



Department of Indigenous Affairs Reconciliation Action Plan ***Annual Progress Report for the Year 2008***

Our vision for Reconciliation

The Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) will lead action to improve life opportunities for Indigenous Western Australians.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan for 2008

In 2007 the Western Australian Government announced all State Government agencies would develop Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs). DIA is working closely with Reconciliation Australia (RA) and State Government agencies to achieve this commitment.

DIA registered its RAP with Reconciliation Australia in early 2008. Under three key headings – Relationships, Respect and Opportunities – we identified 19 actions we would undertake.

Our RAP focuses on ways we can help improve economic and social outcomes for Indigenous Western Australians.

DIA supports Indigenous people in sharing equally in the benefits of Western Australian society and economy. DIA believes that by working together, Government can play an important role in achieving this. DIA supports all State Government agencies developing a RAP by providing advice and recommendations.

The DIA continues to engage with Indigenous people and all levels of Government to improve service delivery and developing of policy and programs to deliver sustainable economic, environmental and social benefits to Indigenous communities.

The department believes RAPs are vital to the process of achieving these goals.

Summary and Key Learnings:

DIA continues to lead Reconciliation in Western Australia through:

- The provision of support to other Government agencies in the development of their Reconciliation Action Plans;
- Delivery of cultural awareness training to Government and non-government agencies across Western Australia;
- Providing Reconciliation Grants for key initiatives; and
- Managing the Partnership, Acceptance, Learning and Sharing (PALS) program.

The DIA RAP has identified specific targets for achieving these goals. The implementation of DIA's first Reconciliation Action Plan has been a rewarding experience. A working group has monitored progress towards the goals in the department's RAP. The group met quarterly and ensured that the majority actions were achieved. Once begun, the group discovered some actions were too limited and in achieving them, exceeded expectations.

Our successes:

DIA committed itself to 19 actions, broken down to 28 targets. It is on track to achieve eight of these, has achieved six more and has exceeded the expectations of nine, leaving only five targets unachieved.

Reconciliation Action Plans

In May 2007, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs announced that all Western Australian Government agencies were to develop RAPs by the end of 2007 and that DIA was to facilitate this process.

As well as its own successes, DIA provided a leadership role in coordinating WA State Government agencies in the development of their RAPs.

PALS (Partnership, Acceptance, Learning and Sharing)

The Partnership, Acceptance, Learning, Sharing (PALS) program is a partnership between DIA and BHP Billiton to encourage school students to learn about Reconciliation and to spread the message to their communities. BHP have recently committed funding for the program for a further 3 years.

Participation in the program in 2008 has increased 100 per cent from 2007, with projects submitted ranging from breakfast clubs to living libraries and gardens.




PALS was a huge success in 2008 with more than 8,180 students and 215 teachers participating in the program. 77 schools applied for grants and 55 schools submitted their projects to the PALS Awards. The program has improved greatly from the 50 grant applications and 34 schools entering the Awards last year.




In 2009 we have set a target of 80 schools submitting a PALS project.

Challenges:

- The working group found that the department needed a better consultation process to identify the actions. This will ensure the department has the capability and resources to work toward achieving the action.
- The working group did not adequately consult with regional staff about the RAP process. This was due to their location and inability to attend the working group meetings. This will be revised to allow for regional consultation.

DIA looks forward to refreshing our RAP for the 2009-2010 period and the new challenges this will bring.

EXCEEDED 	ACHIEVED 	ON TRACK 	NOT ACHIEVED 
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Relationships				
Effective consultation and engagement between Government, non-government organisation and the Indigenous community is essential in promoting and achieving reconciliation.				
Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	Stop Light
Establish a working group of Indigenous and non Indigenous staff members to monitor and report to Corporate Executive on progress of implementing the RAP	Working Group to meet at least 4 times a year to review RAP implementation and report on progress.	4 meetings held with good attendance throughout 2008	Staff members in the working group were not able to commit to every meeting. A more consistent approach will be adopted to ensure the working group has regular attendance. A representative from each directorate will provide new actions, additionally a person will join the working group to monitor progress of these actions, allowing the responsibility to be shared within each directorate.	
Lead the coordination of RAPs by all State agencies in collaboration with RA.	Number of state agencies with RAPs registered with RA	DIA continues to support and guide agencies to develop RAPs.	More than forty RAPs have been approved by RA with the support of DIA. A DIA officer provides advice and contacts to facilitate the appropriate development of RAPs. Some agencies have not shown interest in developing a RAP. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs' position of RAPs needs to be determined and if appropriate the development of RAPs enforced rather than recommended. This will ensure all State Government agencies in WA are working to achieve Reconciliation.	
Influence the introduction of a new category in the Premier's Awards for the most successful Reconciliation initiative.	Letter to Premier drafted for approval with suggestions for new category and criteria.	Target was not met due to timeframe and change of government in 2008.	DIA sponsored the new category "Indigenous Service Award" at the Regional Achievement and Community Awards in 2008. Introducing a new category in the Premier's Awards during the change of Government presented challenges and an alternative was achieved.	

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Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	Stop Light
Promote and market the DIA PALS (Partnership, Acceptance, Learning and Sharing) School Reconciliation Program.	Annual Survey of teachers and students on behaviour change resulting from their PALS projects.	The PALS annual survey was assessed for improvement and to better align with substantive equality, and delivered on time. 34 teachers and 545 students responded to the survey, an increase of 127% and 138% respectively from 2007 respondents.	The changes made to the survey greatly improved the information gained from respondents. More changes could be made to further improve the survey and to ensure the survey is suitable for all respondents. This would include a survey that kindergarten students or ESL students could easily complete.	●
	Annual PALS awards presentation at Wardarnji festival.	16 schools were presented with prizes at the PALS Awards at the Wardarnji Festival on 15 November 2008. PALS had a big presence at the festival, with a PALS marquee and bush tucker, face painting, dance workshops, archaeological dig, colouring in stations and a treasure hunt.	Feedback from organisers and participants at the festival has been very positive. The festival attracts a large number of attendees and is a very effective way to promote PALS to the wider community.	●
	Annual report to education stakeholders and sponsoring partner BHP Billiton Iron Ore.	Annual report prepared and provided to stakeholders. The report found that in 2008 it is estimated that over 8,180 students and around 215 teachers from 91 schools were directly involved in PALS through projects, Awards and regional and Ambassador workshops.	The report relies on the results of the annual survey and takes time to compile. Future surveys to be conducted prior to November annually to have reported completed and with sponsor by start of the new year.	●

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Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	Stop Light
<p>Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders reconciliation news, events and achievements to staff, external stakeholders, State agencies, communities and media via the DIA's publication, Tarwangin.</p>	<p>26 Publications a year. Tarwangin is distributed to all DIA staff members.</p> <p>Tarwangin is distributed to external stakeholders with increased marketing of the newsletter to new stakeholders and communities.</p>	<p>Publications ongoing and on time.</p> <p>Publications are ongoing and on time.</p>	<p>It was more appropriate to distribute one publication each month. Stories shared information on funding opportunities, Government announcements, new initiatives, departmental news and items of specific interest to Indigenous affairs.</p> <p>More than 1000 subscribers receive Tarwangin and all staff are notified when the latest edition is available on the website. The newsletter is promoted through word of mouth with external contributors sending information for inclusion directly to DIA.</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p>
<p>Provide IT equipment that is no longer required by the DIA to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations.</p>	<p>Report on the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations assisted each year.</p>	<p>Ongoing donation of equipment.</p>	<p>Very successful initiative with six Indigenous communities benefiting from the computer donation program.</p>	<p>●</p>

Respect

The DIA recognises the continuing rights and responsibilities of Indigenous people as the first peoples of Western Australia and will actively promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	
Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through collating and maintaining oral histories, expanding genealogical databases and enabling re-unification and family reunions.	6 community information sessions held each year.	8 information sessions held in 2008 with good attendance.	Information sessions were very well received in both metropolitan and regional locations. Sessions were held at community events e.g, Wardarnji Aboriginal Cultural Festival, NAIDOC events and Seniors Week. Photographs from different regions are available for family members to view. The information sessions provide community members the opportunity to find out where their family records are held and how to gain access to the information.	●
Evaluate the DIA grant programs for Heritage and Culture, reconciliation and National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC).	Advertising of grants during the first quarter of 2008, closing March 2008. Future grants offered have measurable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Grant now closing April 08. Funding increased to \$160K Each appl up from \$5K to \$20K Grants process updated and outcomes will be measured.	Successful 2008 Grant program with 17 grants approved to budget for a diverse range of reconciliation initiatives. The existing grants process has been reviewed as there has been an increased demand in direct sponsorship requests. In the future the grants will be replaced by sponsorship and will promoted through word of mouth and informal networks. This has been identified as more effective than the grants process in 2008.	●
Promote DIA's commitment to substantive equality on email signatures.	New signature block for emails introduced and used by 100% of staff members.	Signature block implemented.	The email signature tag demonstrated DIA's commitment by state and federal governments to Closing the Gap. The tag adopted by DIA "Advancing the Apology" refers to the National Apology February 13th 2008. The Working Group exist to monitor progress ; not responsible for achieving the actions. Stronger consultation and collaboration are required for the department to demonstrate commitment to advancing reconciliation.	●

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Develop and implement protocols for 'welcome to country' and/or recognition of traditional owners during events, speeches and flying of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural respect protocols developed.</p> <p>Promotion and dissemination of protocols to other agencies and organisations.</p> <p>Traditional peoples for all regions are identified and recognised at all key DIA events.</p>	Fact sheets being produced on a range of Indigenous protocols	<p>DIA refers requests about protocols to those developed by other agencies and organisations.</p> <p>DIA as the lead agency for Indigenous Affairs in Western Australia is now producing fact sheets on Welcome to Country protocols for distribution.</p> <p>All DIA hosted events commence with a Welcome to Country ceremony by the appropriate Elder. All speeches given by DIA staff and Minister acknowledge the traditional owners.</p> <p>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are displayed at special departmental meetings and events.</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p>
Install a plaque at all the DIA offices recognising the agency's commitment to reconciliation and acknowledgement of traditional owners.	Plaques located in all the DIA office reception areas.	<p>Working Group to decide on format/wording of plaques.</p> <p>Budget to be determined.</p> <p>Part budget could be sourced from RA funds.</p>	<p>DIA now recognise the need for stronger consultation with regional offices and Indigenous staff.</p> <p>Due to financial constraints DIA is focusing on core business.</p>	●
Increase staff awareness of the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia through cultural awareness training.	<p>All staff to have completed cultural awareness training by 2009.</p> <p>Evaluation completed by attendees to measure positive feedback.</p>	<p>On track with 60 staff members (head office/regional) attending training.</p> <p>Evaluations from staff and external participants received.</p>	<p>Due to the high staff turnover it has been difficult to ensure all staff are sufficiently trained.</p> <p>Additionally, it is recognised there is only one staff member with the skills to conduct the training. This needs to be reviewed due to the large workload this creates for one person. Other Indigenous staff are able to provide training under the instruction of the Senior Indigenous Advisor.</p> <p>Evaluations are completed immediately following each training session.</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p>

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<p>Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, learning and achievements with opportunities for staff to participate in events.</p> <p>The DIA to celebrate NAIDOC week with its own staff celebration and attended by Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff members.</p>	<p>Report on opportunities provided and cultural leave allowances to staff to participate in events.</p> <p>Number of staff participating in events.</p> <p>100% of Perth staff invited to attend NAIDOC week celebrations at Head Office.</p>	<p>Teams to be formed to work on the various celebrations throughout the year (e.g. NAIDOC). Working Teams to be made up of Indigenous and non Indigenous staff.</p> <p>All staff invited.</p>	<p>HR needs to report on cultural leave allowances.</p> <p>100% of Perth and Midland offices were invited to attend celebrations in Perth Office foyer.</p> <p>The event was held in the foyer of the Perth office and people passing by joined the celebrations.</p> <p>Feedback from staff indicated future events include community members and stakeholders.</p> <p>Regional staff should be enabled to celebrate NAIDOC Week which will be considered in the future.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">●</p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>

Opportunities

The DIA recognises the valuable contribution which Indigenous people bring to the Department through cultural knowledge, networks and skills. The DIA will promote opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, development and retention within the Department and public sector.

Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	
Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific employment targets.	Establishment of a measurable target to increase Indigenous employment within the DIA on an annual basis.	State Govt requirement – targets in place.	DIA have exceeded the 3% target set by the State Government. DIA percentage of Indigenous employees is 31%. DIA targets for 2009-2010 will be established and how this will be achieved.	●
The DIA formally respects and values the specific skills and abilities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees contribute to the Department.	Annual survey of Indigenous employees to develop skills database. Survey feedback identifies any areas of disadvantage or suggestions for improved inclusiveness of Indigenous employees.	Formal skills are managed through Employee Performance Agreement (EPA) monitoring.	DIA will acknowledge Indigenous staff, their skills and abilities in a statement outlining the department's principles.	●
Conduct an evaluation of the DIA's traineeship and graduate intake programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	Evaluation Completed. Re-structured programs to be implemented in 2009, together with the establishment of Indigenous employment targets.	Evaluation of traineeship program completed.	Evaluation of the traineeship program demonstrates DIA has a commitment to continuation of the program. DIA needs to consider 'post completion' placement opportunities within the current organisational structure. DIA will sign up to National Indigenous Cadetship Project (NICP) in 2009.	●

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Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	
<p>Invest in the professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within our Department, through training, mentoring and leadership development opportunities.</p> <p>Evaluate the Department's mentor program and implement a revised program.</p>	<p>100% of Indigenous staff at levels 6 & 7 offered the opportunity to participate in DIA mid level leadership program in Annual Report.</p> <p>Evaluate mentor program</p> <p>Offer mentor program to 100% Indigenous staff members, with targets set for participation in 2009.</p> <p>Conduct two Indigenous leadership development workshops per year.</p>	<p>No internal mid-level leadership program run during 2008, given ongoing 'change' process and restricted funding capacity (1 Indigenous staff member currently undertaking DPC Leadership program)</p> <p>Regional Skills Initiative available in 2009. DIA to consider Indigenous regional staff to apply.</p> <p>DIA not currently positioned to offer Indigenous Leadership workshops, but canvassing access to external providers for same.</p>	<p>Retention initiatives need to be more robustly developed and secure an 'absolute' funding commitment</p> <p>Scope of Mentor Program to be revaluated and submission presented to Corpex on way forward.</p> <p>DIA does not have to capacity to deliver Leadership workshops in-house. External providers to be identified.</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p>

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Offer secondment opportunities for the DIA staff to work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.	<p>Increased support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation through secondment and skill sharing and establishing targets for 2009.</p> <p>Report on number of staff participants in Annual Report with a summary of experience.</p>	<p>1 DIA staff member seconded to South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council.</p> <p>Report on success of program in 2008 annual report.</p>	Successful initiative with DIA and SWALSC meeting quarterly for project update.	<p>●</p> <p>●</p>
Initiate discussions with the Department of Premier and Cabinet to undertake a series of public information sessions on the Indigenous recruitment program for entry level positions in the metropolitan area, and extension to regional areas.	<p>Negotiations held with the Department of Premier and Cabinet.</p> <p>Develop a proposal for information sessions in the metropolitan area.</p> <p>Develop a program to rollout to major regional locations.</p>	Public information sessions are currently run by DPC.	DIA to liaise more closely with central agency to determine alignment between agency specific and broader Indigenous recruitment objectives.	●