



Reconciliation Action Plan 2014-16



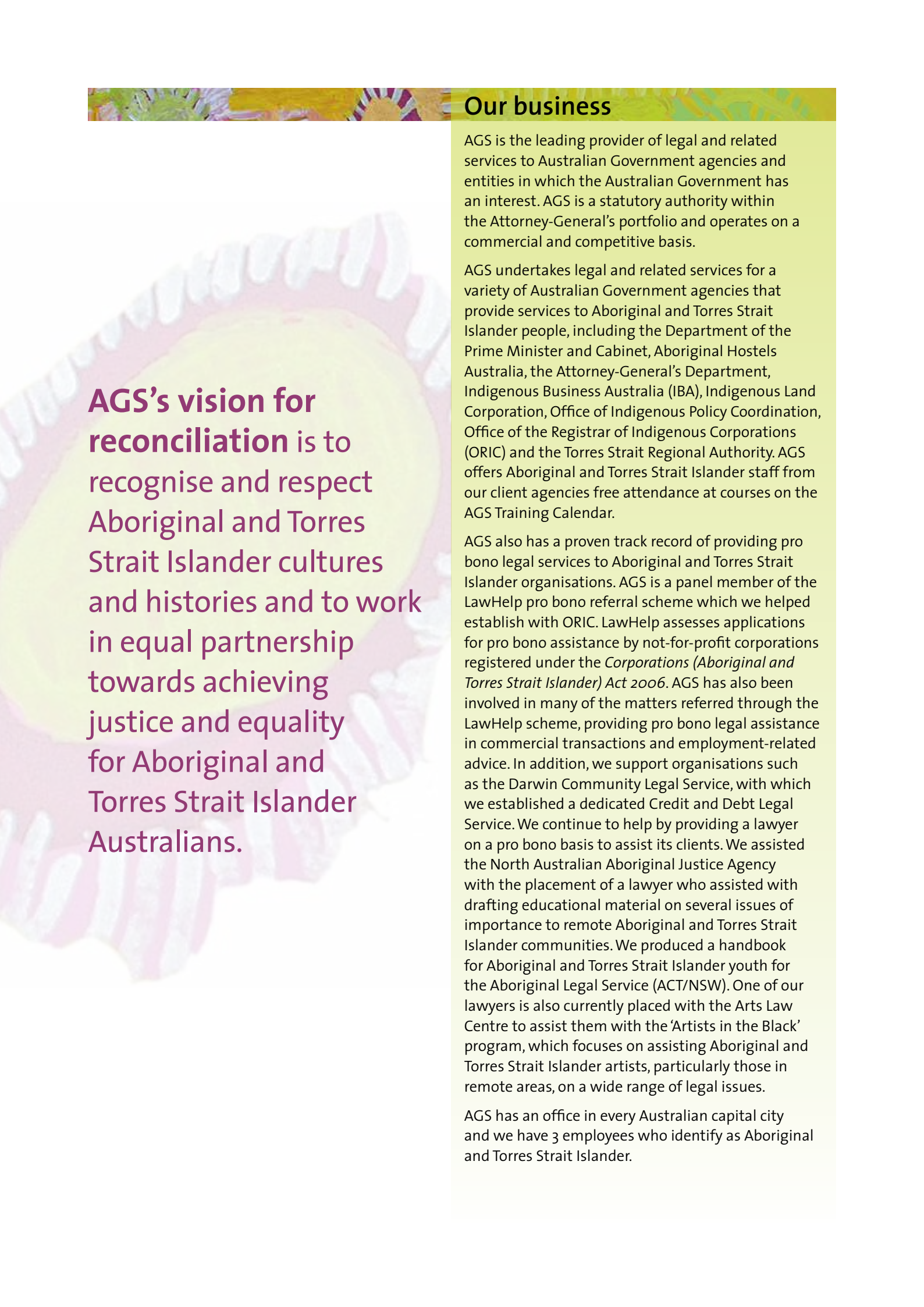
Reconciliation
ACTION PLAN
INNOVATE RAP



Emma Nungarrayi lived at Papunya for many years and is recognised as a member of the Papunya Artists Movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Emma now lives in Alice Springs and painted with Ngurratjuta from when it first opened in 2004 until 2012. Emma is from Central Mt Wedge and holds the sacred and secret law from that country she calls Karrayarra.

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.





Our business

AGS's vision for reconciliation is to recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories and to work in equal partnership towards achieving justice and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

AGS is the leading provider of legal and related services to Australian Government agencies and entities in which the Australian Government has an interest. AGS is a statutory authority within the Attorney-General's portfolio and operates on a commercial and competitive basis.

AGS undertakes legal and related services for a variety of Australian Government agencies that provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Aboriginal Hostels Australia, the Attorney-General's Department, Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), Indigenous Land Corporation, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) and the Torres Strait Regional Authority. AGS offers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from our client agencies free attendance at courses on the AGS Training Calendar.

AGS also has a proven track record of providing pro bono legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. AGS is a panel member of the LawHelp pro bono referral scheme which we helped establish with ORIC. LawHelp assesses applications for pro bono assistance by not-for-profit corporations registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*. AGS has also been involved in many of the matters referred through the LawHelp scheme, providing pro bono legal assistance in commercial transactions and employment-related advice. In addition, we support organisations such as the Darwin Community Legal Service, with which we established a dedicated Credit and Debt Legal Service. We continue to help by providing a lawyer on a pro bono basis to assist its clients. We assisted the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency with the placement of a lawyer who assisted with drafting educational material on several issues of importance to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We produced a handbook for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth for the Aboriginal Legal Service (ACT/NSW). One of our lawyers is also currently placed with the Arts Law Centre to assist them with the 'Artists in the Black' program, which focuses on assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, particularly those in remote areas, on a wide range of legal issues.

AGS has an office in every Australian capital city and we have 3 employees who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Our RAP

AGS first made a commitment to reconciliation on 13 February 2009. We developed our first RAP during 2009 and launched it in January 2010. Our first RAP focused on raising the awareness of reconciliation among our employees and providing pro bono assistance to registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations.

AGS's RAP Steering Committee is chaired by one of our Senior Executive Lawyers, Denise Saunders, who is also our Indigenous Champion, with representatives from other parts of our practice including one Indigenous lawyer. We have 2 external Indigenous members – Ms Lydia Miller, Executive Director, Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Arts, Australia Council, and Dr Asmi Wood from the Law School, Australian National University.

Our RAP is championed within AGS by our RAP Steering Committee, our CEO and senior executives and by Reconciliation Working Groups in our larger offices.

► Relationships

Building strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is important to AGS because it engenders a sense of justice and equity which resonates with our role as a prime provider of legal services to the Government. It also fosters recognition of cultural diversity and promotes a culture of inclusion within our workplace.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1 The AGS RAP Steering Committee will continue to actively monitor RAP development, including implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	Chair of RAP Steering Committee	By end March and September each year of the RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP Steering Committee oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP. • Meet at least twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.
2 AGS will celebrate National Reconciliation Week by providing opportunities for all employees to engage in activities that promote a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.	Chair of RAP Steering Committee	27 May – 3 June each year of the RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise at least one AGS event for staff to attend in each AGS Office during Reconciliation Week each year. • Advertise all events that are occurring during the week within AGS nationally.
3 AGS will continue to actively provide pro bono legal services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	National Manager, Pro Bono Services	June 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities identified to do pro bono work for LawHelp and other not-for-profit organisations that work to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
4 AGS will offer free places at AGS external training programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.	National Training Manager	June 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise the offer of free places to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in our marketing material.
5 AGS will encourage its employees to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by holding fundraising for things such as Indigenous Literacy, Fred Hollows Foundation for Indigenous eye health program, etc.	Chair of RAP Steering Committee	June 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a fundraising event to raise awareness of the issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people twice a year.

▶ Respect

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture, land and history is important to AGS's business because it underpins successful working relationships and enhances our ability to understand what our clients' needs are and to achieve effective outcomes for our clients.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1 AGS will engage employees in understanding the protocols around Acknowledgment of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies.	Chair of RAP Steering Committee	June 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, implement and communicate a protocol document for our organisation. • Identify when it is appropriate at significant events for a Welcome to Country from a Traditional Owner to be included. • Ensure traditional custodians are acknowledged on our external and internal websites. • Ensure traditional custodians are acknowledged when AGS hosts public events.
2 AGS will engage employees in cultural learning to increase understanding and appreciation of different cultural backgrounds in order to lay the foundation for other RAP actions to be achieved.	National HR Manager and Chair of RAP Steering Committee	June 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and pilot a cultural awareness training strategy for our organisation. In particular, provide opportunities for RAP Steering Committee members, RAP Champions, HR managers and other key leadership to participate in training.
3 AGS will provide opportunities for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to engage with their culture and community through NAIDOC Week events.	National HR Manager and Chair of RAP Steering Committee	July 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review HR policies and procedures to ensure staff can participate in NAIDOC Week events. • Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in local NAIDOC Week events.
4 AGS will create a culturally welcoming workplace.	CEO	July 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork and provide a profile on the art on Reconciliation@AGS. • Purchase artwork from ethical traders. • Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in all AGS Offices.
5 AGS will increase the number of library acquisitions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters.	CEO and National Manager, Library Services	June 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase 5 new titles a year.
6 AGS will ensure that <i>Koori Mail</i> and <i>National Indigenous Times</i> is available in each office and the online versions on Reconciliation@AGS.	CEO and National Manager, Library Services	June 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspapers are available in offices. • Ensure intranet page is up to date.

► Opportunities

Providing employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and pro bono legal and related services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations are the main ways AGS can promote reconciliation and cultural diversity in its workforce.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1 AGS will investigate opportunities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities.	National HR Manager	June 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples applying for employment with AGS. Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies. Consider different approaches to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within AGS (this may include training pathways, apprenticeships, internships, cadetships, work experience).
2 AGS will investigate opportunities to increase supplier diversity within our organisation.	Chair of RAP Steering Committee	June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure there are no procurement policies that are a barrier to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses supplying AGS. Investigate becoming a member of AIMSC or partnering with a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chamber of Commerce. Educate staff about using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Aim to develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business during the course of the RAP.
3 AGS will offer specific and tailored professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.	CEO	June 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider if AGS employees will attend the Indigenous Legal Conference each year to increase their professional contacts and assist their career development.
4 AGS will offer specific career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law graduates into AGS.	CEO	September 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsor an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law student at the University of NSW in Semester 2 each year if this program continues.
5 AGS will encourage its employees to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by holding fundraising for things such as Indigenous Literacy, Fred Hollows Foundation for Indigenous eye health program, etc.	Chair of RAP Steering Committee/ National HR Manager	December 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with other portfolio agencies to put mentoring arrangements in place.
6 AGS will actively seek opportunities for providing pro bono legal assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations or to not-for-profit organisations which support Indigenous communities.	National Manager, Pro Bono Services	June 2014, 2015, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase pro bono legal hours to Indigenous corporations or to not-for-profit organisations which support Indigenous communities.

► Tracking progress and reporting

<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Target</i>
1 AGS will report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the Annual Impact Measurement Report.	Chair of RAP Steering Committee	September 2014, 2015, 2016	• Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.

Contacts details

Denise Saunders, Indigenous Champion and Chair of RAP Steering Committee

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Emma Daniels, *Karrinyarra (Central Mt Wedge)* 2013, (section) acrylic on canvas 90 x 30cm,
Copyright the artist, courtesy Tangentyere Artists, reproduced with permission.