

# **Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan**

**April 2022 –  
September 2023**

**BRIDGE DAREBIN  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
OF COUNTRY**

**Bridge Darebin acknowledges and pays respect to Wurundjeri  
Woiwurrung Elders and community who are the Traditional  
Owners of the Kulin nation.**

**We recognise that Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people have cared for  
and sustained this Country for many thousands of years.**

**We recognise Wurundjeri Woiwurrung as a living culture with  
deep knowledge and strength and recognise their rights to land  
and to justice.**

# Contents

**2**

**Acknowledgement of Country**

**4**

**CEO statement Chris**

**7**

**CEO statement Reconciliation Australia**

**8**

**About Bridge Darebin**

**10**

**About our RAP**

**11**

**Partnerships and current activities**

**12**

**RAP timeline**





## A message from Bridge Darebin CEO, Chris Lombardo

An enlightening discussion with Sarah Sheridan from Clothing The Gaps back in February 2019 was the starting point for my own journey to better understand the real history of First Nations People. Growing up on a farm in Dja Dja Wurrung Country and going to school in the '60s and '70s, my personal education and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories, was very poor.

In that meeting with Sarah, I endeavoured to better understand the Not the Date to Celebrate campaign. Sarah helped me realise that Bridge Darebin had a responsibility to create a culture within our organisation of awareness, acceptance, and safety for First Nations people. As community educators, we needed to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to their country and assist in truth-telling and reconciliation. Bridge Darebin is in a position of influence and has a responsibility to use this standing in the community to further develop reconciliation initiatives.

I am proud to say that we have now finalised our Reflect RAP three years later. As a first step towards our RAP, I attended a VACCA Aboriginal Cultural Awareness program. This was powerful and enlightening and reinforced

my determination to be better educated in First Nations history and what role Bridge Darebin could play to increase awareness of the truth.

With the completion of Stage One of our RAP, Bridge Darebin will remain committed to supporting and educating, as we strive as a society for a more equitable Australia. We will play our part through our Children's Services, Adult Education, regular community events and social enterprise to keep the conversations going. To increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights.

Uncle Bill Nicholson Jnr. has been instrumental in helping the staff and volunteers of Bridge Darebin recognise our responsibilities in truth-telling. When we asked him what we can do to help, he simply said, "Keep the conversations going. Help us tell the truth." Bridge Darebin is committed to truth-telling and supporting the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to self-determination.

Bridge Darebin now has an ongoing commitment to embed responsive RAPs within our organisational objectives, in a meaningful way, that ensures effective outcomes for all.



**“Knowing our own history is important as non-Aboriginal people. How did you come to be here? What happened on the land where you now live?”**

- Clare Land, author of Decolonizing Solidarity, panelist for National Reconciliation Week, ‘Moving beyond words: how to be an active ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’

Bridge Darebin event May 2021

## A message from Karen Mundine, CEO Reconciliation Australia

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

Bridge Darebin joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with over 2.3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its

own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Bridge Darebin to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Bridge Darebin, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



# About Bridge Darebin



Bridge Darebin (Preston Neighbourhood House Inc.) is an innovative, not-for-profit community organisation based in Preston and Thornbury. Established in 1982, our purpose is to strengthen our community and to provide social and educational services to empower those who need it the most.

Our work actively addresses key challenges in the Darebin community, through training and employment pathways, positive ageing and social inclusion.

We offer a wide range of services across multiple sites, including:

- Adult education;
- Child care;
- Community programs;
- Venue hire;
- Moon Rabbit café and catering;
- Heart of Thornbury (HOT) craft market.

Bridge Darebin is a registered charity and public benevolent institution (PBI), a certified social enterprise and a Learn Local organisation. As of November 2021, Bridge Darebin has 17 staff members and upwards of 20 ongoing contractors. Currently Bridge Darebin does not have any employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, but this is something we would like to address in the future.

As a neighbourhood house we service the local Darebin area. We have contacts and partners with neighbouring municipalities and are part of the North Eastern Neighbourhood House Network.

Bridge Darebin has office locations and community halls in Preston and Thornbury, as well as an Arts Hub in Thornbury that's dedicated to community ceramics and arts practices.



**“It’s all about supporting us as best you can with the capacity and resources that you have built up from the land that was stolen from us 200 years ago”**

Uncle Bill Nicholson,  
panelist for National Reconciliation  
Week, ‘Moving beyond words: how  
to be an active ally to Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander peoples’

Bridge Darebin event *May 2021*



## Our RAP

Bridge Darebin's journey to developing our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan began with the establishment of relationships with local Aboriginal controlled organisations, in particular Spark Health, Clothing the Gaps and VACCA.

Located in Preston, where many of Melbourne's Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and services are located, we became increasingly aware of their work and of our potential to engage with, and support, these organisations and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

In 2020, Bridge Darebin employed a Community Development Officer with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander portfolio to oversee the drafting, endorsement and implementation plan of the Reflect RAP. We took time to develop our RAP by reflecting on how we might implement reconciliation actions, externally through supporting and partnering with neighbouring organisations and internally through self-reflection and listening and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Bridge Darebin staff have begun the process of learning more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, histories and cultures. During 2020–2021 staff underwent cultural training sessions with Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), Wurundjeri Woi Wurring Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited (VASCAL) and through the Neighbourhood Houses Victoria hosted sessions with Yorta Yorta educator Kathryn Coff.

In February 2021, Bridge Darebin established a RAP Working Group who meets fortnightly and who will oversee the implementation of the RAP deliverables. The Working Group will provide a 6-month progress summary to managers and the CEO in September 2022. The RAP WG will assess the progress of the Reflect RAP implementation and report back to Reconciliation Australia in December 2022 and report in the RAP impact Measurement Questionnaire September 2023.

Through our Reflect RAP we aim to embed respect for First Nations' sovereignty, history and justice campaigns in all aspects of our operation and to build ongoing partnerships with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in order to support community self-determination.

We also aim to extend community outreach to vulnerable community members and to make our range of training opportunities, education and community support programs accessible and inclusive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise that in order to create a safe and respectful cultural space, we have to commit to ongoing internal work to understand First Nations' cultures and cultural protocols, the ongoing impacts of colonisation and Bridge Darebin's historical position as a white-run organisation on stolen Wurundjeri land.



## Our partnerships / current activities

Bridge Darebin has relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations including Spark Health, Clothing the Gaps and Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).

To date Bridge Darebin's partnerships and initiatives have been:

- In 2020, Bridge Darebin hosted a VACCA fundraising morning tea that involved taking 24 staff members through a discussion about key dates in the year and their significance. The VACCA morning tea raised over \$1300 towards VACCA's healing and protective cultural programs.
- In 2021, we held another VACCA morning tea and weaving workshop during NAIDOC week to raise awareness about Aboriginal culture and to fundraise for VACCA.
- Delivering job readiness programs to Aboriginal teens in partnership with VACCA.
- Establishing a First Nations Women's Health and Wellbeing Group, initiated and led by a community member.
- Distributing Christmas Hampers in 2020 and 2021 to First People's Health and Wellbeing and Djirra.
- Hosting a panel discussion for National Reconciliation Week 2021, 'Moving beyond words: how to be an active ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'. We partnered with Darebin Council and 3KND radio station. The event sold out and demonstrated the desire within the Darebin community to engage with reconciliation actions and Bridge Darebin's capacity to respond to community need.
- Increasing staff cultural awareness through training. Creating a portal for sharing information pertaining to Acknowledging Country and embedding across the organisation Acknowledgement of Country protocol at meetings, classes and events and inviting Elders to provide Welcome to Country ceremonies at larger public events.
- Moon Rabbit café features a variety of chocolates and pantry item sourced from Indigenous-owned businesses.

## RELATIONSHIPS

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	April 2022	Community Education Manager
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	April 2022	Community Development Officer
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2022	General Manager
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June, 2022	Community Education Manager
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June, 2022	General Manager
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	May 2022	General Manager
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	June 2022	Community Development Officer
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we can approach to collaborate with us on our reconciliation journey.	June 2022	Community Development Officer

Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination	June 2022	Community Development Officer
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2022	Executive Assistant

## RESPECT

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	August 2022	Community Development Officer
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	August 2022	Community Development Officer
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	September 2022	Community Development Officer
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	September 2022	Community Education Officer

	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2022	Community Education Officer
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	First week in July 2022	Community Education Officer
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2022	Education Manager

## OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, employment retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	Dec 2022	Community Development Officer
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Dec 2022	Community Development Officer
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	May 2022	Community Development Officer
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	May 2022	Community Education Manager



## GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	April 2022	Community Development Officer
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	September 2022	Community Development Officer
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	September 2022	Community Education Manager
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	April 2022	Community Development Officer
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	April 2022	Community Education Manager
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	April 2022	Community Development Officer
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2023	Education Manager
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	March 2023	Education Manager



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

---

REFLECT

For public enquiries about our RAP contact:

Chris Lombardo

[ceo@bridgedarebin.org.au](mailto:ceo@bridgedarebin.org.au)

9484 5806

 **Bridge Darebin**