

Director-General's foreword

I strongly endorse this Reconciliation Action Plan (2011–2013) for the Community Services Directorate.

Our directorate plays a key role in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families; and in working closely with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and community partners. For directorate staff, reconciliation is more than just a word, or a box we tick for government. It's embedded in our daily practice and something we embrace enthusiastically. That's why we already exceed government targets of employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and why we'll increase these even more. Reconciliation is something we are deeply committed to — it's part of being good at what we do, for the benefit of our clients.

The first Reconciliation Action Plan (2009–2010) had a number of achievements:

- collecting data to improve our evidence base for policy and service delivery
- giving prominence to reconciliation through a newsletter, a calendar of events and the placement of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council Charter on our website
- developing guidelines for acknowledgement and welcome to country
- celebrating cultural events such as Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC
- holding successful Reconciliation Awards on 31 May 2010 and 3 June 2011.

We've learnt valuable lessons from our first year. First, a mix of actions is needed in a plan — both short and long term. Quick achievements give people 'runs on the board', increasing their motivation to pursue longer term goals. Another lesson is the need to regularly renew membership of the RAP Committee. Any group driving change needs unflagging energy and a regular stream of new members is a great way to keep the momentum going. People need to prove their intentions by concrete commitments, and that's where this action plan comes in. It commits the directorate over the next three years to a common goal — to address disadvantage among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families. The plan is built around three themes of participation; trust and respect; and greater engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In developing the plan, we consulted widely with staff, community partners and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network.

As a directorate, we haven't 'arrived' there yet, but this action plan pushes us further towards where we want to go. I invite you — all directorate staff and our community partners — to join us on this very important journey of reconciliation.

Martin Hehir, July 2011

The Community Services Directorate contributes to the wellbeing of the Canberra community, activities impact directly on the quality of community life through policy, legislative, program and funding responsibilities. A measure of our maturity is also determined by how we value and support our cultural and social capital.

Our vision for reconciliation is:

- acknowledging our past and moving forward towards a shared future that embraces all Australians
- working in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community partners
- recognising that working towards reconciliation is ongoing
- exploring ways to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage and assist in closing the (national) 17-year life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples
- giving more attention to programs and initiatives which aid Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and education
- focusing on measures which enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to rise above their socio-economic disadvantage
- assisting our employees with practical tools to challenge and combat racist attitudes
- promoting cultural awareness amongst staff and community partners
- having all areas of our directorate involved in developing and reviewing our RAP.

Our RAP journey

Our directorate's journey to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) began on 13 February 2008, after the National Apology by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the presence and energy of The Stolen Generations in Canberra during that period.

A Reconciliation Statement of Commitment was signed by the Chief Executive on 29 May 2008. A RAP working group was established to progress our reconciliation statement of commitment and develop the directorate's first Reconciliation Action Plan which was launched in June 2009.

The RAP working group, comprised of 12 committed Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous representatives from across the directorate, met monthly for two years to implement and progress actions under the original plan. At the end of 2010 the working group was refreshed after broad staff consultation.

The new 2011–2013 Reconciliation Action Plan was developed through consultations with: staff across the directorate; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other community partners. We did this through workshops, questionnaires and discussions. In the workshops we reviewed the old plan and asked for ideas on what individuals, their business units and our directorate could do in relation to reconciliation in the key areas of relationships, respect and opportunities.

Our directorate continues to develop its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples based on respect for human rights, mutual respect, good faith and partnership.

Relationships

Building respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, our clients and each other is crucial in providing quality services that meet the needs of the community. It is our responsibility as an influential organisation to promote respectful relationships. These relationships will demonstrate that diversity is valued by our community.

Focus area

To further foster and support respectful relationships between our Directorate and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in order to improve effectiveness in service delivery.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target	
1	Implement a whole-of-directorate approach engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services		Improved satisfaction recorded by funded services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establish a satisfaction baseline in 2011–12 ▪ increase satisfaction by 5% by 2013 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a Regular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander forum of government and non-government service providers to share information, build networks and improve outcomes 	Office for Multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OMATSIA) Data and Research	Biannual	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ b Implement ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service Delivery Framework 2010–2014 	Business units providing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples OMATSIA	Review annually	
2	Support staff to participate in actions in the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	Executive Directors	Review annually	Increase number of staff who participate in RAP sponsored events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establish baseline in 2011–12 ▪ increase by 5% by 2013

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target	
3	Publish a Community Services Directorate (CSD) newsletter to report progress of actions in the RAP	CSD RAP Committee and Media and Communications	Biannual reporting on RAP progress	Two newsletters per annum published on CSD portal
4a	Continue support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks, forums, conferences and working groups in the ACT Government	Executive Directors	Review annually	Number of networks, forums, conferences and working groups supported — reported through CSD's annual report
4b	Implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Speaking Series for the directorate, open to all staff and community partners	RAP Committee	At least quarterly	Attendance of staff and community partner's who participate in speaking series forums: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ baseline of 20 participants in 2011 ▪ increase attendance by 10% by 2013
4c	Hold an advisory roundtable with CSD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with Director-General	Executive officers to Director-General	September/October March/April	At least two roundtables held each year
5	Continue to promote our programs, services and opportunities for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to participate through	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS)	Review annually	Participation in community events (see also action 5a): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establish baseline in 2011–12

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
community events (e.g. NAIDOC Family Day)	Director Disability ACT (DACT) Director Housing ACT (HACT) Director		▪ increase participation by 2%

Respect

Understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, connection to land and histories is an important way for our staff and community partners to show respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Acknowledging the past and affirming respect is central to reconciliation and creating an environment in which all cultures are celebrated.

Focus area

Demonstrating our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through public acknowledgements, engagement and participation in community events, promotion and the ongoing development of our cultural competency.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target	
1a	Promote the ACT Government protocol to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> meetings and events correspondence welcome signs 	Deputy Director- General	September 2011	Indigenous protocol circulated to all directorate employees for inclusion on meeting agendas and event speeches Protocol included in new staff induction package Protocol modeled at all major events.
1b	Engage the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to identify appropriate traditional language for the naming of meeting rooms, directorate buildings and programs	RAP Committee	June 2012	Meeting rooms, buildings and programs have been named in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
2	Obtain art, such as through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts program, and acknowledge the artists and display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork	Executive Directors RAP Committee	June 2012	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork displayed in directorate buildings

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target	
3	Promote a positive view of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture to clients and community by ensuring Directorate publications and promotional material reflect appropriate cultural content	Media and Communications	Review annually	Reconciliation statement, acknowledgments and pictures used in directorate publications and promotional material where appropriate
	Explore options to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, stories, language and artwork within promotion material		June 2012	Recommendations considered and implemented by June 2012
4	Build cultural competency across all business units with targeted programs in specific areas by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> surveying directorate employees to ascertain levels of cultural competency and training needs providing advanced cultural competency training to all employees according to identified training needs providing diversity training to all employees and managers — including specific skills training 	Executive Directors	June 2012	Cultural competency survey conducted and used to develop cultural competency training program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of employees with identified need have attended cultural competency training within the performance management cycle in 2011–12
5	Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and significant events by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> acknowledging the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the International Day of Indigenous People 9 August 	RAP Committee	August	Celebration held to mark the International Day of Indigenous People on 9 August
6	Improve service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by:	Executive Directors	June 2012	Client satisfaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> baseline established in 2011–2012

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ building cultural competency with targeted programs in specific business units ▪ developing cultural care plans with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients ▪ ensuring appropriate consultation occurs with initiatives designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ▪ ensuring Child and Family Centres have culturally appropriate resources for client programs 	ATSIS Unit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ increase satisfaction by 5% by 2013
<p>7 Improve access to information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ providing employees with access to information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues including subscriptions to the <i>Koori Mail</i> and the <i>National Indigenous Times</i> and Internet sites on Reconciliation Portal on Intranet 	Media and Communications (include links to newspapers on daily news items)	December 2011	<p>Stakeholder satisfaction with information about CSD programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establish baseline in 2011–2012 ▪ increase satisfaction by 5% by 2013 ▪

Opportunities

Creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians to work together in our organisation is important to our directorate. Our workplace will be one in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want to work. The actions below are designed to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to engage with our services.

Focus area

Foster diversity and inclusion and actively encourage the development of skills to enhance the career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Create opportunities for non-Indigenous Australians to increase their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and cultures. Increase the confidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in our services.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target	
1	Implement the CSD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2011–2013	CSD Executive Organisational Services	2011–2013	Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed to 5% of staff by 2014–15 from a baseline of 3% as at June 2011 Increased representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all employment occupational groups, levels, locations and employment arrangements within CSD
2	Identify skilled mentors to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	Policy and Organisational Services (POS)	30 June 2012	Mentors identified and matched to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
3	Develop performance management and development plans for staff working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients where appropriate	Executive Directors	30 June 2012	Cultural development needs are met through Performance and Development Management Framework

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target	
4	CSD Reconciliation Awards for recognition of individual and team contributions towards reconciliation in the workplace and the community presented by Director-General	RAP Committee	Reconciliation weeks 2011–2013	Staff report that CSD is a workplace that recognises and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and values
5a	Utilise the data collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients to inform evidence based service delivery and policy development	Data and Research and relevant business units	January 2012	Evidence of data utilisation in key service delivery decisions
5b	Service delivery supported by capability of staff to identify client's cultural background (where possible)	Data and Research Learning and Community Education (LaCE)	October 2011	Training to identify client's cultural background integrated into cultural awareness training
6	Encourage community partners to develop their own RAP	POS Executive Director	January 2013	Incorporate reconciliation principles into Community Services Directorate's pre-qualification framework/contract and procurement framework Facilitate Reconciliation Australia to be invited to forums with community partners to talk about producing reconciliation action plans

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
7 Directorate will contribute to the development of a whole-of-government RAP	Deputy Director-General	2011–2012	Facilitate Reconciliation Australia to be invited to discussions with senior ACT Government officials Whole-of-government RAP developed

Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
RAP Committee helps guide the implementation of the RAP	CSD Executives	Twice a year	RAP monitoring report provided to Senior Mangers Meetings twice a year RAP Committee includes both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other staff/stakeholders RAP Committee meets at least quarterly
Feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non- Indigenous stakeholders	Director-General and RAP Committee	Annually	Feedback is incorporated into annual review of RAP
Consult with Reconciliation Australia on the report and refresh the RAP	RAP Committee	July annually	Report sent to Reconciliation Australia identifying lessons learnt and uploaded on both websites Minor refresh to RAP as identified in annual review Major refresh of RAP in 2014
Publish report on progress of RAP	POS	September annually	Progress in implementing RAP is publicly reported annually including on the Reconciliation Australia website RAP news item submitted to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in Reconciliation News Magazine