OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our reconciliation vision is to work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to build a just, secure and resilient Australia where all people have access to the rights and protections of the rule of law.

OUR BUSINESS

Our mission is to achieve a just and secure society. We do this by providing legal services, including constitutional advice, to government and agencies of government, and by developing and implementing policies and programs to maintain and improve Australia’s legal and justice systems.

Our work includes programs and services specifically designed to advance respect and opportunities for, and relationships with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Some of these include opportunities for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to attend forums such as the FOI and Privacy Forum, the National Indigenous Legal Conference, as well as an opportunity for international liaison and networking at the World Indigenous Legal Conference. Services offered by the department includes pro bono legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. Additionally, the department continues to hold a seat on the panel for the LawHelp pro bono referral scheme which was established in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations.

Our people are central to the delivery of our priorities and in fulfilling our role. The department employs 2,128 staff nationally including the Australian Government Solicitor with staff across eight offices and the head office in Canberra. Of those, 1.6% staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
Our Innovate RAP will empower us to explore and implement innovative approaches in advancing reconciliation and reaching our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment targets. This RAP is particularly significant for us, as it reaffirms our commitment to appreciating and recognising the contributions made by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and learning from their wonderfully rich cultural diversity.

Our progress is championed by a dedicated Indigenous Champion who is actively involved in promoting our actions against the deliverables within this RAP. The Indigenous Champion and Human Resource representatives are active in promoting the department’s commitments to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and external stakeholders, such as the APS Indigenous Champions Network and the Indigenous APS 5/6 Career Development Working Group.

Our Indigenous Champion role is supported by an equally important cohort of internal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous employees through our Indigenous Employee Network and the RAP Working Group. The Working Group membership includes:

- the Indigenous and Reconciliation Champion as Chair
- at least two members from Human Resources
- at least one member at the EL2 or SES level drawn from each of the four business groups (ie Civil Justice and Corporate, Criminal Justice, Australian Government Solicitor, National Security and Emergency Management)
- at least two members from the Indigenous Employee Network (at any level).

We continue to make progress towards reconciliation and achieving our targets by actively developing initiatives and participating in programs to create awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and provide meaningful opportunities for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, such as our commitment to participate in Jawun annually.

“Our department’s participation in the Jawun program sees employees apply their skills to projects chosen by Indigenous organisations. In my case, this was working with young leaders to establish a business arm within the Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative in Shepparton that would provide an independent income stream. The word Jawun means ‘family or friend’ in the language of the Kuku Yalanji rainforest people of Far North Queensland. It was a real privilege to be welcomed as such and to have a unique insight into the community’s history and culture, the work of its organisations and its successes and challenges.”

Cadie Minshall, AGD JAWUN 2016 Secondee

Since our last RAP was launched, we have moved further along our journey toward reconciliation in several meaningful ways. An example of this was the support provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who were granted scholarships to attend conferences, including the World Indigenous Legal Conference and the National Indigenous Legal Conference.

“Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is an important topic on the national agenda. The conference encouraged me to reflect on the issue and to engage critically with proposed options and what impact they might have in practice. It broadened my thinking to look at other cultures, and the lessons we can learn to ensure the best outcome for Indigenous Australians. The conference gave me further insights into the issue which I can share with my friends and colleagues so that together, we may contribute to the national conversation.”

Jake Lee, Indigenous Trainee Officer, Policy Hub, Civil Law Unit, AGD

“The National Indigenous Legal Conference provided me with learning opportunities that I still reflect on in my work today. I was given the opportunity to network with, and learn from, people who are equally as passionate about the legal issues that continue to affect our First Nations People. For someone who has just started working within government and policy it was beneficial to hear from both academics who provide that evidence-base behind the legal issues, and then conversely to hear from lawyers and practitioners who are on the ground experiencing these issues. It gave my own work perspective, and enables me to see how policy fits into that bigger picture.”

Sonjah Stewart, Policy Officer, Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, AGD

This Innovate RAP contributes further towards recognising achievements made by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and offering greater developmental opportunities that were previously not available. It also contributes to developing the cultural competency of our non-Indigenous staff. This is a result of collaboration with our Indigenous Champion and Indigenous Employee Network, who continue to be the voice of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
I am pleased to present the fifth Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for the Attorney-General’s Department. This RAP aims to achieve the Innovate level and will demonstrate our strong commitment to reconciliation, both within the department and among the broader community.

The Innovate level will enable us to develop innovative experiences and training opportunities for our staff, to support a culturally safe and diverse workforce that better understands, promotes, and embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures.

Our department is committed to improving representation of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through a suite of meaningful actions.

Through the implementation of this RAP, I hope to empower the department to build relationships, develop a culture of respect, investigate opportunities, and measure RAP successes through reporting.

Since our previous RAP, the department has made significant progress in establishing benchmarks for improvement. Building on this strong foundation, our Innovate RAP sets out clear, measurable, and most importantly, achievable goals through a complementary mix of recruitment, retention and development opportunities.

We have a long and proud history in driving change and enhancing the lives of Australians, and I am confident that, over the coming year, and those to follow, we will continue to build on this legacy by embedding the RAP into the fabric of our department.

I look forward to implementing our RAP and progressing our reconciliation journey.

Chris Moraitis PSM

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I am delighted and honoured to be the Indigenous Champion for the Attorney-General’s Department.

In my role as the Champion I have the privilege of working closely with our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and Indigenous Employee Network to help create a great place to work for all our people.

Since my appointment in January 2016, I have been privileged to meet most of our fantastic Indigenous staff in individual meetings. These employees shared their personal stories regarding their career progression and mentoring opportunities within the department. These meetings have been overwhelmingly positive and have really shown me the level of dedication and engagement of our Indigenous staff and the support provided by the department.

There have been a number of initiatives that I have progressed and I have represented the department at a number of networking events, both internally and externally. One of the most important of the many initiatives has been the development of our Innovate RAP.

I look forward to continuing in my role as the Indigenous Champion for the department and working closely with our Secretary, our Indigenous staff and our stakeholders to achieve all the actions in the Innovate RAP.

Louise Vardanega PSM
Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is centred on the essential reconciliation principles outlined by Reconciliation Australia – Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

1. **RELATIONSHIPS**

   Building strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is essential to our work and the way we do it. Strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders helps us to deliver better outcomes for Government and the Australian community, and strengthens our approach to achieving a just and secure society. A strong relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff strengthens our organisational culture by celebrating cultural diversity and promoting inclusion.

2. **RESPECT**

   Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture, land and history is important to our business because it underpins successful working relationships and helps lead to better policy development and outcomes.

3. **OPPORTUNITIES**

   Providing employment and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enriches our workplace and supports a culture where all staff are valued for their diverse backgrounds and experience. Ensuring we give business to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations also helps to support this culture and benefits our community.

4. **GOVERNANCE, TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING**
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting</td>
<td><strong>Responsibility</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lead: Indigenous Champion&lt;br&gt;Supported by: RAPWG, Human Resources</td>
<td><strong>Timeline</strong>&lt;br&gt;By August 2017</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week events by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians</td>
<td><strong>Responsibility</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lead: Canberra Indigenous Ambassador&lt;br&gt;Supported by: RAPWG, Indigenous Employee Network, Indigenous Champion, Human Resources</td>
<td><strong>Timeline</strong>&lt;br&gt;By 27 May to 3 June each year</td>
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| 1.3 Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes | **Lead:** Indigenous Employee Network Chair  
**Supported by:** Indigenous Employee Network, Indigenous Champion, Human Resources, Diversity Council | By June 2018                     | Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. |
|                                                                       |                                                                                 | By December 2017                 | Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. |
|                                                                       |                                                                                 | By December 2019                 | Have at least three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander barristers listed on the Counsel Engagement System so that AGS can brief them to advise and appear for the Commonwealth.¹ |
| 1.4 Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our department | **Lead:** Indigenous Champion  
**Supported by:** RAPWG, Diversity Council, Human Resources | By December 2017                 | Develop a communication strategy to promote the RAP to internal and external stakeholders, including among Attorney-General’s portfolio agencies. |
|                                                                       |                                                                                 | Three times a year, commencing August 2017  
July yearly | Promote reconciliation, including having RAP update presentations to representatives of the Diversity Council to become champions of the initiatives and promote to all staff. |
|                                                                       |                                                                                 |                                 | Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with stakeholders, including during NAIDOC week, through a diverse range of internal events (ie film screenings, guest speakers). |
| 1.5 Promote awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives in the regional offices | **Lead:** Indigenous Champion  
**Supported by:** Indigenous Employee Network, Human Resources | By December 2017                 | Identify and establish Regional Indigenous Ambassadors in all physical departmental office locations. |
|                                                                       |                                                                                 | By December 2017                 | Establish terms of reference for Regional Indigenous Ambassadors. |
| 1.6 Continue department’s commitment with participation in the APSC Jawun program | **Lead:** Indigenous Champion  
**Supported by:** Indigenous Employee Network, Human Resources | November yearly                  | Commit to participate in the APSC Jawun program annually. |
|                                                                       |                                                                                 | May yearly                      | Jawun participants are to formally share lessons learned about their experience to all staff and champion the program to future participants. |
|                                                                       |                                                                                 | November yearly                 | Jawun alumni are to be champions of the RAP to promote it in their teams. |

¹For noting: Australian Government agencies must use legal counsel who have an approved Commonwealth ongoing rate. Once a counsel has an approved initial Commonwealth rate, an agency and counsel may choose to negotiate a competitive and comparable rate for the brief up to the threshold rate.
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| 2.1 Engage employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements | **Lead:** Diversity Officer, Human Resources  
**Supported by:** Indigenous Employee Network | **By December 2017** | Develop a Cultural Awareness Training Strategy for all staff, including options for online and/or face-to-face training. |
<p>| | | <strong>By June 2018</strong> | Promote cultural awareness training to all staff and report completion rates to business units yearly. |
| | | <strong>By June 2018</strong> | Consult with Supply Nation to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers of cultural immersion training and offer opportunities of on-country training to all staff. |
| | | <strong>By December 2017</strong> | Distribute cultural awareness fact sheets to all staff at induction. |
| | | <strong>By June 2018</strong> | Provide opportunities for RAPWG members, RAP champions, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in cultural training. |
| | | <strong>By June 2018</strong> | RAP Champions to communicate and promote the benefits of staff undertaking cultural awareness training. |
| | | <strong>By June 2018</strong> | Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to provide cultural awareness training. |
| | | <strong>July yearly</strong> | Communicate with staff about dates of significance in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander calendar, including Sorry Day, NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week. |
| | | <strong>July yearly</strong> | Host two lunchtime Indigenous film screenings per year. |</p>
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| **2.2 Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country to ensure there is shared meaning** | **Lead:** Indigenous Champion  
**Supported by:** Indigenous Employee Network, Human Resources | By December 2017 | Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country.  
June yearly | Maintain a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships.  
July yearly | Invite a traditional owner to provide a Welcome to Country at least one significant event, including our NAIDOC week event.  
By December 2017 | Include an Acknowledgment of Country at the commencement of all important internal and external meetings.  
By December 2017 | Encourage Acknowledgments of Country at meetings by developing and distributing Acknowledgment of Country cards to be attached to staff security passes for reference at meetings. |
| **2.3 Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week** | **Lead:** Assistant Director, Performance and Wellbeing, Human Resources  
**Supported by:** Indigenous Employee Network, Diversity Council | March yearly | Review human resources policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.  
NAIDOC Week yearly | Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week.  
NAIDOC Week yearly | Provide opportunities for all staff to participate in NAIDOC Week activities, including the NAIDOC Week Ball. |
| **2.4 Recognise and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff achievements in the Department by including specific awards for those employees** | **Lead:** Indigenous Champion  
**Supported by:** Indigenous Employee Network, Human Resources, Diversity Council | By December 2018 | Develop awards framework for ongoing NAIDOC awards ceremonies.  
NAIDOC Week yearly | Host awards and publish news articles, case studies and staff testimonies.  
NAIDOC Week yearly | |
| **2.5 Create awareness of the gaps present between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians** | **Lead:** Indigenous Champion  
**Supported by:** Canberra Indigenous Ambassador | March and September yearly | Conduct at least two fundraising events per year, including:  
• Indigenous Health Equality on Close the Gap Day  
• Indigenous Literacy on Indigenous Literacy Day |
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| **3.1 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities requiring legal services** | **Lead:** AGS National Manager, Pro Bono Services  
**Supported by:** Indigenous Champion | July, October, January and April yearly | Identify opportunities to provide pro bono legal services and advise AGS National Manager, Pro Bono Services of opportunities.  
AGS to report quarterly on pro bono services provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. |
| **3.2 Provide opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to support their career development** | **Lead:** Indigenous Champion, Canberra Indigenous Ambassador  
**Supported by:** Human Resources, Diversity Council | July yearly | Offer corporately funded training opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.  
Promote available training via internal communications, including targeted messaging via the Indigenous Network and Indigenous entry-level programs.  
Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to meet with influential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders within the community, including Indigenous networking events.  
Discussion of career aspirations and whether training or mentoring could be helpful to develop their careers.  
Offer two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff funding each year to attend a conference, with consideration of international attendance given on a case-by-case basis. |
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| 3.3 | Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace in accordance with the Australian Public Service Indigenous Employment Strategy | **Lead:** Assistant Director, Recruitment, Human Resources  **Supported by:** Indigenous Champion, Indigenous Employee Network | By June 2018 | In consultation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Retention plan, which includes participation in APSC Indigenous Employment Programs and supporting marketing strategy.  
July yearly | Collect current employment rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities.  
September and December yearly | Advertise and promote Identified and Special Measures positions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and report to the Diversity Council twice annually.  
By January 2018 | Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace. |
| 3.4 | Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation in accordance with the Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy | **Lead:** Procurement and Finance Manager | By December 2017 | Raise awareness of the implemented procurement policies and procedures to encourage engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through Supply Nation.  
Communicate and create awareness of the current guidelines on using the Supply Nation services and the Mandatory Set-aside template to all staff via various communications channels including:  
• posters  
• all staff emails  
• presentation at high-level SES meetings.  
By December 2017 | Review and update procurement policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers for procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.  
June yearly | Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned business.  
By December 2017 | Promote Supply Nations Indigenous Business directory to all staff.  
December yearly | Renew supply nation membership. |

1Identified Positions: jobs that require applicants to have an understanding of the issues affecting Indigenous Australians and a proven ability to communicate with them. Special Measures Positions: applicants need to provide documentation to confirm their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage.
## GOVERNANCE, TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

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| **4.1 Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia Report** | **Lead:** Indigenous Champion  
**Supported by:** Diversity Officer | September yearly | Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.  
May 2018 | Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer. |
| **4.2 Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally** | **Lead:** Indigenous Champion  
**Supported by:** Diversity Officer | June and November yearly | Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings in the annual report on the department’s internet page.  
June and November yearly | Internally report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings in the annual report and via a traffic light report published on the intranet. |
| **4.3 Review, refresh and update RAP** | **Lead:** Indigenous Champion  
**Supported by:** Diversity Officer | By March 2019 | Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.  
By June 2019 | Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal review, feedback and endorsement. |

### Contact details

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T 02 6141 6111
Emma Nungarrayi Daniels Artwork
Emma Daniels, Karrinyarra (Central Mt Wedge) 2013
Acrylic on canvas 90x30 cm
© Emma Daniels/Licensed by Viscopy, 2017
Image courtesy Tangentyere Artists

The RAP reflects the efforts of many people. We would like to give special thanks to all departmental staff involved. In particular, our:
• RAP Working Group
• Human Resources
• Indigenous Champion
• Indigenous Employee Network
• Diversity Committee and Diversity Council.

More information
For more information about this publication, or to request an alternative format, contact Human Resources on 02 6141 6111 or hr.assist@ag.gov.au.

Aboriginal-owned and directed, Tangentyere Artists is a not-for-profit organisation, returning 100% of proceeds to the artists it represents. The urban and regional artists come from 18 Town Camp Communities in Alice Springs. Strongly committed to improving social justice and maintaining cultural heritage, the centre operates on foundation principles based on equity, ethics and the protection of artists’ rights.

Emma Nungarrayi lived at Papunya for many years and was recognised as a member of the Papunya Artists Movement of the 1970s and 1980s. She was a well respected elder holding much ritual knowledge, not only in story form, but also song and dance. Nungarrayi was from Central Mt Wedge and held the sacred and secret lore from that country she called Karrinyarra. She lived in Alice Springs and painted with Ngurratjuta from when it first opened in 2004 until 2012. Later she joined Tangentyere Artists and was a member until she passed away in March 2015.