 

Equal Opportunity Commission

Reconciliation Action Plan

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# Our vision for reconciliation

The Equal Opportunity Commission envisions Australia as a nation that recognises and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples as the First Nations people with continuing rights over the land and seas; where its citizens work together to eliminate disadvantage, discrimination and injustice experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples in every aspect of their lives; and where opportunity, security, education, and good health - for so long denied Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - are enjoyed by all, fully and without qualification.

# Our business

The Commissioner for Equal Opportunity is an independent statutory office established under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (“the Act”).

The Commissioner’s main responsibilities are to:

* Encourage recognition and an understanding of the principle of equal opportunity;
* Provide a means of redress to individuals who allege unlawful discrimination;
* Address systemic forms of racism in the procedures and practices of public sector agencies in the delivery of services to the public;
* Provide a variety of services that seek to inform and promote the principles of equal opportunity to individuals, employers, employees, public and private sector organizations, as well as community and voluntary groups;
* Raise public awareness about human rights.

The Equal Opportunity Commission carries out the Commissioner’s statutory functions and responsibilities under the Act.

# Our reconciliation action plan

To assist in developing, implementing and monitoring the RAP, the Commission has established a RAP Committee co-chaired by selected staff members. Staff members made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous staff representing all sections of the Commission attend Committee meetings on a rotating basis, allowing maximum participation. Staff perform an important role, reporting back to each section and ensuring that matters arising from the Committee are discussed and actions followed up. The model is inclusive of all staff.

The RAP includes specific actions and targets designed to foster the Commission’s relationship with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and bring about a better way of delivering our services. It also seeks to establish a process for consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in relation to Commission activities and projects. All actions are subject to the reporting and monitoring framework.

All actions are subject to the reporting and monitoring framework set out in Part 4 ‘Tracking and Reporting on Progress’.

This is the second revision of the RAP, approved by the RAP Committee on 28 June 2017.

1 Relationships

Since 1985, the Commission has been building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia, from the Kimberley to the South West. The Commission looks forward to strengthening those relationships through its RAP, working together on ways to provide a better service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and doing all we can to eliminate discrimination in Western Australia.

The Commission has also resolved to identify and remove barriers encountered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait people when accessing the Commission’s services, especially in the areas of complaint handling and communicating effectively with people in remote locations.

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| Action |  |
| Make our services accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with effective and culturally appropriate information and communication strategies – ongoing program. This should also include providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who wish to make a complaint, or their advocates, with advice on how to effectively present information and evidence in support of the complaint. The Commission will trial a training program with the ALS, CLCs, and other advocacy services, with this purpose in mind, commencing late 2017.  Use a relevant contact database to identify appropriate contacts within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities- updated and ongoing  Be involved in relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community activities and outreach projects (regularly at special events and annually on specific anniversaries) |  |

2 Respect

The Commission respects the cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their special relationship with the land. The Commission values the opinions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and shall seek their views on all aspects of the Commission’s work that is relevant to them.

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| Action |
| * All staff receive the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training at the commencement of employment and periodically afterwards * All staff follow the *Protocols for Working With Aboriginal Staff* document * All RAP Committee members follow the *RAP Committee Protocols* document * Relevant materials are displayed in reception, the training room and online acknowledging Traditional Owners and reflecting the Commission’s commitment to reconciliation and equality (ongoing program) * EOC publishes and promotes a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander publications and products (e.g school posters, annual calendar, ebulletins) |

3 Opportunities

As the principal agency for the promotion of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination in Western Australia, the Commission seeks to lead by example in relation to the successful recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and trainees.

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| Action |
| * Develop and implement training and work experience program, to include: * Partnerships with tertiary institutions to build relationships with Aboriginal students (annual). * Work experience opportunities at the Commission (annual).   Follow the Commission’s *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Policy*. This Policy is a separate document which has a specific strategy, action plan and timelines. The Commissiner checks progress on the Action Plan every six months. The current policy will be reviewed in 2017.  Refer to the PSC’s ‘*Attract, appoint and advance: An employment strategy for Aboriginal people*’ policy, 2016. |

4 Tracking progress and reporting

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| Action |
| RAP Committee meets every quarter. The Committee:  Monitors implementation of the RAP actions against timelines and performance indicators.  Receives feedback from section representatives as to progress made in developing and implementing actions.  Reviews effectiveness of actions and records the progress of actions in the Committee minutes.  Provides guidance to staff about the RAP and its implementation, through staff meeting updates, distribution of RAP committee minutes, and induction of new employees.  Makes recommendations for improvements and adjustments to the RAP, in consultation with Aboriginal contacts.  Reports in the annual report on the RAP. |
| Section representatives shall:  Follow the RAP Committee Protocols (June 2017)  Report as appropriate to the RAP Committee at its quarterly meetings as to RAP actions undertaken by the section. |
| The RAP is reported on in the Commission’s annual report and made available to the public on the Commission’s website and the Reconciliation Australia website. |