RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN
INNOVATE

Marrickville Legal Centre
From the inner west, serving NSW

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

July 2026 – July 2028

Stephen Morgan
Artist

About the artwork

The Four Boomerangs of the Goolay'yari (2026), a painting by Stephen Morgan commissioned for Marrickville Legal Centre, presents a visual meeting place between past and present. The painting centres on Goolay'yari (Cooks River) as the spine of Marrickville Legal Centre's catchment – it gathers, carries, and connects everything around it. Among this waterway, Morgan depicts a scene of traditional life – two men hunting along the river, a mother with her two children by a fire, and striking ghost gums – and juxtaposes it with an aerial view of the catchment in present day. The artwork is surrounded by four boomerangs that arc across the edge.

Stephen Morgan is a proud Ƙamilaroi man who was raised in Walgett and has lived in the Inner West region for more than twenty years. Stephen's passions include listening to music, being with mob, and creating art. His artworks have been featured in reports and publications from various health not-for-profit organisations.

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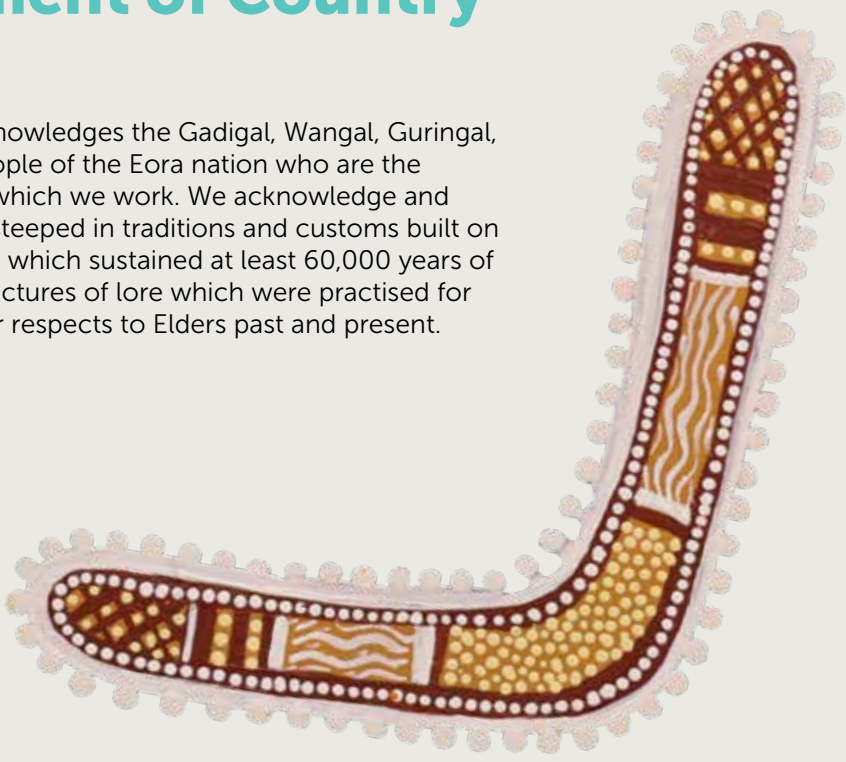
Acknowledgement of Country

Marrickville Legal Centre proudly acknowledges the Gadigal, Wangal, Guringal, Wallumedegai, and Cammeraygal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we work. We acknowledge and respect that First Nations people are steeped in traditions and customs built on a disciplined social and cultural order, which sustained at least 60,000 years of existence and that this land holds structures of lore which were practised for thousands of generations. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



Statement from Reconciliation Australia CEO

Reconciliation Australia commends Marrickville Legal Centre on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Marrickville Legal Centre to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Marrickville Legal Centre will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With over 5.5 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Marrickville Legal Centre is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Marrickville Legal Centre's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Marrickville Legal Centre on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Foreword from Marrickville Legal Centre CEO

At Marrickville Legal Centre, our work is grounded in a simple but powerful belief: justice shouldn't be the privilege of the few. As a community legal centre serving diverse communities, we see every day how systemic barriers continue to prevent many people – especially those experiencing disadvantage – from accessing their rights and achieving fair outcomes.

Our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan is a clear expression of MLC's commitment to reducing barriers and improving access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community. It reflects our responsibility to move beyond acknowledgement and take practical, accountable steps toward a more just and equitable future.

This plan builds on the foundations established through our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan in 2022, where we strengthened our understanding of First Nations cultures, histories, and perspectives. Through initiatives such as cultural learning with Mirri Mirri and Gunnawirra, commissioning artwork from Bundjalung artist Tracey Bostock, and embedding recognition of First Nations systems of law into our organisational culture, we began an important process of reflection and change.

As we move into the Innovate stage, we are focused on turning learning into action. This includes strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, embedding culturally safe practices across our services, building staff capability through ongoing cultural learning, and improving referral pathways and service responses so people can access support earlier and more safely. It also means examining our own systems and practices to ensure they reflect respect, equity and accountability, and that these commitments lead to more accessible and responsive legal services.

Marrickville Legal Centre operates across a large and diverse catchment of approximately 1.5 million people through a range of legal services covering different areas of law. With this reach comes a responsibility – and an opportunity – to contribute meaningfully to reconciliation through the way we deliver our services and engage with our communities.

This work is supported by our RAP Working Group, which brings together staff from across the organisation, including Aboriginal representation, to guide and strengthen our approach. Their leadership, alongside the commitment of our broader staff and volunteer community, will be critical to achieving the goals set out in this plan.

We acknowledge that reconciliation is an ongoing responsibility that requires listening, learning and sustained action. Through this Innovate RAP, MLC commits to deepening relationships, strengthening cultural safety across out services and embedding accountability for progress across our organisation. In doing so, we aim to contribute to a legal system that recognises and respects First Nations peoples and delivers more equitable access to justice for all.

Vasili Maroulis
Chief Executive Officer
Marrickville Legal Centre

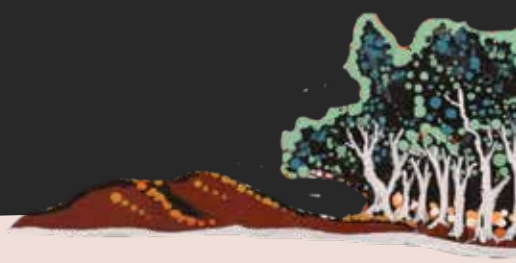
Who we are

Marrickville Legal Centre (MLC) is a not-for-profit community legal centre based in Sydney's inner-west on Gadigal land, serving New South Wales. Our vision is to help people forward towards better and fairer outcomes, and to create access to justice for us all.

Justice is for all people, not just for a few. We recognise that some members of the community experience greater barriers to access to justice due to factors such as income, language, disability, culture, age, migration status, or experiences of violence. We work to remove those barriers and promote a fair and equitable justice system that supports those most in need.

MLC provides free legal advice and assistance to the community of the inner-west, south-west, and southern suburbs of Sydney, as well as statewide services. There are 1.5 million people living in our key catchment, representing around 30 per cent of Sydney's total population. Our services include:

- The **General Legal Service** offers legal advice and assistance to adults in the inner-west, south-west and southern suburbs of Sydney in relation to issues such as consumer disputes, credit and debt including mortgage and car repossession, minor criminal matters, discrimination, employment, victims compensation, motor vehicle accidents, liability and property damage.
- The **Family Law Service** works with clients who are unable to access affordable family law services, and who suffer disadvantage or family violence, to make workable arrangements after separation.
- The **Domestic Violence Support Service** offers specialised assistance to support the legal and related needs of people who are at risk or who have experienced family and domestic violence, with a focus on assisting those who have difficulty accessing the justice system or other services.



- The **Inner West Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service** and **Northern Sydney Area Tenants' Service** provide advice to renters in the Inner West and the Northern Sydney area on their rights and responsibilities.
- The **NSW Strata Collective Sales & Advocacy Service** offers free legal information, advice, assistance and advocacy to owner-occupiers of strata units and townhouses in NSW.
- The **NSW Youth Legal Service** offers free legal information, advice and assistance to young people 25 years and younger across NSW.
- The **Low Cost Legal Service** offers deeply discounted, fixed-fee legal services in the areas of employment and family law for people who are ineligible for free legal services but cannot afford to engage the services of a private lawyer.

MLC has 28 employed staff, alongside a large volunteer base. One staff member identifies as Aboriginal.

Our RAP journey

Marrickville Legal Centre is developing an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan to take active steps as an organisation to understand and acknowledge our nation's history and the historical truths to improve the way we engage with and serve our communities, particularly marginalised groups like First Nations people, with their legal needs.

We have four staff members involved in the MLC RAP Working Group: our Deputy Chief Executive Officer (a member of senior leadership who is championing the RAP), our Communications Officer, and two Solicitors. There is one Aboriginal person represented in the RAP Working Group.

In 2022, Marrickville Legal Centre announced our official commitment to reconciliation with our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. Some of the most significant initiatives Marrickville Legal Centre has implemented included engaging cultural training providers Mirri Mirri and Gunnawirra to educate staff on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, commissioning artwork from Bundjalung artist Tracey Bostock, and embedding the concept that this land holds structures of lore which were practiced for thousands of generations into our culture.

Marrickville Legal Centre has also cemented itself as a culturally safe workplace, having gained an Aboriginal staff member that also sits on the RAP Working Group.

During the Reflect RAP process, Marrickville Legal Centre juggled limited resources and key staff turnover. The RAP Working Group managed these issues by managing deadlines and expectations through the Terms of Reference and a planner, and opening RAP Working Group membership to volunteers and Board members.

Right: *Walking on Country for Reconciliation* is a painting by Tracey L. Bostock commissioned for Marrickville Legal Centre's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan in 2022. Tracey is a Bundjalung woman born in Brisbane who resides in the Inner West suburb of Tempe.

Innovate RAP

Relationships

Building strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians directly supports Marrickville Legal Centre's aim of improving access to justice for all. Clients often access Marrickville Legal Centre's services through referrals, word-of-mouth, or trusted community connections – strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and partners builds trust across our communities and ensures our legal services are welcoming, safe, and accessible.

Respect

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights is imperative to Marrickville Legal Centre's role as a community legal centre committed to fairness, social equity, and access to justice. This respect begins with understanding and acknowledging that history, structural disadvantage, and intergenerational impacts shape peoples' experiences of the legal system – this in turn allows us to provide informed and trauma-aware legal advice. Conversely, a culture built around celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture and history promotes positive engagement and shifts the narrative from deficit to strength.

Opportunities

Building meaningful opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations, and communities means that every part of Marrickville Legal Centre's work is strengthened – service delivery, culture, and impact. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and suppliers bring lived experience and cultural knowledge which, in turn, shapes our services and culture to be safe and respectful. This representation, borne through opportunities, creates a long-term impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our communities via individual services and overall economic empowerment.

Governance

Strong governance ensures that Marrickville Legal Centre's commitment to reconciliation is embedded, accountable, and sustained over time. Through the guidance of the RAP Working Group and the endorsement of the Leadership team, we establish clear structures, responsibilities, and processes to meaningfully track our progress, reflect on our impact, and remain responsive to the priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Governance also creates shared ownership of our RAP across the organisation, ensuring that reconciliation is not isolated to a single team or initiative, but is integrated into decision-making, leadership, and everyday practice.

Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	December 2026	Deputy CEO
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2026	Deputy CEO
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2027-8 (prior to NRW)	Communications Officer
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June 2027-8	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: RAP WG
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2027-8	Lead: Communications Officer Support: RAP WG
	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May- 3 June 2027-8	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: RAP WG
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website	May 2027 and May 2028	Communications Officer
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	July 2026	Lead: Deputy CEO and Communications Officer Support: RAP WG
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	July 2026	Communications Officer
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	January 2027	Deputy CEO and Communications Officer
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	January 2027	Deputy CEO

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	September 2026	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: RAP WG
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	September 2026	Chief Executive Officer
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	September 2026	Chief Executive Officer
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	December 2026	Lead: D&I Subcommittee Support: RAP WG

Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review and identify cultural learning needs within our organisation.	August 2026	Lead: Deputy CEO and Communications Officer Support: RAP WG
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	September 2026	Deputy CEO
	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	December 2026	Lead: Communications Officer Support: RAP WG
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, Service Leads and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	July 2027	Chief Executive Officer
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	January 2027	Communications Officer
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	January 2027	Lead: Communications Officer Support: RAP WG
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	December 2027 (for review June 2028)	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: Leadership
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	December 2027 (for review June 2028)	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: Leadership
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	RAP Working Group to participate in one external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2026 (after implementation of RAP) and July 2027	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: RAP WG
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	July 2027 (for review July 2028)	Deputy CEO
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	July 2027 (for review July 2028)	Communications Officer

Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2026	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: Leadership
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	December 2027	Lead: Communications Officer Support: Leadership
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	April 2028	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: RAP WG, Leadership
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	July 2028	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: RAP WG, Leadership
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	April 2028	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: Leadership
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	April 2028	Leadership and and Communications Officer
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	July 2027	Lead: Communications Officer Support: Leadership
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	January 2028 (for review June 2028)	Lead: Communications Officer Support: RAP WG, Leadership

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2028	Communications Officer
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	July 2027	Lead:Deputy CEO Support: Leadership
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteer and student diversity to support improved	Develop systems to capture the cultural and linguistic diversity within volunteer base.	July 2027	Communications Officer
	Investigate joining the Community Legal Centres NSW First Nations Cadetship Program.	July 2028	Deputy CEO

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	July 2026 (for review July 2028)	Lead: Communications Officer Support: RAP WG
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	December 2026	Lead: Communications Officer
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	March 2027 and 2028 June 2027 and 2028 September 2026 and 2027 December 2026 and 2027	Deputy CEO, Communications Officer, Solicitors
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	May 2027	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: RAP WG, Leadership
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	July 2026 (for review February 2028)	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: RAP WG
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure, and report on RAP commitments.	July 2026 (for review July 2027)	Lead: Communications Officer Support: RAP WG
	Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	July 2026 (for review July 2028)	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: RAP WG
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June 2028	Deputy CEO
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	August 2027 and August 2028	Communications Officer
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	September annually	Lead: Communications Officer Support: RAP WG

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	March 2027 and 2028 June 2027 and 2028 September 2026 and 2027 December 2026 and 2027	Deputy CEO, Communications Officer, Solicitors
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	October 2026 and October 2027	Communications Officer and Deputy CEO
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	July 2026 (for review February 2028)	Lead: Deputy CEO Support: RAP WG
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	April 2028	Lead: Communications Officer Support: RAP WG
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	July 2028	Lead: Communications Officer Support: RAP WG
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	February 2028	Lead: Communications Officer Support: RAP WG

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