



# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2008 - 2010



Department of Indigenous Affairs  
Government of Western Australia



Reconciliation Australia  
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANS

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS



The Department of Indigenous Affairs is committed to ensuring that Indigenous Western Australians live long, healthy and fulfilling lives. The Department recognises and values Indigenous land, heritage and culture and supports Indigenous people in their needs and aspirations to share equally in the benefits of Western Australian society and economy.

Above:  
Working together towards  
Partnership Acceptance Learning and Sharing - PALS



## Message from the Acting Director General Department of Indigenous Affairs

I am proud to present the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). As the lead agency for Indigenous affairs in Western Australia, every person working with the Department has an advocacy role in promoting equality, mutual respect and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

DIA is working with other agencies, organisations and communities to overcome disadvantage and close the gap - particularly in the areas of health, housing, education, law, justice and employment. This action will enhance the life opportunities for Indigenous people.

Reconciliation is about mutual respect, a willingness to listen and learn from each other. Indigenous culture is rich and enduring and it is essential to build a greater understanding and awareness of Indigenous culture and the value it can add to our workplace and our community as a whole.

This RAP identifies the steps DIA will take to achieve improved economic and social outcomes for Indigenous Western Australians. The development of the Plan is an important milestone, but the effective implementation and achievement of the outcomes will be the measure of our success.

A handwritten signature in orange ink that reads "Jackie Tang". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters being larger and more prominent.

Jackie Tang  
Acting Director General

31 January 2008

## Department of Indigenous Affairs Reconciliation Principles

The Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) is committed to the following principles:

- Recognise the continuing rights and responsibilities of Aboriginal people as the first peoples of Western Australia, including traditional ownership and connection to land and waters;
- Address issues which affect Aboriginal communities, families and individuals at a local and regional level recognising the need for flexibility;
- That trust and mutual respect are integral to working effectively with Aboriginal communities;
- Promote capacity building within communities to empower individuals and foster change; and
- Progress genuine partnerships through effective engagement, consultation and communication.



Above:  
'Playground' by Pauline Moran  
*Purchased for the 2007 PALS Schools Reconciliation Awards*

## Our Reconciliation Plan (RAP)

The DIA will establish a Working Group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff members to oversee the implementation, ongoing development and evaluation of our RAP. Progress reports will be provided to the DIA's Corporate Executive every quarter. All staff have ownership of the RAP, under the leadership of the RAP Working Group and Corporate Executive.

This RAP has a timeframe of two years, 2008 - 2010. DIA will review the RAP annually and develop subsequent plans.

The DIA will report on RAP progress in our Annual Report and on the Reconciliation Australia website.

The DIA will be the lead agency in facilitating the development and registration of RAPs by other State agencies and will monitor their implementation.



State Government Reconciliation Action Plan Workshop, October 2007

Left to right:

*Danny Ford (A/Director Policy and Coordination - DIA)*

*Jackie Tang (A/Director General - DIA)*

*Hon Fred Chaney AO (Board Member - Reconciliation Australia)*

*Uncle Ben Taylor (Aboriginal Elder)*

*Jason Glanville (Program and Strategy Director - Reconciliation Australia)*

## Our approach to developing our RAP

In May 2007, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Hon. Michelle Roberts MLA, announced that all State Government agencies were to develop RAPs. The DIA is working closely with Reconciliation Australia and State Government agencies to achieve the Government's commitment.

The DIA's RAP is a living document and has been developed through extensive consultation with staff, both regional and Perth based. The process began with an internal focus group of Indigenous staff members to assemble the framework and include some actions. Further comprehensive consultation was facilitated through publishing the draft RAP on our intranet site, two presentations at Head Office, and discussion with Regional Managers for consultation at regional offices. The RAP has actions which the agency will achieve during 2008. These actions will be enhanced in successive years.



Above:  
Staff at the Department of Indigenous Affairs - Perth Office  
From left to right: Pam Thorley, Mary Cowley, Narelle Thorne, Shaye Hayden,  
Carlee Hedlam, Merindah Bairnsfather-Scott and Samantha Thorley

## 1. Relationships

Effective consultation and engagement between Government, non-government organisations and the Indigenous community is essential in promoting and achieving reconciliation.

Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Establish a Working Group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff members to monitor and report to Corporate Executive on progress of implementing the RAP.	Whole of Government Regional Coordination and Engagement	January 2008	Working Group to meet at least 4 times a year to review RAP implementation and report on progress.
Lead the coordination of RAPs by all State agencies in collaboration with Reconciliation Australia.	Regional Coordination and Engagement	June 2008	Number of state agencies with RAPs registered with Reconciliation Australia.
Influence the introduction of a new category in the Premier's Awards for the most successful Reconciliation initiative.	Public Affairs	2008 - Agreement	Discussions held with the Department of Premier and Cabinet regarding the introduction of a new Award category. Agreement achieved.
		2009 - Awards	RAP award included into Premiers Awards.
Promote and market the DIA PALS (Partnership, Acceptance, Learning and Sharing) School Reconciliation Program.	Public Affairs	October Annually	Annual survey of teachers and students on behaviour change resulting from their PALS project.
		November Annually	Annual PALS awards presentation at Wardarnji festival.
		January Annually	Annual report to education stakeholders and sponsoring partner BHP Billiton Iron Ore.
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.	Public Affairs	Fortnightly	26 publications a year. Tarwangin is distributed to all DIA staff members.  Tarwangin is distributed to external stakeholders, with increased marketing of the newsletter to new stakeholders and communities.
Provide IT equipment that is no longer required by the DIA to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations.	Information Management	Annual	Report on number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations assisted each year.

## 2. 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.

Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through collating and maintaining oral histories, expanding genealogical databases and enabling re-unifications and family reunions.	Aboriginal History Research Unit (AHRU)	Annual	6 community information sessions held each year.
Evaluate the DIA existing grant programs for Heritage and Culture, Reconciliation and National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC).	Regional Coordination and Engagement  Heritage and Culture	March 2008	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.
Promote DIA's commitment to substantive equality on email signatures.	Public Affairs  Heritage and Culture	March 2008	New signature block for emails introduced and used by 100% of staff members.
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.	Public Affairs  Aboriginal History Research Unit (AHRU)	June 2008	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural respect protocols developed.  Promotion and dissemination of protocols to other agencies and organisations.  Traditional peoples for all regions are identified and recognised at all key DIA events.
Install a plaque at all the DIA offices recognising the agency's commitment to reconciliation and acknowledgement of traditional owners.	Public Affairs  Heritage and Culture	March 2008	Plaques located in all the DIA office reception areas.
Increase staff awareness of the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia through cultural awareness training.	Workforce Management	Bi-annually commencing June 2007	All staff to have completed cultural awareness training by 2009.  Evaluation completed by attendees to measure positive feedback.
Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, learning and achievements with opportunities for staff to participate in events.  The DIA to celebrate NAIDOC week with its own staff celebration and attended by Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff members.	Public Affairs  Aboriginal History Research Unit (AHRU)  Heritage and Culture	Annually and when events are scheduled  6-13 July - Annually	Report on opportunities provided and cultural leave allowances for staff to participate in events.  Number of staff participating in events.  100% of Perth staff invited to attend NAIDOC week celebrations at Head Office.

### 3. 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.

Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific employment targets.	Workforce Management	December 2008	Establishment of a measurable target to increase Indigenous employment within the DIA on an annual basis.
The DIA formally respects and values the specific skills and abilities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees contribute to the Department.	Workforce Management	Annual survey commencing in 2008	Annual survey of Indigenous employees to develop skills database.  Survey feedback identifies any areas of disadvantage or suggestions for improved inclusiveness of Indigenous employees.
Conduct an evaluation of the DIA's traineeship and graduate intake programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	Workforce Management	December 2008  2009	Evaluation completed.  Re-structured programs to be implemented in 2009, together with the establishment of Indigenous employment targets.
Invest in the professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within our Department, through training, mentoring and leadership development opportunities.  Evaluate the Department's mentor program and implement a revised program.	Workforce Management	Ongoing June 2008  June 2008  January 2009  2008	100% of Indigenous staff at levels 6 & 7 offered the opportunity to participate in DIA mid level leadership program in Annual Report.  Evaluate mentor program.  Offer mentor program to 100% Indigenous staff members, with targets set for participation in 2009.  Conduct two Indigenous leadership development workshops per year.
Offer secondment opportunities for the DIA staff to work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.	Workforce Management	Jan - Dec 2008 Jan - Dec 2009	Increased support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations through secondment and skill sharing and establishing targets for 2009.  Report on number of staff participants in Annual Report with a summary of experience.
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.	Workforce Management	June 2008  December 2008  March 2009	Negotiations held with the Department of Premier and Cabinet.  Develop a proposal for information sessions in the metropolitan area.  Develop a program to rollout to major regional locations.

## 4. Tracking Progress and Reporting

Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Launch of the DIA's RAP by Minister for Indigenous Affairs.	Regional Coordination and Engagement Public Affairs	January 2008	RAP launched. 80% of the DIA Perth employees attend the launch.  Regional Managers successfully rollout to regional staff with local event.  Level of positive feedback from employees.
Publish the DIA's RAP on our website and the Reconciliation Australia website. Provide regular updates on implementation process.	Public Affairs	January 2008	RAP published and placed on the DIA and Reconciliation Australia website, reported on annually, and updated as actions completed.
Review and report on the current RAP and develop successive plans.	Working Group	January 2009  By June 2009	Report on the 2008 RAP in January 2009.  The new RAP developed and endorsed by December 2009.
Report regularly to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs on the State Government's contribution to Reconciliation and in particular on the development and implementation of State Government agencies' RAPs.	Regional Coordination and Engagement Public Affairs	By June 2008	Quarterly Ministerial briefing notes.  Each State Government agency to provide the DIA with reports of at least one effective Reconciliation initiative. The DIA will promote these initiatives to all agencies.





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