

Reconciliation Action Plan July 2014 to June 2017



Attorney-General's
Department



Government of South Australia
Attorney-General's Department





Chief Executive's Foreword

The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) reflects the ongoing commitment that our Department has to acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal peoples as South Australia's First Peoples.

On 4 February 2014, I joined with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, fellow Chief Executives and Reconciliation Australia to launch our Reconciliation Action Plans, including the first AGD Reconciliation Action Plan.

In the time since our first RAP was launched, we have taken significant steps to promote reconciliation within the Department but there is still much more to be done.

I am committed to ensuring that the Attorney-General's Department is an inclusive and culturally safe place for Aboriginal people to work. Our services to the community also need to be delivered with respect for Aboriginal peoples' culture, land and history, whether we are developing laws and policies, negotiating native title arrangements, advocating and protecting peoples' rights, or providing advice to businesses and consumers.

This Department realises it needs to work hard to build trust and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal South Australians, and we will make it happen. I'm certain all our people will ensure that this plan is not just a piece of paper but a promise that will lead to genuine results.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rick Persse', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rick Persse
Chief Executive
Attorney-General's Department



Artwork

The Attorney-General's Department commissioned Adelaide artist Paul Herzich to provide the cover artwork. The design reflects the Ripple Effect Principle; to evoke the AGD with a sense of connection to people through the development and engagement of good 2-way communication. The centre of each set of ripples has been located to represent the state's metropolitan, regional and outback communities. The colour arrangement for each set of ripples proposes to be a mix of the state colours of blue, red and yellow with the Aboriginal colours of black, red and yellow to strengthen connections.

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Our vision for reconciliation

The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) acknowledges and respects Aboriginal peoples as the State's First Peoples and nations; and recognises Aboriginal peoples as Traditional Owners and occupants of lands and waters in South Australia.

We recognise that:

- Aboriginal spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices come from traditional lands and waters
- maintaining cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws are of ongoing importance; and that
- Aboriginal people have made and continue to make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the State.

We acknowledge that the Aboriginal peoples have endured past injustice and dispossession of their traditional lands and waters and the effects of such injustice and dispossession today.

The AGD acknowledges the unacceptable over-representation of Aboriginal peoples as victims and offenders in the criminal justice system and is committed to working with Aboriginal peoples to overcome disadvantage in law and justice.

The AGD vision for reconciliation is for healing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, as a first step towards the realisation of an inclusive, safe and fair South Australia for all.

Our business

The AGD provides a legal infrastructure for South Australia that is just, equitable, and robust, with a focus on prevention. The AGD promotes fair, timely and easy access to justice through the provision of legal, civil, prosecutorial and legislative services. The AGD fosters community safety and wellbeing by advocating for and protecting the rights of individuals, in particular, the most vulnerable in the community, and promoting cultural diversity and equality.

By working with businesses to achieve better compliance, the AGD promotes a fair, secure and balanced marketplace, where consumers are protected and know their rights.

The AGD's mission is to foster justice and harmony through sound laws, protecting people's rights, and strengthening communities.

The Attorney-General's Department works in a number of areas that are particularly important to Aboriginal South Australians including:

- Native title negotiations
- Consumer awareness
- Complaint handling
- Working to remove discrimination
- Drafting laws and regulations
- Working to address over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

As at 30 June 2014, the Attorney-General's Department had 1494 staff including 21 Aboriginal employees.

Our RAP

This RAP was developed to reflect the AGD's commitment to reconciliation and equal opportunity by focusing on developing cultural competency, building awareness and supporting local networks, and providing increased opportunities and support to Aboriginal peoples. It builds on the achievements and learnings of the first AGD RAP 2013-14. Amongst the achievements of the first RAP was the establishment of a RAP Committee, a successful National Reconciliation Week event was held for staff, Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols were developed and the Executive Management Group signed a Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation. The number of Aboriginal employees in the Department increased reflecting the impact of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Retention Strategy, however we recognise that there is much more to be done.

The AGD July 2014-June 2017 RAP was developed by the AGD's Reconciliation Action Plan Committee in consultation with our staff and the AGD Executive Management Group. Chaired by the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, the AGD Reconciliation Action Plan Committee includes representatives from Human Resources, the Crown Solicitor's Office, Consumer and Business Services, Public Trustee, SafeWork SA, Medical Panels SA, the Office of the Chief Executive, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and Policy, Projects and Technology. The Committee membership includes Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff as well as a broad range of staff levels, from very senior to trainee level staff.

The Reconciliation Committee will monitor and support the continuous improvement of the RAP, and will report and provide feedback on progress made against objectives for the life of the RAP. In addition, the AGD Reconciliation Action Plan Committee will continue to support and positively promote the RAP.

All AGD staff have responsibility to contribute to the RAP.

Relationships

In the Apology to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on 13 February 2008, the Prime Minister acknowledged that all governments have a special responsibility to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in order to rebuild the trust lost through 'the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss'.

Premier Weatherill has also placed special emphasis on community engagement and conversation – involving people in the decisions that affect their lives and giving them a genuine role in making such decisions.

Strengthening relationships with Aboriginal peoples is important to the Attorney-General's Department as it is critical to the success of many of its functions including negotiating native title, advocating and protecting rights, consumer awareness and the development of laws and policies.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1. The AGD RAP Committee is informed by the expertise and advice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including AGD staff, to support the effectiveness of the RAP.	Executive Director, Policy, Projects and Technology (ED, PPT)	By June each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP Committee continues to meet at least four times per year. • RAP Committee representatives meet with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at least twice per year.
2. AGD celebrates reconciliation events and milestones throughout the year including National Reconciliation Week (NRW) to engage staff in ongoing conversations about reconciliation.	ED, PPT and Director, Human Resources	<p>By end January each year</p> <p>By end may each year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a calendar of events for the AGD intranet. • Organise at least one internal event each year and participate in at least one external event during National Reconciliation Week (NRW).
3. Identify and document current links across all AGD business units with Aboriginal representatives, communities and organisations.	Commissioner for Equal Opportunity	By end February each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A map of current links is maintained and relevant contact information of all links captured. • This map is made available to AGD staff on the intranet and through other channels.
4. Engage proactively to develop new and strengthened relationships with Aboriginal representatives, communities and organisations.	ED, PPT Commissioner for Equal Opportunity	<p>By June 2015</p> <p>By June each year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project templates are updated to include reference to engaging with Aboriginal South Australians. • Executive Management Group meets with Aboriginal representatives at least once per year.



Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
5. Strategies are developed and implemented to enhance existing connections with regional and remote areas.	Commissioner for Equal Opportunity	By June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing from the map of current links that was developed in 2013/14, the RAP Committee develops and implements strategies that enhance relationships with Aboriginal people in rural and remote communities.
6. Communicate stories across AGD regarding AGD's action and efforts taken to support Aboriginal people, to engage AGD staff in reconciliation.	Director, Office of the Chief Executive	By June each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least three positive communications distributed annually. • At least two 'lunch and learn' or similar sessions are held per year.
7. Develop a three year AGD Reconciliation Action Plan for July 2017- June 2020.	ED, PPT	End June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a review of the 2014-2017 RAP to identify key achievements and lessons learnt for inclusion in AGD's next RAP. • Three year plan drafted.



Respect

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture, land, and history helps AGD attract and retain Aboriginal staff and provides the foundation for AGD to build relationships in order to effectively carry out its core business activities including:

- Native title negotiations
- Consumer awareness
- Complaint handling
- Working to remove discrimination
- Drafting laws and regulations
- Working to address over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1. Engage employees in understanding the protocols around Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies.	Director, Office for the Chief Executive	June 2015 By June each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country posters are displayed in 20 meeting rooms or public areas. • AGD staff are reminded of Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols via email. • Identify at least one significant AGD event each year for which a Welcome to Country from a Traditional Owner will be organised.
2. Engage employees in Aboriginal cultural learning to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures in order to lay the foundation for other RAP actions to be achieved.	Director, Human Resources Director, Office of the Chief Executive	By end June each year March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure and increase the percentage of AGD staff who have participated in Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training each year. • Target training specifically to new staff and managers working with Aboriginal staff and encourage for all other staff. • Make Lawyers' Protocols for Dealing with Aboriginal Clients in South Australia available to AGD law staff via the intranet.
3. Support the Recognise campaign for constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	ED, PPT Business Unit heads	March 2015 March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Recognise network in AGD. • Encourage Business Units to discuss the Recognise Campaign at staff meetings.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
4. Provide opportunities for AGD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to engage with cultures and communities.	Director, Human Resources	July each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a reminder to business unit heads and Aboriginal staff regarding options to access leave entitlements to participate in cultural events including local NAIDOC Week events.
	Director, Office of the Chief Executive	By July each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote NAIDOC Week events on the AGD intranet.
5. AGD will create a work environment that promotes and celebrates Aboriginal cultures.	Director, Office of the Chief Executive	June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install at least six Aboriginal artworks in prominent locations. • Explore honouring Aboriginal people or places through naming meeting rooms.
6. AGD to implement actions under the national anti-racism strategy.	Director, Human Resources	June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to EMG is submitted.



Opportunities

Increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities is important to the Attorney-General's Department in pursuing reconciliation and effectively undertaking its core business activities including:

- Native title negotiations
- Consumer awareness
- Complaint handling
- Working to remove discrimination
- Drafting laws and regulations
- Working to address over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1. Implement actions with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Retention and Employment Strategy (ARES) to employ and retain Aboriginal employees within AGD.	Director, Human Resources and Business Unit heads	By June each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards South Australia's Strategic Plan Target to Increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the South Australian public sector, spread across all classifications and agencies, to 2% by 2014 and to maintain or better those levels through to 2020. • Provide report on progress of ARES actions to Executive Management Group.
2. Investigate opportunities to support Aboriginal businesses.	Commissioner for Consumer Affairs ED, PPT	June 2015 June each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationship with at least an additional two Aboriginal businesses. • Promote Aboriginal owned businesses to AGD Business Unit Heads at least once per year.
3. Work with the Legal Services Commission and the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement to improve services relating to wills including funeral and burial arrangements.	Public Trustee	December 2015 December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PT to hold at least four meetings with stakeholders to develop and discuss strategies to improve wills in metropolitan Aboriginal communities. • PT to work with stakeholders to develop strategy for non-metropolitan areas.
4. Take steps to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system.	ED, PPT	June 2016 At least six-monthly July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with Aboriginal communities are formed to deliver at least two Justice Reinvestment projects. • Updates on Justice Reinvestment projects provided to SA Government through the Chief Executives Group on Aboriginal Affairs. • Justice Reinvestment State-wide steering group is established with government and community representation.

Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1. Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the Annual Impact Measurement Report.	ED, PPT	September each year July each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP progress is reported each year in the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. Reconciliation Committee Report to the Executive Management Group and recommend any further targets.

Contact details

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