



Department of
Indigenous Affairs

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN



2010 - 2012

Advocacy. Equality. **Respect.** Understanding.





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Message from the Director General

Welcome to the Department of Indigenous Affairs' second Reconciliation Action Plan, a document that sits close to our heart.

As a comparatively small department, our role is to lead action that improves life opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and we hope to do this by example. We consider our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to be crucial to this, and we are proud to be part of a national approach to reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

After the successes and lessons learned from our RAP for 2008-2010, we looked closely at our initial goals and aspirations in the context of our work and our capacity and refined them to help create this refreshed RAP. Our RAP responds to our unique place in Western Australia, where we help to support the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their engagement with government and also provide and oversee the delivery of many government services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. This fact helps to explain the extensive range and number of actions in our RAP.

In the two years since our first RAP we have assisted a considerable number of Western Australian Government agencies in researching, drafting, writing and implementing, reporting and refreshing their plans. Underpinning this has been our partnership with Reconciliation Australia and our important work as an agent for the RAP program in Western Australia.

Through our RAP journey we have grown more sophisticated in our approach to reconciliation. However, at its core, the aim remains as it was at the start in 2008: to take actions that enhance relationships, respect and opportunities for mutual benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Western Australians.

We are proud to accept our roles of advocacy, and of promoting equality, respect and understanding between all people.

Patrick Walker

Director General

May 2010



... to take actions that enhance relationships, respect and opportunities for mutual benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Western Australians.





PALS DIA foyer display

Our vision for reconciliation

The Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) believes that reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians is about mutual respect and a willingness to listen and learn from each other. We recognise that Australian Indigenous culture is rich and enduring and it is important to support all Australians to benefit from it through a greater understanding and awareness.

The Department's vision for reconciliation includes a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples benefiting from the same opportunities, expectations and standards as other Western Australians whilst maintaining a strong, vibrant culture.

The Department is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Western Australia live long, healthy and fulfilling lives.

The Department recognises and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land, heritage and culture. It considers that all Western Australians benefit when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can participate fully in the benefits of Western Australian society and economy.

As a leading agency in improving life opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Western Australia, we are committed to a fundamental change in the way Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and opportunities are addressed in Western Australia and the way they are engaged, as equal partners, in policy development and decision making that impacts upon them.



“ The Department of Indigenous Affairs believes that reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians is about mutual respect, and a willingness to listen and to learn from each other. ”



Maintaining a strong & vibrant culture...



Our Business

The DIA is responsible for advising the Western Australian Government on the adequacy, implementation and coordination of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Western Australia. The Department currently has 168 employees across Western Australia, with 76 being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. It leads policy development on key issues affecting the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in WA and across-Government strategies to improve program planning and coordination. It engages with the community to ensure that Western Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples play a key role in policy development. The Department's seven regional offices are the front line of this community collaboration process.

The Department supports the operations of the Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT). The ALT is established under the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972 and is responsible for the administration of lands held by the Department, a number of other State Government agencies and the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority. Additionally, as a part of the effective management of the estate, the Department, on behalf of the ALT undertakes strategic land acquisitions. The ALT provides advice to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs on ALT land issues.

The Department also works with Aboriginal people to protect and manage places of significance. The Department provides advice to the public and private sectors and the community about Aboriginal heritage management and maintains a Register of Aboriginal Sites. It also assists Aboriginal families and native title parties to access information that may assist them in reuniting families or demonstrating their connections to country.

As part of the State's project approvals system, the Department works with stakeholders, including Aboriginal people and developers, to ensure that Aboriginal heritage and engagement with Aboriginal people is built into development planning processes. As part of this work the Department provides secretariat support for the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee which provides advice to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs on issues relating to Aboriginal sites and heritage management in the State and also makes recommendations on land use approvals for the Minister's consideration.

As the State's lead agency in the Council of Australian Governments *Closing the Gap* initiatives, we are in the process of reforming government service delivery and improving social, economic and cultural outcomes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Western Australia.

We are leading State government in the development of new ways of 'doing business' with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that will achieve tangible outcomes in urban, regional and remote areas.

The economic advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the protection of land and cultural heritage will be pre-conditions for State development during the next two years and beyond.

“ As the State's lead agency in the Council of Australian Governments *Closing the Gap* initiatives, we are in the process of reforming government service delivery and improving social, economic and cultural outcomes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Western Australia. ”

The Department will continue to play a key role in supporting and collaborating with peak Aboriginal statutory and other bodies, such as the WA Aboriginal Advisory Council, Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee, Aboriginal Cultural Affairs Committee, Aboriginal Lands Trust and the Indigenous Implementation Board. This will ensure appropriate policy is translated into real life differences and opportunities for Aboriginal people.

The Department is committed to strong targeted investment in its people, systems and governance arrangements in order to achieve effective and sustainable results from the actions and measurable targets outlined in this refreshed RAP.

The Western Australian State Government, through the Department, provides sponsorship funding for selected local reconciliation projects that bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Western Australians at the local community level and embody mutual benefit and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Western Australians. These small sponsorships are aimed at small, community-based projects driven by local groups in Western Australia.

The Partnership, Acceptance, Learning and Sharing (PALS) program is a partnership between the Department and BHP Billiton to encourage school students to learn about reconciliation and to spread the message to their communities. PALS commenced in 2004, and in 2009 the Department and BHP Billiton committed additional funding to allow the program to continue for a further three years. Based on the core attributes of Partnership, Acceptance, Learning and Sharing, PALS encourages young people to take a leadership role in strengthening the relationships that exist in their local community between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Western Australians.

The Department's partnership with Reconciliation Australia has enabled it to be active in supporting the development of RAPs by Western Australian Government agencies. Under a memorandum of understanding between the Department and Reconciliation Australia signed in 2010, the Department will continue to be an agent for the RAP program and assist Western Australian Government agencies to develop, implement, report and refresh their RAPs, and to provide advocacy advice to other organisations in WA as opportunities arise.



“ The economic advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the protection of land and cultural heritage will be pre-conditions for State development during the next two years and beyond. ”

Our RAP

This RAP is the Department of Indigenous Affairs' second, and has been developed in consultation with all divisions within the Department and Reconciliation Australia. The RAP covers the period 2010 to early 2012 and the Department will produce a RAP report on our actions after the end of each calendar year. It focuses on actions highlighting new ways of doing business with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The RAP is structured according to the three main aspects of reconciliation: relationships, respect and opportunities.

DIA's Strategic Plan 2010 - 2012 emphasises our commitment to our RAP, which has the support of staff, our boards and committees and the Minister for Indigenous Affairs. The Strategic Plan is focused around three areas and also helped to guide the development of the actions in our RAP:

- Leading and influencing – Collaborates and engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and stakeholders to enhance life opportunities
- Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' aspirations with respect to their land, heritage and culture
- Building our capacity to enhance our effectiveness in achieving these objectives

We are committed to ensuring the progress of reconciliation through internal strategies, such as the implementation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Retention strategy and through external strategies such as the ongoing PALS program.

Our refreshed RAP has a two-year time frame (January 2010 to January 2012) with short, medium and long term actions to achieve our goals. Our RAP started off with internal discussion within the RAP working group. Our RAP working group is made of a mix of people, including managers across the organisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other staff. Through intensive discussion with staff from all directorates, we decided to choose actions that best facilitate and promote reconciliation. We will be reporting on and refreshing our RAP in early 2012.

Our refreshed RAP has been informed by our experiences gained and lessons learnt from our earlier RAP covering the period 2008 to early 2010. Implementation of our inaugural RAP coincided with a period of organisational change and realignment, including the development and commencement of the DIA Strategic Plan in 2009 and 2010. Implementation of the inaugural RAP also highlighted for us the necessity of RAP processes that included our regionally based staff; our current RAP has benefited from this learning. Our RAP has been developed so that it aligns well with our current Strategic Plan so that the Department has the capability and resources to work towards achieving each action.

“ The RAP is structured according to the three main aspects of reconciliation; relationships, respect and opportunities. ”





Listen & Learn

Relationships

Relationships are critical to:

- Fostering honesty and trust between the Department and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Understanding the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in their State and local settings
- Better life opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
1.	Maintain a RAP working group to seek input and monitor RAP progress	Director Community Partnerships	September 2011	Working group to meet at least 4 times a year to review RAP implementation and report on progress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership of the group comprises approximately half of the RAP working group
Focus area: Redesign and strengthen Government engagement with Aboriginal people				
2.	Facilitate Aboriginal Lands Trust board meetings in regional communities on a regular basis	Director Land Branch	June 2010 June 2011	3 regional meetings per year Each regional meeting will allow opportunity for community members to discuss local land issues
3.	Lead a range of government groups determining State policy, including the Economic Audit Implementation group	Director Policy and Reform	June 2010 June 2011	DIA will monitor and provide input across agencies with all policy initiatives that provide outcomes to enhance life opportunities for Aboriginal people Input is provided direct from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or based on DIA's own expertise and knowledge
Focus area: Develop and implement policy that addresses economic participation, remote community and land tenure reform priority areas				
4.	Under the guidance of the ALT and broader community, develop policies that support the utilisation of the ALT estate in forms of tenure that allow Aboriginal people to derive maximum benefit	Director Land Branch	June 2010 June 2011	One overarching policy or a series of land use policies
5.	Community education sessions held in regional communities about opportunities in relation to the ALT estate		June 2010 June 2011	5 sessions annually Attended by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other community members
6.	Support Aboriginal groups and individuals to access land held by other government agencies		June 2010 June 2011	Provide advice to 4 representative bodies and agencies, as required

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Focus area: Implement key strategic initiatives to maximise social and economic benefits				
7.	Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives that promote reconciliation in the general community and highlight role models in WA communities	Director General's Office	Dec 2010	The Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee (AACC-Directors General group) to investigate the potential for all participating agencies to sponsor a project that enhances reconciliation in a target area
		Director Community Partnerships	Dec 2010	Support initiatives and activities that will result in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples being seen as role models in the community
		Executive / Director Community Partnerships	Dec 2010	Partner with an external agency to maximise grant funding
		Director Program Management and Development / Regional Outcomes	June 2010 June 2011 Sep 2010	Provide funding and support to Aboriginal Community Patrol service providers (target 15) Develop a strategy for improving the effectiveness of the Patrol Services program in its operation across the State
Focus area: Build partnerships and collaborative action				
8.	Partner with Reconciliation Australia and support Western Australia Government departments and agencies to develop implement, report and refresh RAPs	Director Community Partnerships	Dec 2010 Dec 2011	5 new WA Government department or agency RAPs established each year RAP reports completed annually by each WA Government department or agency with a RAP
9.	Support and collaborate with peak Aboriginal statutory and other bodies	Director Policy and Reform	June 2010 June 2011	Coordinate and provide executive support to the AACC to promote collaborative whole of government response to government issues. Minimum of 6 meetings a year Provide executive and secretariat support for the WAAAC. Minimum of 6 meetings a year Assist in supporting the development and implementation of the WAAAC Strategic Plan Assist the WAAAC in establishing strong working relationships with the State Government through regular meetings with the Minister and by the Chair of the WAAAC All recommendations made by the statutory and other boards are progressed on time

Respect

Respect is an important value in the Department as it:

- Gives people the confidence to have their say
- Recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage and history
- Encourages diversity of opinions and 'the way of doing things'

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Focus area: Support land, heritage and culture				
Aboriginal peoples' aspirations with respect to their land, heritage and culture are acknowledged and addressed				
1.	Develop guidelines and protocols for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to Country ceremonies • Acknowledging Traditional Owners • Cultural and professional protocols in the workplace 	Director Community Partnerships	Dec 2010 June 2010 June 2011	Protocols are published on DIA's internal and public websites Protocols are observed at all relevant events and functions
2.	Demonstrate a tangible commitment by the State Government to reconciliation through an appreciation, understanding and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, culture and achievements	Executive/Director Community Partnerships	Dec 2011	Identify a not-for-profit charitable project that works towards reconciliation outcomes that all WA Public Service staff might contribute to through fund raising days (e.g. casual dress day) and or workplace giving
			June 2010 June 2011	Establish a calendar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significant events Use internal and external resources to promote celebrations and significant dates each year
			June 2010 June 2011	Provide sponsorship and in-kind support to the WA NAIDOC Committee
3.	Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, learning and achievements with other agencies and organisations by sharing of knowledge	Director Community Partnerships	June 2011	One RAP community meeting / seminar of 15 or more RAP agencies to share experiences and build connections (attended by Reconciliation Australia staff) and other opportunities and linkages with RAP community as they arise Through our regional network, encourage the local community to participate in NAIDOC and other events

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
4.	Ensure Aboriginal heritage sites are protected for future generations	Director Heritage and Culture	June 2010 June 2011	Number of Aboriginal sites registered Number of sites vulnerable to impact monitored in partnership with the Traditional Owners
5.	Provide Aboriginal clients with genealogical information and advice that will allow individuals to identify their family links and cultural connections to land, to learn about their past and provide the opportunity to engage with their community	Director Heritage and Culture	June 2010 June 2011	30 road shows/information sessions annually 6 newsletters distributed to key organisations and individuals annually
6.	Develop DIA's knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and history and extend the service to external State Government agencies	All directorates	June 2011	All DIA programs and projects will consider the potential for reconciliation outcomes and cultural awareness
		Director Community Partnerships	June 2010 June 2011	3 sessions annually of cultural awareness training for all staff is provided on an ongoing basis 100% of staff to have participated in cultural awareness training by June of each year 3 external State Government agencies to use DIA's cultural awareness training services
7.	Develop the Aboriginal Language Preservation Small Grants Program	Director Policy	June 2011	10 or more grants allocated under the program
8.	In partnership with Derbarl Yerrigan Committee, establish the Yagan Memorial Park and the reburial of Yagan's kaat	Director Regional Outcomes	July 2010	Reburial conducted Public celebration event held
9.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and knowledge is visible and appropriately acknowledged	Director Regional Outcomes	June 2011	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are placed in the entrance / reception areas of all DIA offices All DIA artworks and displays present authors' details, including name and background

Focus Area: Build our capacity

Improve Departmental systems and processes to enhance the effectiveness of internal operations to better serve Aboriginal Western Australians, stakeholders and the community

10.	All visitors to Aboriginal reserves are advised on protocols and responsibilities when entering lands	Director Land Branch	June 2011	Permit system in place and maintained for all visitors to Aboriginal reserves
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Opportunities

The Department believes creating opportunities is the best way to move forward and enhance reconciliation. The Department is committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples enjoying Western Australia's economic opportunities and benefits alongside other Western Australians

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Focus Area: Support land, heritage and culture				
Aboriginal peoples' aspirations with respect to their land, heritage and culture are acknowledged and addressed				
1.	Maintain and continue to develop the PALS program	Director Community Partnerships	Dec 2010 Dec 2011	12 PALS ambassadors appointed More than 200 PALS projects supported each year Website updated and all current and previous projects recorded Annual PALS Awards presentation at Wardarnji Festival
2.	Maximise reconciliation outcomes achieved from the reconciliation grants/sponsorship programs	Director Community Partnerships	July 2010 July 2010 Dec 2010	All funds distributed to maximum of 32 successful applicants Recipients are promoted on DIA's intranet Explore external funding opportunities
Focus area: Lead and Influence				
The Department collaborates and engages with Aboriginal people and stakeholders to enhance life opportunities for Aboriginal people				
3.	Adopt a consultative approach when developing policy in relation to land tenure	Director Land Branch	June 2010 June 2011	Aboriginal traditional owners and stakeholders involved in all policy development
4.	Provide support to targeted communities to identify and address basic community governance issues and assist in gaining formal awareness and training through appropriate bodies	Director Regional Outcomes	June 2010 June 2011	Support the Roebourne and Carnarvon Aboriginal Congresses by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating monthly meetings Providing governance training

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Focus Area: Building our capacity				
A values driven organisation with the strategic and operational capacity to improve the lives of Aboriginal people				
5.	Develop action plans and strategies to achieve improved workforce outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Department	Director Strategic HR	June 2010 June 2011	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Retention Strategy is endorsed and implemented Retention figure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is on par with other staff Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up a consistent proportion of staff at every level in DIA (i.e. 33%)
6.	Support the Equal Opportunity Commission's <i>Substantive Equality Policy Framework</i> - designed to ensure that all people have access to a public service that best meets the different needs of WA's diverse community	Director Strategic HR	June 2010 June 2011	Substantive Equality is embedded in identified areas within the Department Report on findings submitted to Executive for approval
7.	DIA will participate in and provide high level advice on recruitment and retention strategies to external agencies	Director Strategic HR	June 2010 June 2011	DIA participates as a member of the Public Sector Commission's Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy Working Group
8.	Leverage funding and procurement contracts to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes, increase employment and enhance wider reconciliation initiatives	Director Regional Outcomes	June 2011 June 2012	DIA current funding and procurement processes are examined to identify how other organisations can be encouraged to be involved in reconciliation (including RAPs and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations) Modified funding and procurement contracts are implemented
9.	Support Aboriginal people to derive maximum social and economic benefits from the ALT estate	Land Branch	June 2011	A list of new initiatives that enable Aboriginal people to use their natural resources for social and economic benefit Annual reporting in effectiveness survey findings
Focus area: Lead and inform COAG reforms				
10.	National Partnership Agreements (NP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Remote Service Delivery (RSD) NP to achieve better service outcomes for Indigenous people in remote areas The Indigenous Economic Participation NP to increase Indigenous employment 	Deputy Director Corporate Strategy	Annual reporting for 5 years from Sep 2010	Report on the performance indicators in the Bilateral Implementation Plan tracking progress towards the COAG <i>Closing the Gap</i> targets in WA

Opportunities cont.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
			June 2010	Develop and agree on Local Implementation Plans in 4 RSD locations, identifying priorities for action by community, government, business/industry and service providers
			July 2010	Convert CDEP activities undertaking State services to sustainable jobs Target – 63 jobs
			July 2011	Develop a central statement to strengthen WA Government procurement to maximise Indigenous employment outcomes in conjunction with relevant agencies
			July 2011	Participate with the Public Sector Commission to develop an Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy for the public sector
<p>Focus area: Support land, heritage and culture Aboriginal peoples' aspirations with respect to their land, heritage and culture are acknowledged and addressed. In partnership with Aboriginal people, assist in the cultural resource management of heritage sites</p>				
11.	Provide training and expert advice on preserving heritage and culture, including mapping and access to information Being available on the ground to impart information and exchange views on managing heritage	Director Heritage and Culture	June 2010 June 2011	Customer satisfaction survey completed after each session Each DIA region is visited bi-annually to provide information on heritage preservation to individuals and organisations Regional representative bodies visited annually
12.	DIA, WA Museum and Traditional Owners will work collaboratively with external heritage consultants to audit and document approximately 1,800 petroglyphs in the Hearson Cove Museum compound in the Dampier Archipelago	Director Heritage and Culture	Dec 2010	Significant progress in recording the engravings within the compound Decision reached on options for relocation and management

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Focus Area: Strengthen regional and remote community governance				
13.	Establish a governance model that can be applied across the State to meet the interests of the Aboriginal community, industry and the State in the effective management of Native Title Trusts	Director Regional Outcomes	June 2010	Phase 1: Pilbara Futures Forum held
			Nov 2010	Phase 2: Facilitate meeting with representatives from Aboriginal organisations, industry and Government on strengthening Aboriginal representational structures, organisational governance and improving outcomes from native title agreements
			Dec 2011	Phase 3: Prepare governance framework Identify leadership and governance capacity building program
Focus Area: Building our capacity Improve Departmental systems and processes to enhance the effectiveness of internal operations to better serve Aboriginal Western Australians, stakeholders and the community				
14.	The skills, knowledge and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and stakeholders are embedded in directorate and regional planning processes	All directorates	June 2010 June 2011	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and stakeholders are involved in all directorate and regional planning processes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIA RAP • Strategic Plan • Regional projects
15	Develop guidelines to assist government officers to map and understand the complex elements and relationships (systems) that exist in Aboriginal affairs	Business Improvement Director	Dec 2010	Development of guidelines to support systems thinking

Tracking Progress and Reporting

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
1.	Refresh RAP completed	Director Community Partnerships	January 2010	RAP published on DIA's and Reconciliation Australia's websites
2.	Review and report on the current RAP	Director Community Partnerships	January 2011 January 2012	Submit Annual Report to Reconciliation Australia
3.	Refresh RAP with findings from RAP report and current DIA circumstances	Director Community Partnerships	March 2011 March 2012	Refresh RAP published on DIA's and Reconciliation Australia's websites





Department of
Indigenous Affairs

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