move to implementation of this RAP, we acknowledge the need to continually listen, learn and apply the lessons from First Nations Peoples and organisations to drive reconciliation.



**Paul Jenkins**  
Chief Executive Officer

**We are delighted to launch our second Stretch RAP, which reaffirms our long-term commitment to reconciliation in Australia. We have a proud history of working with First Nations Peoples, including Ashurst lawyers' involvement in the establishment of the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), which marked the first free legal service in Australia.**

As a society, we are now in a very different position than we were at the inception of our last stretch RAP. In recognition of this, we have developed a RAP that is able to withstand the ever-changing circumstances we find ourselves in. In this RAP, we have adopted a "grassroots" approach to the work we do, with a focus on deep listening and consultation across a variety of First Nations individuals and organisations. Our approach is also flexible to ensure we can achieve the outcomes described: we view this RAP as a living document that holds us to account and provides responsibilities for Ashurst's people across our Australian offices. We also aim for this RAP to have a global reach, and to inform our wider global commitment to racial justice, a key focus area within our global pro bono practice and global social impact program, our Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging program and broader Environmental, Social and Governance leadership.

We are committed to advancing the rights of First Nations Peoples in Australia, and we move forward in partnership with First Nations individuals and organisations, in full recognition that they hold the solutions and that it is our role to listen and work on such solutions under the guidance of First Nations people within Ashurst and in the community.



**Sarah Morton-Ramwell**  
Global Pro Bono and Social Impact Partner

# Ashurst Stretch CEO Statement

**On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate Ashurst on its ongoing commitment to reconciliation as it implements its second Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, its third RAP overall.**

Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, the RAP program provides organisations with a framework to contribute to the reconciliation movement.

As a leading global law firm with offices across Australia, Ashurst is well positioned to affect substantial positive change in the reconciliation space. Through its involvement in the RAP program, Ashurst understands that the reconciliation process must be guided by the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In the legal sphere, Ashurst recognises that only First Nations people can devise justice strategies for the wellness of their communities; and that its role is to support these ambitions on equal terms.

In service of this knowledge, Ashurst's previous RAP commitments have focused on increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access, capacity and representation within the legal space. These goals have resulted in AU\$16.5M worth of pro bono work with First Nations individuals, organisations and communities; supporting community organisations with advocacy and law reform activities; and prioritising career, training and mentoring opportunities for First Nations lawyers.

These ongoing commitments are woven into Ashurst's new Stretch RAP and will propel it toward its aspirations over the next three years, deepening its impact on reconciliation in the legal space and profession.

With an understanding that two-way relationships with and genuine inclusion of First Nations people and organisations are fundamental to the reconciliation process, Ashurst has built industry networking, cultural safety, education strategies and key partnerships into its new RAP commitments.

In action, this involves identifying collaboration opportunities for and with First Nations organisations, developing relationships with Indigenous Governance Awards finalists and implementing internal processes that respect the experiences of First Nations employees and stakeholders.

Additionally, Ashurst will continue to prioritise access to legal assistance and First Nations representation within the profession with a goal of 10,000+ hours of First Nations-related pro bono work and improving on its recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.

Ashurst's consistent and thoughtful reconciliation commitments demonstrate a deep understanding of the unique experiences of First Nations people within the justice system and acknowledges that its role in the pursuit of social justice is not paternalistic but collaborative.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Ashurst on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia

## Key contacts



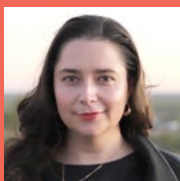
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