

Reconciliation Statement of Commitment

The Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners of this land, with unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land and its environment. The Department also acknowledges the many other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have come and settled in Canberra from areas across Australia.

The Department recognises the past injustices faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the continuing disadvantaged circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is sorry for the pain and suffering experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a consequence of past policies and recognises that this pain and suffering reverberate within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities today.

In making this Reconciliation Statement of Commitment, the Department commits to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to overcome this legacy. It will learn from the past to seek new ways to address these issues and move forward in a relationship between all people of the ACT based on respect, recognition, encouragement and support, underpinned by the fundamental principles of respect for human rights, mutual respect, good faith and partnership as outlined in the Canberra Social Plan framework.

This statement commits the Department to developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) by May 2009.

Development of this RAP will involve consultation with internal and external stakeholders including our staff, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Areas for action will include:

Respect

Develop culturally congruent practice, knowledge and understanding.

Respond to the diverse needs of the community and staff.

Relationships

Involve DHCS staff in generating and implementing ideas to achieve reconciliation through Department and core business activities.

Promote respectful values.

Promote workplace diversity and cultural diversity.

Opportunities

Recruit, retain and develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Raise awareness of the aspirations, culture and achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people among our staff and the community we serve.

Develop initiatives and programs to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage and close the gaps of inequality.

Identify and review policies and procedures to ensure they adequately address issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Signed

Sandra Lambert

Chief Executive

29 May 2008



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