

The background of the entire page is a vibrant Indigenous Australian artwork. It features a large, stylized profile of a person's head in white and yellow ochre, set against a rich red and orange background with intricate patterns. The artwork is composed of various textures, including dots, lines, and wavy patterns, typical of Indigenous painting styles.

# Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

January 2018 – October 2019



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

INNOVATE

MinterEllison



#### **‘My Country – 2013’ by Yannima Pikarli Tommy Watson © Yanda**

Yannima Pikarli Tommy Watson is internationally recognised as one of the most significant Aboriginal artists of our time. Watson “walked in” from the desert in his teens; as a child he lived a traditional life in the Gibson Desert where he gained an intimate understanding of the environment and his Tjukurrpa (ancestral stories).

His paintings refer to his country, Ngayuku Ngura (“My Country” in Pitjantjatjara language), representing several sites of importance, such as Waku, Utjuri Pukara and Pikarli. As a senior Pitjantjatjara elder, Watson is celebrated for his highly expressive use of bright colour and innovative abstraction. This work, considered to be one of his most significant, is representative of the Walu site. MinterEllison is grateful to the artist’s family and its representatives for permitting the use of this work in our Reconciliation Action Plan.

#### **‘Kunj & Bolung – Kangaroo & Rainbow Serpent’ by Marcus Blanasi © Marcus Blanasi 1997**

The kangaroo was the rainbow serpent’s pet and the people (bininj) killed the kangaroo. The rainbow serpent ate all the people. The small man is the only witness, he killed the snake and went and told everybody. The leaves in the painting are for the fire burning, getting ready to cook them all up. In this painting, the kangaroo is a rock kangaroo (namarr). There are many types of kangaroo. All are called kunj.

Marcus Blanasi’s “Kunj & Bolung” is included in The Blanasi Collection which is a permanent exhibition housed at the Ghunmarn Cultural Centre, Beswick (Wugularr) Community, 107 kms east of Katherine in the Northern Territory, on Jawoyn Land. Ghunmarn Cultural Centre is owned and operated by Djilpin Arts, an Aboriginal Corporation based in the community of Beswick. MinterEllison is grateful to the artist and Djilpin Arts for permitting the use of this work in our Reconciliation Action Plan.

# OUR VISION

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MinterEllison is proudly an Australian-based professional services firm. As a large Australian employer, we recognise our responsibilities as a corporate citizen.

Over many years, we have assisted Aboriginal communities primarily through our pro bono legal work. In the next phase of our reconciliation journey, we are turning our focus to the opportunity presented to all Australian businesses – growing the economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

All available evidence suggests that economic participation involves a series of inter-related factors including education, training, and mentoring - all of which can ultimately lead to job opportunities and opportunities to establish and grow businesses.

At MinterEllison, we have the skills and the commitment of our people to help create an environment where greater economic participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can become a reality.

This Reconciliation Action Plan reflects the commitment of all our people, with the active commitment of our firm's leaders, to closing the gap for Indigenous Australians.



**Bruce Cowley**  
Chairman





## OUR BUSINESS

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MinterEllison is one of the Asia Pacific's leading law firms and operates in Australia, Hong Kong, mainland China, Mongolia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Our Australian offices are located in Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. We have associated offices in Adelaide, Darwin and the Gold Coast.

We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, past and present, of the lands on which we work each day.

We employ approximately 1,800 people in our Australian offices, with less than one percent of staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

## OUR RAP

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MinterEllison is committed to improving access to economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and is developing this RAP as a step towards realising our vision for reconciliation.

MinterEllison is committed to grow and achieve in the three key areas – relationships, respect and opportunities – through implementing this RAP. Our RAP is championed internally by the RAP Working Group.

The RAP Working Group was involved in the development of this RAP, seeking input from various areas of the firm including the CEO and the Executive Leadership Team. We also sought advice from two Indigenous advisors well known to our firm Casey Ralph (KARI) and Warren Mundine, both of whom will join our RAP Advisory Board to oversee implementation of the RAP.

The RAP Working Group is made up the following Indigenous and non-Indigenous MinterEllison employees and Partners across our Australian offices: Michael Brennan, Nicole Green, Keith Rovers, Kate Cato, Anton Hermann, Fiona Cook, Peter Wheatley, Fiona Britton, Tyrone Kelly and Amity Kruger.

# OUR PARTNERSHIPS / CURRENT ACTIVITIES

MinterEllison has a proud record of engaging with Australian and Torres Strait Islander Australians, particularly through community-based organisations who represent their interests.

Through MinterEllison's Pro Bono and Community Investment Program we have:

- been recognised by KARI, the largest provider of foster care for Aboriginal children in NSW, as its Partner Agency of the Year in 2016
- advised on the establishment of the Rhodanthe Lipsett Indigenous Midwifery Charitable Fund, to support more Indigenous midwives with their education and training
- advised on the establishment of the Mila Foundation, an Aboriginal youth leadership program based in Collie, Western Australia
- advised on the establishment of the Ngaoara Foundation, founded by Professor Ngiare Brown for the health and well-being of Aboriginal children and young people
- provided pro bono legal advice to a range of Indigenous corporations through our role on the ORIC (Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations) Law Help Panel
- worked in partnership with the Darebin Community Legal Centre since 2005 to deliver a regular outreach legal clinic for Indigenous elders at the Kookaburra Club in Melbourne's northern suburbs
- delivered a legal workshop in Alice Springs for the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
- provided ongoing legal assistance to the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)
- advised Djilpin Arts Aboriginal Corporation through our partnership with the Westpac Foundation
- advised the Darwin Aboriginal Arts Fair
- advised the Dream Sky Foundation, a social enterprise dedicated to training Indigenous pilots
- worked with the Arts/Law Centre of Australia's "Artists in the Black" program to support Indigenous artists and Indigenous Arts organisations
- Engineering Aid Australia - a tax exempt and DGR charity ( Bob Hawke the Patron) established to encourage Indigenous youth into an engineering career. EAA will deliver an annual summer school in conjunction with Sydney and Perth universities with involvement of the large engineering / construction organisations. We were involved in the establishment of the corporation together with tax endorsements in 2009 and continue to act
- Australian Indigenous Chamber of Commerce - also established (with MinterEllison acting, on instructions from Warren Mundine, one of the founders) in 2009 as a tax exempt and DGR charity to advance Indigenous businesses, employment, vocations etc.
- Australian Indigenous Aviation Foundation - again, a tax exempt and DGR charity we assisted to establish in January 2017 to encourage Indigenous Australians to pursue a career in aviation and related industries
- Australian Indigenous Medical Scholarship Fund - a tax exempt and DGR fund established in 2016 by the AMA to provide scholarships to Indigenous people in Australian universities leading to registration as medical practitioners

We engage our staff through events such as our 2017 staff function to commemorate 50 years since the passage of the 1967 referendum to include Aboriginal people in the census and to allow the Commonwealth Government to make laws for Aboriginal people.

We have also engaged with the Career Trackers cadetship program in Brisbane and more recently employed an Indigenous law student as a cadet in Sydney.



# RELATIONSHIPS

MinterEllison's ambition to be our clients' best partner is core to developing our RAP as we believe that strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians are fundamental to building a sustainable future for all Australians. We will work through our internal and external networks to connect people and organisations; to share opportunities and experiences and engage with community partners to deliver the actions below for the benefit of all.

## FOCUS AREA: OUR RAP AND OUR COMMUNITY

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.</li> <li>Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on the RWG.</li> <li>Meet at least four times per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.</li> <li>Establish Terms of Reference for the RWG.</li> <li>Develop and distribute an expression of interest to join the RWG to key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our sphere of influence.</li> </ul>	October 2017 March 2018	Director, Talent Development
2. Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise at least one internal event for NRW each year.</li> <li>Register all NRW events via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.</li> <li>Support an external NRW event.</li> <li>Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> <li>Extend an invitation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share their reconciliation experiences or stories.</li> <li>Encourage staff to participate in external events to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> <li>Host NRW events across the areas in which we operate.</li> <li>Download Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and circulate to staff.</li> </ul>	27 May - 3 June 2018 (annual)	Diversity Manager
3. Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.</li> <li>Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.</li> <li>Develop joint ventures, partnerships, pro bono support or secondment and community capacity opportunities.</li> <li>Work collaboratively with the IT Newcom Foundation to support Indigenous secondary and tertiary students including individual mentoring.</li> </ul>	February 2018 - ongoing	Director, Community Investment
4. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders.</li> </ul>	March 2018 - ongoing	Communications Manager
5. Collaborate with key clients on shared values initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities to collaborate with key clients on shared value initiatives.</li> </ul>	March 2018 - ongoing	Pro Bono Partner in each office in consultation with CMG team

# RESPECT

Understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, lands, waters, histories and rights are important to people at MinterEllison, many of our clients, and core to business activities - themes include pride in cultures and histories, understanding, appreciation, acknowledgment, learning, success and celebration.

## FOCUS AREA: OUR RAP AND OUR PEOPLE – NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
6. Engage employees in continuous cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training strategy for our staff which defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face-to-face workshops or cultural immersion).</li> <li>Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness training.</li> <li>Ensure the firm's leaders, RWG members, RAP champions, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in cultural training.</li> <li>Identify cultural learning requirements specific to our staff's training need.</li> </ul>	March 2018 and ongoing	Director, Talent Development
7. Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country e.g. all lecterns will include a relevant local Acknowledgement card.</li> <li>Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships.</li> <li>Invite local Elder/Traditional Owner to deliver a Welcome to Country at significant events, including our annual MinterEllison Partners' Conference.</li> <li>Include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all important internal and external meetings.</li> <li>Encourage staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all meetings.</li> <li>As part of our Cultural awareness and understanding program provide opportunities for Traditional Owners to explain the significance of Welcome to Country ceremonies and Acknowledgement of Country statements.</li> <li>Organise and display an Acknowledgment of Country plaque in our office/s or on our office building.</li> </ul>	March – May 2018 Ongoing	Director, Talent Development
8. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week and other key events.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for all staff to participate in NAIDOC Week activities.</li> <li>Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to hold an internal or external NAIDOC Week event.</li> <li>Support an external NAIDOC Week community event.</li> <li>Contact our local NAIDOC Week Committee to discover events in our community.</li> </ul>	First week in July	Diversity Manager



# OPPORTUNITIES

Developing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities is critical to delivering better outcomes for all Australians. At MinterEllison, improving opportunities in a direct way through Indigenous employment and development programs and our procurement systems will strengthen our firm and deliver broader positive outcomes.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
9. Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities.</li> <li>Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Retention strategy.</li> <li>Accelerate the ITNewcom Foundation's existing initiative to enhance tertiary education opportunities for Indigenous students, partnering with universities and supported by best - quality mentoring and employment pathways.</li> <li>Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.</li> <li>Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.</li> <li>Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.</li> <li>Engage with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or consultants to advise on recruitment, employment and retention strategies, including professional development.</li> <li>Develop and implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways (e.g. traineeships or internships).</li> </ul>	March 2018 - ongoing	Chief Talent Officer/ Diversity Manager
10. Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update procurement policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers for procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.</li> <li>Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.</li> <li>Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business.</li> <li>Investigate Supply Nation membership.</li> <li>Develop and pilot an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.</li> <li>Investigate opportunities to partner with local Indigenous Chambers of Commerce.</li> </ul>	July 2018	Director, Corporate Services
11. Increase MinterEllison's provision of pro bono legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain provision of legal assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples.</li> <li>Increase the proportion of pro bono assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples as part of the firm's overall pro bono commitment.</li> </ul>	July 2018 - ongoing	Director, Community Investment



# GOVERNANCE, TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
12. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.</li><li>Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer.</li><li>Develop and implement systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.</li></ul>	30 September each year and interim internal reporting.	Diversity Manager
13. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Publically report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings.</li></ul>	30 November [Annually]	Communications Manager
14. Review, refresh and update RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Liaise with Reconciliation Australia in 2019 to review our RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.</li><li>Send revised RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review and feedback.</li><li>Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement.</li></ul>	Mid - 2019	Director, Talent Development

## CONTACT DETAILS



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# WORKING TOGETHER

Working with Indigenous organisations in urban, rural and remote communities provides an opportunity for MinterEllison to contribute to delivering positive change in areas important to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.



*Artsworker Evangeline Wilson with the Blanasi Collection, Beswick NT. Photo courtesy of Caritas Australia.*



*MinterEllison is assisting Djilpin Arts Aboriginal Corporation to develop legal protections around its operations, infrastructure and cultural assets.*

*The Blanasi Collection of paintings represents critical cultural legacy for Bewick community and creates local employment for community members.*

*MinterEllison's support in developing a Trust for the collection is empowering community to care for its heritage into the future.*



*Fleur Parry, Djilpin Arts Aboriginal Corporation*



*Paul Ralph (Founder, KARI), Anton Hermann, Gary Potts (Chairman, KARI) at the presentation of KARI's Partner Agency of the Year Award to MinterEllison in 2016*

Our relationship with KARI, the largest provider of Indigenous foster care services in Australia, dates back to 2008. We provide pro bono legal services across all aspects of KARI's operations including service delivery, intellectual property, employment and real estate.

We were honoured to be recognised in 2016 as KARI's Partner Agency of the Year 'for an organisation that has committed to support KARI through ongoing partnership, collaboration and outstanding pro bono support'.

In presenting the award, KARI founder Paul Ralph said: *"MinterEllison's support goes to the heart of our work in protecting vulnerable children".*







