

Arnold Bloch Leibler launches Reconciliation Action Plan with guest of honour, The Hon. Jenny Macklin MP

Arnold Bloch Leibler became the first Australian law firm to launch a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) at a ceremony at the firm's Melbourne office today.

The Hon. Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, was the guest of honour and officially launched the plan.

The firm's Senior Partner and Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia, Mark Leibler AC, said the RAP initiative is an important step in the reconciliation process and in eliminating the 17-year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

"It is my belief, and my experience, that there are now many sectors of Australian society actively engaged in reconciliation and that, unlike even five years ago, today's engagement is strategic and practical.

"The essential elements of the RAP are relationships, respect and opportunities. These plans are designed to be action-oriented, measurable and long-term, and to embed systemic reconciliation into the institutions of our nations.

"In preparing our RAP, the good work that Arnold Bloch Leibler already does in collaboration with Indigenous groups and their supporters has been highlighted, but it also created opportunities for new ideas. We will continually re-evaluate our plan so that we can celebrate our achievements, learn from each other and turn good intentions into action."

RAPs are an initiative of Reconciliation Australia, designed to build positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. They are also a public contribution towards the national effort to close the 17-year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

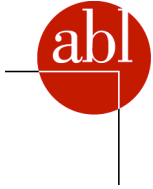
Some of the key features of the plan include: sharing the firm's reconciliation experience with other professional services organisations; acting as a match-maker between the firm's Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients; offering a tertiary student mentoring programme and a tertiary student scholarship; and providing extensive support of Tarwirri, the Indigenous Law Students' and Lawyers' Association.

The launch included speeches from the Minister, Mark Leibler AC and Henry Atkinson, a Yorta Yorta elder and member of the firm's RAP Working Group, as well as a Welcome to Country ceremony by Wurundjeri woman, Annette Xiberras.

It is hoped that other professional services firms will follow Arnold Bloch Leibler's lead and develop their own RAPs.

To view Arnold Bloch Leibler's RAP, visit the website www.abl.com.au.

For more information, or to arrange an interview, contact **Clare Kennedy**, Marketing Communications Executive, (03) 9229 9715 or 0405 941 658 or at ckennedy@abl.com.au.



About Arnold Bloch Leibler

Arnold Bloch Leibler is a leading commercial law firm with offices in Melbourne and Sydney. The firm represents a wide range of individuals and corporate clients, including high-net-worth individuals and entrepreneurs, large family businesses and blue-chip corporations. Arnold Bloch Leibler also has a dedicated pro bono practice providing advice on social, environmental and cultural issues to more than 100 charitable and not-for-profit organisations.

Arnold Bloch Leibler is particularly known for its expertise in commercial law, litigation and dispute resolution, taxation and property. The firm also has an expanding presence in trade practices law. In these areas, the firm has been involved in many landmark matters and transactions.