The Derbarl Yerrigan (Swan River) is an extremely significant area in Perth. This painting depicts an aerial view of the river which embodies the presence of the Wagyl (the Dreaming serpent). It is known in Noongar creation stories that the Wagyl made the rivers, swamps, lakes and waterholes. The cross hatching patterns (raak) is a painting style from Arnhem Land which is representative of the artist's identity within the work. Green in the Derbarl Yerrigan depicts new beginnings like that of new life in our flora and fauna during Djilba (spring time) as is this RAP for the Law Society of WA.

** The artist acknowledges they are not of ancestry to Wadjuk Noongar country and people and has therefore respectfully used their own ancestral painting styles as to not appropriate Noongar culture. The Derbarl Yerrigan and Wagyl have been used to symbolise Wadjuk Noongar country in Western Australia and the significance they hold in being included in the Law Society of Western Australia’s Reconciliation Action Plan.

**Reconciliation Action Plans are a step in acknowledging that everyone needs to make change in order to see change. Aboriginal people need to be acknowledged within every industry/area of society, especially in our legal systems in regard to fair and equal representation. I am honoured to be part of this project.

**About the Artist**

“I have grown up all over Australia. My ancestral country is in Far North Queensland, Kooki-mini and Kooki-langi country between Laura and Cooktown and have family connections in North East Arnhem Land, Yolngu country. I am also of Scottish and Solomon Islander ancestry. Growing up I did my schooling and lived in Perth, Arnhem Land and on the mid north coast of New South Wales. Moving around was fantastic, it taught me a lot about myself and my identity. In Perth, I studied a bachelor of arts majoring in communications and media and literature, and then went on to teach in the Indigenous Ways of Knowing major at UWA. Art is in my blood, it is a way I can express how I feel about growing up in two completely different worlds as a young Aboriginal person of today. I also just love the aesthetics of painting. I like to bring together many different painting styles that I have learnt throughout my life, challenging notions of what it means to be an ‘Aboriginal artist’.”
The Law Society of Western Australia is pleased to launch its first Reconciliation Action Plan, Reflect. The Society is grateful for the ongoing support and guidance provided by its Aboriginal Lawyers Committee and Reconciliation Australia in gaining endorsement and registration of the Reflect plan.

The Reflect plan outlines the actions the Society will undertake to achieve its vision of:

1. A profession where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law students, graduates and practitioners feel valued and respected; and
2. A community in which members understand and show respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through building relationships and laying the foundation for increased opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As the peak body of the legal profession in Western Australia, the Society recognises that it has the opportunity to affect real change through raising awareness of its commitment to reconciliation, resulting in the profession considering ways in which they can contribute to reconciliation.

I would like to thank the Society’s Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group for establishing the Reflect plan and maintaining its ongoing implementation, on the Society’s behalf.

Matthew Keogh
President of the Law Society of Western Australia

The Law Society of Western Australia recognises the diverse language groups, kinship structures and customs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities throughout Western Australia. While in this document, reference is made in general terms to Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous peoples, this in no way diminishes this diversity.
OUR BUSINESS

The Law Society of Western Australia is the peak professional association for lawyers in the state of Western Australia. Established in 1927, the Society is a not-for-profit association dedicated to the representation of its members and the enhancement of the legal profession through being a respected leader and contributor on law reform, access to justice and the Rule of Law. The Society is widely acknowledged by the legal profession, government and the community as the ‘voice’ of the legal profession in Western Australia.

The Society is governed by a Council chaired by the President. The Council of the Society is assisted in the management of the Society by the Executive Director and Society staff.

Presently, the Society does not have any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. The Society has approximately 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members and is working to increase this representation.

OUR RAP

The Society’s vision for reconciliation is of a legal profession in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel valued, respected and encouraged.

The Society acknowledges the unique position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia, holding a special place in Australia’s history.

By joining the RAP Programme, the Society commits itself to:

- Contributing to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the legal profession;
- Promoting greater respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures within the profession;
- Building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Developing the discourse around legal issues which disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and
- Advocating for the Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The RAP template, entitled ‘Reflect’, will guide the Society as to how to engage in the reconciliation process and build relationships externally and internally with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and community members.

During the period when the RAP is developed, the Society will focus on raising awareness within the organisation about its commitments to reconciliation and why the organisation has decided to join the programme.

The Society’s RAP Working Group will be responsible for implementing and maintaining the Society’s RAP. The RAP Working Group is comprised of Society staff, members of the Society’s Aboriginal Lawyers Committee and members of the Society’s Council.
OUR PARTNERSHIPS/CURRENT ACTIVITIES

The Law Society of Western Australia’s partnerships and current activities include the following:

**Aboriginal Lawyers Committee**

The Aboriginal Lawyers Committee (the ALC) was established by the Society in May 2010. The ALC members are Aboriginal lawyers, law graduates and law students and non-Indigenous Society members.

The ALC was formed with the purpose of encouraging, supporting and advancing Aboriginal lawyers, law graduates and law students, as well as communicating with the legal profession and broader community on issues of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law Students Mentoring Programme**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law Students Mentoring Programme commenced in 2011 and is available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law students in any year of their study of law. The Society offers the programme on an annual basis.

The mentoring programme offers one-to-one contact with a legal practitioner with whom the student is able to discuss the student’s law course, career options and aspirations after graduation.

A formal training session is undertaken by students and mentors, separately, to ensure provision of information regarding the mentoring programme and the opportunity for any questions to be answered. Approximately four Aboriginal law students participate in the programme annually.

**Francis Burt Law Education Programme**

The Francis Burt Law Education Programme (FBLEP) is supported and maintained by the Society as a community service and receives funding from the Public Purpose Trust and Department of Education. The FBLEP provides a unique range of interactive and participant focused legal education programmes for school and community groups.

The curriculum resources for schools include research of local Aboriginal culture and spirituality, life before European settlement, the subsequent impacts and contemporary Aboriginal issues. Consultation with local Aboriginal groups is continuous with the ongoing development of the FBLEP resources.

The FBLEP Education Officers are currently working on a new project called *Know Your Rights*, an interactive and culturally appropriate legal education resource to better engage with Aboriginal Youth in metropolitan and regional areas. The purpose of the project is to create an educational resource that raises the awareness of Aboriginal Youth as to their legal rights and responsibilities.

**Old Court House Law Museum**

The Old Court House is Perth’s oldest remaining public building. The Old Court House Law Museum is a community service managed by the Society. The Museum’s objective is to promote understanding of the law, legal issues and the legal profession to the Western Australian community and to preserve the history of the law and the legal profession in this state.

Current exhibitions in the Museum include ‘Small Court House Big Stories: The First 50 Years of Perth’s Oldest Surviving Building’ and ‘People and the Law’.

Both ‘Small Court House Big Stories: The First 50 Years of Perth’s Oldest Surviving Building’ and ‘People and the Law’ explore the first 50 years of colonisation in Western Australia and include substantial elements which relate the story of interaction between the First Peoples and the colonisers, as told from both perspectives.

The exhibitions incorporate imagery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A free audio commentary is available which includes historical accounts from local Noongar Elders.

During the design phase of these exhibitions Local Noongar representatives and members of the ALC have been consulted regarding the inclusion of suitable stories.
## OUR COMMITMENTS

### RELATIONSHIPS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMELINE</th>
<th>DELIVERABLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAP Working Group (WG) to oversee development, endorsement, implementation and reporting of the RAP</td>
<td>Chair, RAP WG</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>1. The RAP Working Group will meet a minimum of four times over the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop external relationships</td>
<td>Chair, RAP WG</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>2. A list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and stakeholders within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to assist us in our understanding of the potential activities in our future RAPs is developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)</td>
<td>Chair, RAP WG</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>3. Working Group representatives attend a community event or organised an internal event to recognise and celebrate NRW (27 May – 3 June annually).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raise internal awareness of the RAP</td>
<td>Chair, RAP WG</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>4. A plan is developed and executed to raise awareness across the organisation about the RAP commitment, particularly with key internal stakeholders. 5. A presentation on our RAP commitment is given to all relevant areas of our business to ensure they have an understanding of how their area can contribute to our RAP.</td>
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### RESPECT

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigate cultural development</td>
<td>Chair, RAP WG</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>6. A business case for cultural awareness, capability and development based on our core business is developed, with findings presented to relevant HR/ Learning and Development area for their input. 7. We have captured baseline data on our employee’s current level of understanding around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, cultures and contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate NAIDOC Week</td>
<td>Chair, RAP WG</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>8. Our Working Group participated in a community NAIDOC Week event, or held an internal event (1st Sunday – 2nd Sunday in July each year).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raise internal understanding of protocols</td>
<td>Chair, RAP WG</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>9. The plan that is developed to raise awareness includes opportunities to raise understanding of the meaning and significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to our employees.</td>
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## OPPORTUNITIES

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>10. Develop Recruitment Guidelines in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider supplier diversity</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>11. Review Purchasing Policy to consider supplier diversity and how our organisation can include an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other opportunities</td>
<td>Chair, RAP WG</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>12. A paper is presented to the RAP Working Group outlining other opportunities, such as education, that have been identified throughout our consultation with internal and external stakeholders. This paper will assist in defining actions for subsequent RAPs for our organisation.</td>
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## TRACKING PROGRESS

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build support for the RAP</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>13. We have defined available resourcing for our RAP.</td>
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<td>14. Our data collection is able to measure our progress and successes.</td>
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<td>15. We have submitted our annual report on our achievements to Reconciliation Australia.</td>
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