

POPULOUS®

# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

2024



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

**Populous acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and Elders past, present, and future of the lands our company is located, and where we conduct our business.**

We are committed to honouring and respecting Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples unique cultural and spiritual relationship with the land, water and seas and their rich contribution.



*Wiigulga Sports Complex (pictured), honours Gumbaynggirr heritage and culture.*

Recognition of the region was key during design development, contributing to an authentic gathering space where everyone can feel a sense of ownership and belonging.

Artwork by Gumbaynggirr artist, Tulli Stevens, was commissioned by the local Council and National Aboriginal Design Agency (NADA) in collaboration with Gumbaynggirr Elders.

The artwork was used in several locations within the project, including within the Building Façade Screen, Building Entry Foyer, on the precinct and building wayfinding signage and in various printed decals on the walls and internal glazing.



A Message From

## RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Populous Design Pty Ltd to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Populous Design Pty Ltd joins a network of more than 2,500 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 close to 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 Populous Design Pty Ltd 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 Populous Design Pty Ltd, 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



A Message From

## OUR MANAGING DIRECTOR

At Populous we design the places where people love to be together. We acknowledge that the lands where we live, work, and design have a rich history and significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As the world's oldest living culture, their understanding, care and respect for the lands and waters across Australia is profound.

Our formal reconciliation journey has commenced, and we are driven to more deeply listen, collaborate, and learn from First Nations people. Our goal is to integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge, and languages in our practice and projects to platform First Nations stories. For Populous, our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a pivotal part of our ongoing commitment to reconciliation and meaningful action, underpinning the cultural connection and understanding that lives at the core of our Asia Pacific (APAC) team.

We believe it is our responsibility as designers, place-makers and city-shapers to deeply consider the communities and environments in which we live and work. Our venues are spaces for shared memories, stories, creativity, and moments of excellence, allowing us a unique opportunity to design with Country and create authentic and inclusive places where people feel a strong sense of place, ownership and belonging for generations to come.

The deliverables outlined in our RAP, big and small, will ensure we continue to work towards true reconciliation and building and strengthening meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Populous APAC's Sustainability Action Plan (SAP), Sustainable Design Framework (SDF) and ISO 14001 Certification, as well as other policies and commitments, ensure a multidimensional approach to our RAP.

I would like to thank our Populous RAP working group, crossing disciplines and APAC offices, for their dedication and expertise in developing our Reflect RAP. Thanks also to our RAP Champion, Senior Principal and Director (APAC), Al Baxter for his personal commitment to ensuring measurable and impactful RAP outcomes.

We also had the great honour and pleasure to learn from our cultural advisors, including Cre8tive Nations and Tulli Stevens. We extend our greatest thanks to them for sharing their cultures, knowledge, and skills.

Finally, we would like to thank Reconciliation Australia for their invaluable leadership and feedback as we established our RAP and for helping us understand our responsibilities as a global design firm.

We look forward to continuing our journey towards reconciliation and hold great anticipation for what we can collectively achieve with our First Nations partners and industry colleagues, as well as within our sphere of influence, our practice, and our communities.

**PAUL HENRY**

SENIOR PRINCIPAL | MANAGING DIRECTOR - APAC



## A Message From

### OUR SUSTAINABLE DESIGN LEAD | APAC

*Listen carefully this, you can hear me.*

*I'm telling you because earth just like mother and father or brother of you.*

*That tree same thing.*

*Your body, my body I suppose, I'm same as you...anyone.*

*Tree working when you sleeping and dream.*

— Big Bill Neidjie  
'Story About Feeling'

We live in unprecedented times of the Anthropocene where human activity has had great impact on the planet's ecosystems and climate. Rising global temperatures are leading to species extinction, weather events, geopolitical instability, food insecurity, and more. Carbon emissions associated with burning of fossil fuels is viewed as a major contributor to the climate crisis.

As a Settler of Colour on unceded lands of First Nations people, I have begun to view the climate crisis as representation of the disconnection between humans themselves, between humans and the environment and between humans and all beings of the land, skies, and waters.

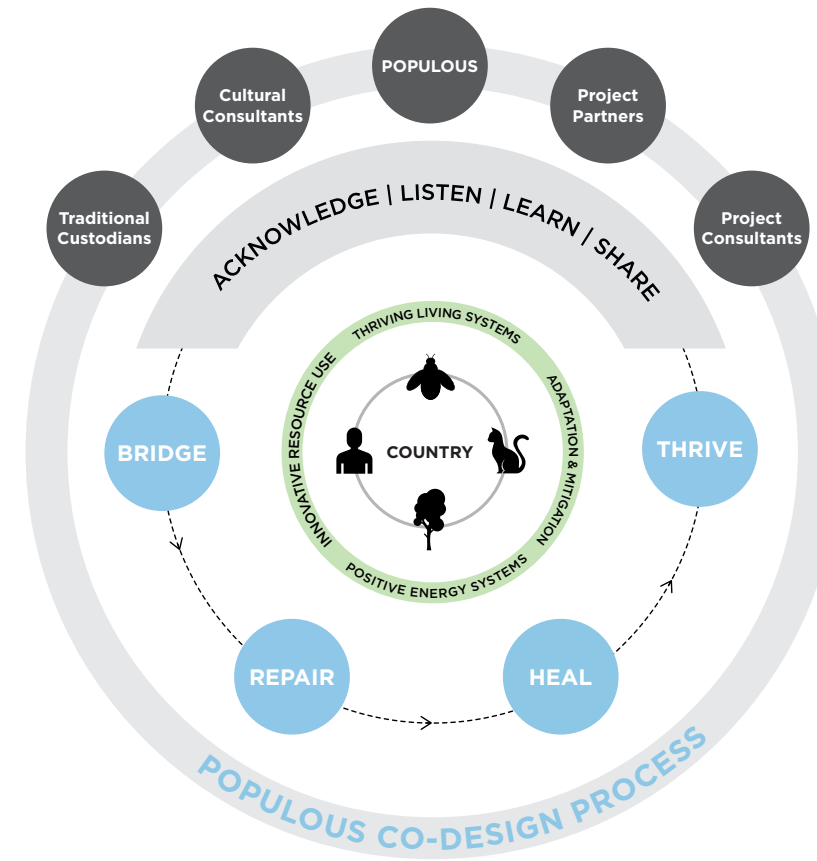
As a migrant on Turrbal and Yuggera Country, I am learning what it means for a community to have been in one place and its surroundings for over 65,000 years and the kind of intrinsic connection they have to place as earnestly expressed by Big Bill Neidjie.

As a professional from the architectural and design field, I acknowledge our role in the crisis as the building materials and construction industry alone contributes to 40% of the global carbon emissions. As a sustainable design advocate, I believe that architects and designers have a role to play in rebuilding these connections to Land to Country.

I have learnt and am still learning : Country is more than just the ground we walk on. It is connection, it is a feeling, it is a place of continuous and evolving meaning, it is the air we breathe and the butterfly that flutters briefly over the fields of daffodils. As Aunt Mary Graham pointed out, Country/Land is the giver of all life: we acknowledge this as the heart of our Co-Design process.



**Through continuous education of Populous APAC architects and designers through active engagement with First Nations culture, lores and customs, we hope to design and build environments that bridge, repair, heal our ecosystems---and eventually create thriving planetary futures for all.**



#### BRIDGE

Build relationships and connections that uphold the equilibrium of the planets' ecosystems.

#### REPAIR

Actively mend relationships and connections between the plant's ecosystems.

#### HEAL

Develop processes that systematically restore the health of the land, waters, and skies.

#### THRIVE

Planet ecosystems are flourishing.

The Co-Design diagram takes the shape of Populous' notable building type — Stadiums and Arenas. People gather around to view the sights and sounds of human excellence. This is also reminiscent of our forefathers and ancestors coming around a fire to share stories and wisdoms. Like these human experiences, we come together with the Traditional Custodians and Cultural Consultants to care for and design on/with Country.

Populous is committed to working with our stakeholders to advocate for every project on Country to have a meaningful and thoughtful community engagement and consultation process: this is Goal 3 of Populous [APAC's Sustainability Action Plan](#) which governs our sustainability initiatives for projects, practice operations and staff.

In terms of operations, Populous Australian offices have also been certified a carbon neutral by Climate Active (Australian Government certification) where we have tracked our business operations and invested in the protecting our forests and biodiversity through the Wulbujubur Cultural Fire Project ([Aboriginal Carbon Foundation](#)) and [Rimba Raya Biodiversity Reserve](#) (Borneo).

Through continuous education of Populous APAC architects and designers through active engagement with First Nations culture, lores and customs, we hope to design and build environments that bridge, repair, heal our ecosystems---and eventually create thriving planetary futures for all.

I am grateful for the time I have spent with First Nations Elders, Teachers, and Community Members. I have deep gratitude for their time, stories, and lessons in their voice and in their writings. I am continuously inspired by the work of Aunt Mary Graham, Margo Neale, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Dr Danièle Hromek, Sarah Lynn Rees, Tyson Yukaporta, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Alison Page, Eve Tuck, Zoe Todd, and many more. I continue to listen, learn and engage in active steps to ensure that architecture and design demonstrate true and meaningful reconciliation for and with our First Nations people.

#### KAVITA GONSALVES

ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL | SUSTAINABILITY DESIGN LEAD - APAC





A Message From

## THE TEAM THAT PUT THE RAP TOGETHER

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### **Our vision towards Reconciliation**

Our RAP team is a collective of dedicated individuals committed to fostering positive change. They are at the forefront of our efforts to promote reconciliation, cultural awareness, and inclusivity within Populous.

As a globally connected Architecture firm, with over 27 offices, we live and work in communities around the world, and our actions impact each other. It is our obligation to respect and support these communities and their values. Our Reflect RAP plays a key role in guiding how we do this within Australia and provides a great framework for supporting further growth outside of Australia.

We remain committed to the principles of reconciliation, and we invite other companies to join us on this journey of positive change, contributing to a more equitable and harmonious society, and fostering a workplace culture that values diversity and inclusion.



## Overview of the Company

Populous is a global architecture and design firm that designs the places where people love to be together, like Yankee Stadium, the London Olympics, Suncorp Stadium, and the Super Bowl.

Over the last 40 years, the firm has designed more than 3,200 projects worth over \$41 billion across emerging and established markets. Populous' comprehensive services include architecture, interior design, event planning and overlay, environmental graphics and wayfinding, master planning, landscape design, urban planning and sustainable design consulting. With regional headquarters in Brisbane, Kansas City, and London, Populous has more than 19 offices on four continents.

In Australia, Populous has three offices located on the lands of the Turrbal and Jagera peoples in Meanjin (Brisbane), the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation in Sydney, and the lands of the Wurundjeri people in Naarm (Melbourne). Across these offices, Populous employs approximately 125 people. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is currently not recorded, however, Populous is in the process of collecting this data as one of their reconciliation initiatives. We are aware of two individuals across our Australian operations who identify as First Nations people.

The Australian teams form part of Populous' regional Asia Pacific team, with more than 35 nationalities represented across the Asia Pacific (APAC) offices.

SUNCORP STADIUM  
BRISBANE / MEANJIN, AUSTRALIA



Our People / Cultural Diversity

We don't consider ourselves just another architecture and design company. At Populous, we know that our strength comes from our diversity. Our APAC team represents over 35 different nationalities, including First Nations representation. We actively celebrate these cultures and are committed to creating a connected team culture that embraces and supports this.

At our core, we are urban designers with a true focus on user experience, creating civic infrastructure that brings whole communities together for amazing experiences.

We design the places that bring people together.

We invest heavily in sustainable design practices and have active Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging strategies in place that are making a difference to not only our team but the wider communities in which we operate across the APAC region.





## Our RAP

Populous designs venues that shape cities and communities, requiring a deep understanding of the diverse people who use these places and spaces, and a commitment to ensuring that all voices and perspectives are embedded into the very principles of how we design and are reflected within our workplace and workforce for strong, sustainable outcomes across the communities we work within.

With this in mind, Populous is embarking on a formal reconciliation journey by committing to developing a Reflect RAP in line with Reconciliation Australia's structured RAP Framework, and in line with our existing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging policies and initiatives. Developing a Reflect RAP will provide practical actions for Populous to build on formal and informal steps already taken by the company and amplify contributions to reconciliation within Populous and within our broader sphere of influence, including at a local, regional and global level.

Our RAP Champion, Al Baxter (Senior Principal, APAC Director), will drive and champion internal engagement and awareness of the RAP and has been involved in RAP working groups outside of Populous. Our core RAP Working Group includes Louise Weeks (Associate, Human Resources Manager - APAC), Amie Edser (Associate Principal, Architect) and Emilley Kingsman (Associate - Regional Comms & Events Manager - APAC), and our broader RAP Working Group includes a number of people from our Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, New Delhi and Singapore offices.

The implementation of our Reflect RAP will provide a solid foundation for Populous to continue exploring relationships with our First Nations stakeholders and implementing sustainable reconciliation initiatives that are meaningful and impactful now and into the future, including developing future RAPs.

## RAP Champions



**Louise Weeks**

**ASSOCIATE | HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, APAC**



**Al Baxter**

**SENIOR PRINCIPAL | DIRECTOR - APAC**



**Amie Edser**

**ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL | ARCHITECT**





## Relationships

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Conduct stakeholder mapping per Australian office and with our internal RAP consulting group to establish a list of First Nations people, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	Jan, 2024	Lead: APAC Head of HR  Support: HR Manager, Regional Comms & Events Manager, IMS Lead, APAC Head of Sustainability
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations through consultation with First Nations representatives and groups	Jan, 2024	Lead: APAC Head of HR  Support: HR Manager, Regional Comms & Events Manager, IMS Lead, APAC Head of Sustainability
	Create an internal database of First Nations stakeholders, groups and organisations	Jan, 2024	Lead: APAC Head of HR  Support: HR Manager, Regional Comms & Events Manager, IMS Lead, APAC Head of Sustainability
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our Asia Pacific team via our internal communication streams.	May, 2024	Lead: Regional Comms & Events Manager Support: HR Manager
	Identify local, external NRW events and ensure that RAP Working Group members are aware of, and can participate in, at least one event	May, 2024	HR Manager
	Encourage and support Principals, Senior Principals, office leaders and key employees based in Australia to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	May, 2024	HR Manager

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all Asia Pacific staff via our internal communication streams, including via message from our regional Managing Director.	Jan, 2024	Lead: Regional Comms & Events Manager Support: APAC Managing Director
	Ensure that new employees are aware of our RAP commitments by including in onboarding processes, with annual review	Oct, 2024	HR Manager
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey and include these stakeholders in an internal database	Mar, 2024	Lead: APAC Head of HR Support: HR Manager, Regional Comms & Events Manager, IMS Lead, APAC Head of Sustainability
	Identify industry and client organisations with a RAP and other like-minded groups and people that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey	Apr, 2024	Lead: APAC Head of HR Support: HR Manager, Regional Comms & Events Manager, IMS Lead, APAC Head of Sustainability
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	May, 2024	HR Manager
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	Apr, 2024	HR Manager



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5. 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.	Feb, 2024	IMS Lead
	Measure employees' existing level of understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights	Mar, 2024	Lead: IMS Lead Support: HR Manager
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation, including additional learning for senior leaders, project leaders and other key staff	Jan, 2024	Lead: HR Manager Support: IMS Lead
6. 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 and develop an internal guide for staff reference and learning	Apr, 2024	HR Manager
	Increase our Australian and Asia Pacific team members' understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols, via our internal communication streams and other educational opportunities.	Feb, 2024	Lead: HR Manager Support: IMS Lead and Sustainability Lead
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our Australian and Asia Pacific employees about the meaning of NAIDOC Week, including sharing information and insights from local First Nations people and communities	Jul, 2024	Lead: HR Manager, Support: IMS Lead and Sustainability Lead
	Identify local, external NAIDOC Week events for each Australian office and encourage employees in Australia to attend and share their experience with employees across Asia Pacific via our internal communication streams	Jul, 2024	Lead: Regional Comms & Events Manager Support: HR Manager
	Identify local, external NAIDOC Week events and ensure that RAP Working Group members can participate in at least one event	Jul, 2024	Lead: Regional Comms & Events Manager Support: HR Manager, IMS Lead

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	Aug, 2024	HR Manager
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Aug, 2024	HR Manager
9. 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.	Aug, 2024	Regional Comms & Events Manager
	Identify local, external NRW events and ensure that RAP Working Group members are aware of, and can participate in, at least one event	Feb, 2024	Lead: Regional Comms & Events Manager Support: HR Manager, IMS Lead



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Jan, 2024	HR Manager
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Jan, 2024	Regional Comms & Events Manager
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG	Jan, 2024	HR Manager
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation	Jan, 2024	IMS Lead
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Jan, 2024	HR Manager
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	Jan, 2024	HR Manager
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Mar, 2024	HR Manager
12. 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.	Aug, 2024	HR Manager
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey	Aug, 2024	HR Manager
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	Sep, 2024	HR Manager
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Oct, 2024	HR Manager





**POPULOUS®**

# Drawing People Together.

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