

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS LAUNCHES NEW RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

12 September 2018 | Australia, Asia Pacific
Firm news

Herbert Smith Freehills has released a new Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP was officially launched by Co-Founder and Non-Executive Director of the GO Foundation and CEO of the Indigenous Defence & Infrastructure Consortium, Adam Goodes, at the firm's annual Pro Bono Lunch in Sydney on 7 September.

It is the firm's fourth RAP and the second to receive "Elevate" endorsement from peak body Reconciliation Australia. Herbert Smith Freehills remains the only law firm to date to receive "Elevate" endorsement for its RAP.

In the new RAP, Herbert Smith Freehills has committed to provide up to A\$5 million of pro bono legal advice to Indigenous clients over the next three years.

The firm has also committed to lead the development of an educational eco-system to nurture a pipeline of talent and significantly increase employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the legal and corporate sectors.

At the launch, Adam Goodes, captured the room with a Q&A session with Herbert Smith Freehills' Head of Pro Bono, [Brooke Massender](#) and former Herbert Smith Freehills and CareerTrackers intern Aaron Lowth. During the Q&A, Adam spoke about the importance of RAPs, and the role corporates can play in promoting supplier diversity.

Speaking at the launch, Partner and Chair of the Herbert Smith Freehills RAP Steering Committee, [Sue Gilchrist](#) said she was very proud of the firm's second Elevate RAP:

“This not only recognises our efforts and outcomes to date, but more importantly reflects our even greater commitment for the future. We will collaborate as a firm and as individuals within the legal sector and beyond. We are focused on genuine and positive impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and businesses. We look forward to standing beside our clients and partners over the next three years and continuing to advocate on national issues such as justice reinvestment and constitutional reform.”

Brooke Massender added: “Our vision for reconciliation is to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the legal profession and to help reduce their over-representation in the criminal justice system.

“This new RAP will see us provide an unprecedented level of pro bono legal services to Indigenous clients, building upon the work that we already do through The Shopfront Youth Legal Centre and our focus on empowering remote communities, particularly in the East Kimberly.

“We are eager to do more to advance reconciliation beyond our existing credentials and the walls of our own firm. So, over the next three years we are going to be taking an active role in the national dialogue on issues such as constitutional reform. Our skill as lawyers makes us well placed to add value in this area because we can distill the complexity of the debate to make these important issues more widely understood and respectfully debated.”

Speaking at the event, Karen Mundine, CEO, Reconciliation Australia, said: “We are very excited to have Herbert Smith Freehills as an Elevate partner. There are over 1000 organisations with a Reconciliation Action Plan but only 21 have reached the Elevate level.

“By raising the bar of its RAP ambitions, Herbert Smith Freehills continues to lead national reconciliation action in the law and justice sector. The firm’s RAP actions, including advocating for justice reinvestment, are contributing positively to national policy and legislative change conversations.

“On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate Herbert Smith Freehills on adopting its second Elevate RAP, and look forward to following its future achievements.”

Herbert Smith Freehills’ Australian Regional Managing Partner, [Andrew Pike](#) said: “As Australia’s leading commercial law firm, we are committed to making a significant contribution to the community, and our RAP work is central to this.

We aim to make a difference by partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of our community to focus on access to justice, thought leadership and career opportunities, and we look forward to continuing this work into the future.”

For more information download the [Herbert Smith Freehills RAP 2018 – 2021 brochure](#).

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