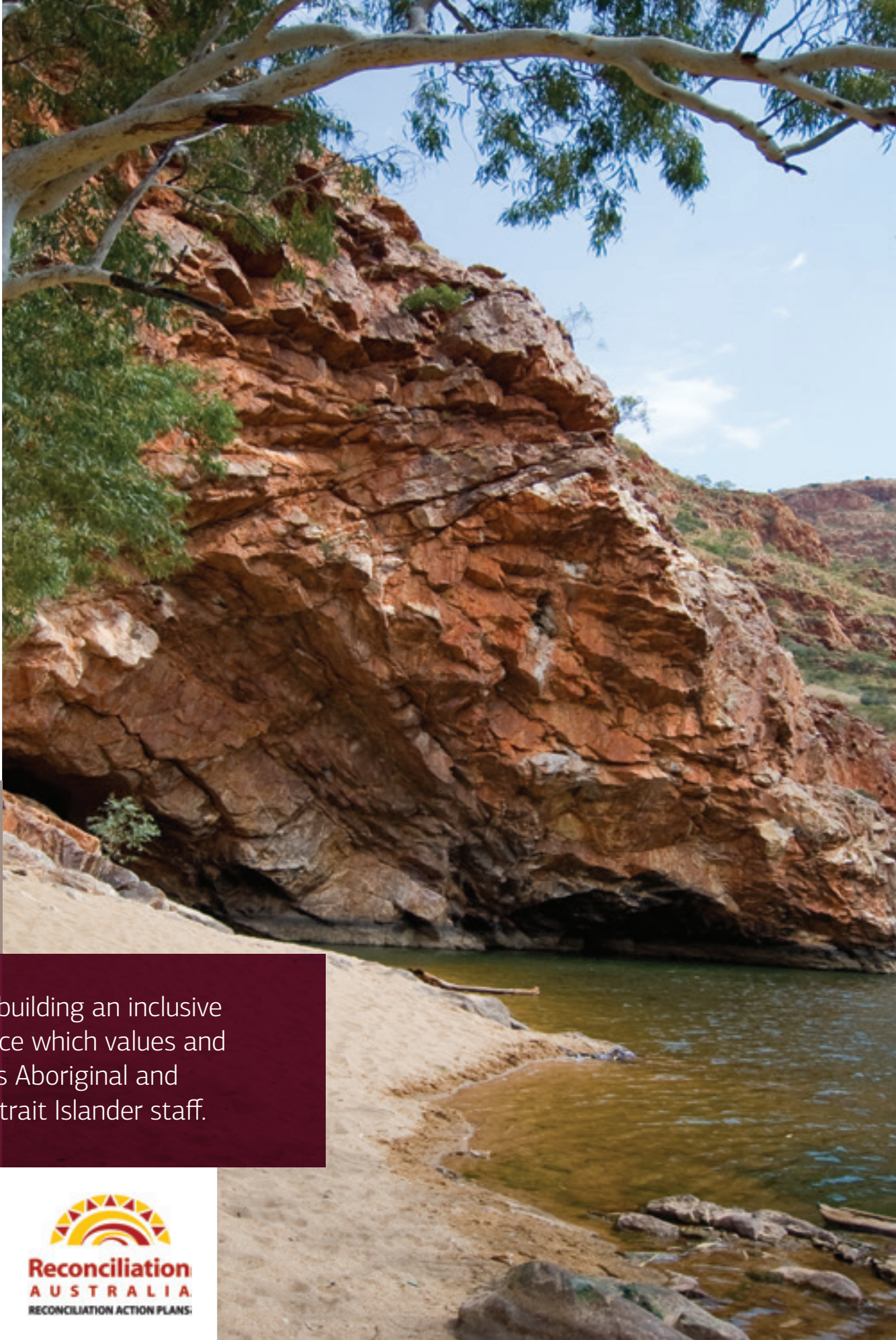




Reconciliation Action Plan
2012–14
Refreshed August 2013





We are building an inclusive workplace which values and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.



Secretary's forward



As the department moves into the second year of the Reconciliation Action Plan 2012–14, I would like to reflect on the achievements we have made in the area of reconciliation.

The department continues to work toward improving access to services for the most vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in urban, regional, and remote locations, as part of the government's commitment to Closing the Gap.

We are building an inclusive workplace which values and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and provides potential and existing employees the opportunity to prosper and provide different views.

The Reconciliation Action Plan is a powerful set of ideas and strategies that commit the department to achieve specific outcomes and targets, while building stronger relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I am confident that we are progressing to build a better future by working together in a spirit of goodwill and mutual respect. We are continuing to foster collaborative relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to facilitate their participation in the community—and work towards an improved quality of life.

This refreshed Reconciliation Action Plan is an important tool for the department to support the government to building that future.

I encourage you to familiarise yourself with the plan, and promote within your workplace an appreciation of the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Campbell".

Kathryn Campbell CSC
Secretary
Department of Human Services
Canberra
August 2013

The journey so far

This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was developed in consultation with Reconciliation Australia. It builds upon the already significant achievement and collective expertise gathered from the implementation of RAPs by our predecessor department and agencies. It enhances our commitment to the first peoples of Australia and highlights our efforts to bring respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the forefront of our business practices.

We also recognise, through this RAP, the important role our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have in identifying employment barriers and providing high level advice, support and direction in developing practical solutions. These solutions ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equitable access to culturally appropriate programs and services throughout Australia.

This RAP recognises our dedication to the implementation of symbolic and practical actions required to overcome the many disadvantages that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face. We aim to help raise the cultural awareness of our staff and the broader community on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history and culture.

Our aim is to improve access to services and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to match those enjoyed by all Australians.

We are proud of our achievements to date. We have:

- developed and integrated our business to meet the local and national needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and supported the Australian Government's Closing the Gap initiative
- assisted our staff to better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture and issues
- focused on improving access to Human Services programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- strengthened relationships to foster collaboration and effective information sharing between our staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



This RAP has specific actions and initiatives that encompass the reconciliation themes and goals—relationships, respect and opportunities. As the service delivery arm of the Australian Government, we are in a unique position to make a difference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a number of specific programs and services. These include the Indigenous Customer Service Officers, Indigenous Service Officers, Liaison Officers, Community Agent Program and Access Points.

As a result of service delivery integration, work is already underway to ensure effective and appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These improve access to services for those who are most vulnerable across urban, regional, and remote locations as part of the Australian Government's commitment to Closing the Gap.

We aim to help raise the cultural awareness of our staff and the broader community on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history and culture.

Our approach to reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation involves working collaboratively to improve social, economic and cultural outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our engagement in the whole of Australian Government commitment to Closing the Gap.

Our business

The department provides easy, high quality services to people at different stages of their lives through a number of programs including Medicare, Centrelink, CRS Australia and Child Support.

These programs focus on the development of service delivery policy and the delivery of high quality, efficient and effective services to the Australian people.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

This first RAP for the integrated department represents ideas and strategies that commit us to achieving outcomes and targets. It will enable us, during this period of change, to contribute toward greater awareness and respect for the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' values, culture and ideas. It sets a three-year vision, reflecting our current environment and how we will work towards achieving outcomes including a more culturally respectful workforce for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This RAP builds on our Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation and our plan to work together to achieve our vision for reconciliation. The vision includes building a culture of mutually respectful relationships, demonstrating understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture, and creating improved opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and particularly our staff.

We will monitor our achievements against the RAP outcomes, through the annual report and through the annual formal review of progress. A Working Group comprising both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members has been established to monitor the RAP's implementation. These measures will help identify areas for improvement and actions to strengthen outcomes where possible.

Sharing knowledge and building local connections

We believe that building strong, mutually respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is essential for effective policy development and service delivery. We work with members of urban, regional and remote communities to provide quality outcomes and services for our customers. Our vast network provides unique opportunities to engage, employ and improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Relationships

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
1. Work collaboratively within the department and with other agencies to build local connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Face to Face Service Delivery Division and Indigenous, Regional and Intensive Services Division supported by: Service Delivery Transformation Division Indigenous Services Branch People Capability Division Service Strategy and Policy Division.	Targets met by December 2014	Indigenous engagement model developed or adopted and implemented; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff supported to attend two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural events per year; Appropriate staff representation at funerals of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members; A calendar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community events established and promoted on the department's intranet; A strategy developed for working in partnership, at the local level and national level, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff consulted to provide advice on community contacts and protocols; All offices assisted to host at least one local relationship building activity per year and invite local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, Elders, Traditional Owners, community leaders and Aboriginal organisations invited to participate in these events.
2. Share cultural awareness resources across the Commonwealth to inform future policy development and service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	People Capability Division supported by Service Strategy and Policy Division.	Targets met by December 2014	The department's cultural capability framework is developed along with facilitated cultural awareness training to at least three Commonwealth agencies per year; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff champions be identified and supported to engage senior staff to implement initiatives and raise the profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across the department.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
3. Develop and implement a Supplier Diversity Strategy to increase the level of departmental procurement activity with registered Australian Indigenous businesses and Australian Indigenous small to medium enterprises (SME's), both directly and through the department's external service providers.	Corporate Operations Division.	Targets met by December 2014	Supplier Diversity Strategy published and promoted within the department by July 2013, incorporating measures to increase both direct and indirect procurement activity with Australian Indigenous businesses and SME's. Strategy measures implemented by December 2013.
4. Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce issues are continually addressed.	People Capability Division supported by Service Delivery Transformation Division and all managers.	Targets met by December 2014	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce management issues are raised by the People Capability Division; and Develop strategies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in their understanding of corporate culture and bureaucracy within the department.

Building cultural capability and understanding

We see building knowledge as well as understanding and appreciating cultures, histories and relationships as crucial to improving service delivery and the well being of Indigenous Australians.



Respect

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
<p>5. Enhance understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture and heritage by introducing a cultural capability framework to build ongoing individual development needs.</p>	<p>People Capability Division supported by Indigenous Services Branch.</p>	<p>Targets met by December 2014</p>	<p>New staff briefed on cultural protocols at induction;</p> <p>All staff engaged in Indigenous policy development or program delivery have individual cultural development needs identified and included in their individual learning plans as an ongoing performance measure;</p> <p>All staff working in Indigenous policy and program development and delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities undertake cultural awareness training; and</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff supported to attend significant Indigenous cultural or community events as covered in the Enterprise Agreement.</p>
<p>6. Ensure Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols are used at appropriate events.</p>	<p>Service Delivery Transformation Division supported by all meeting and event organisers.</p>	<p>Targets met by December 2014</p>	<p>Guidelines established and publicised on the department's intranet;</p> <p>Welcome to Country delivered at all public departmental events;</p> <p>Response to Welcome to Country developed, available and applied when appropriate; and</p> <p>All staff required to acknowledge country where appropriate.</p>
<p>7. Actively promote and assist participation in significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to raise the visibility and profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and issues within the workplace and among other agencies.</p>	<p>Service Delivery Transformation Division supported by Face to Face Service Delivery.</p>	<p>Targets met by December 2014</p>	<p>Local and national offices to host a minimum of two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural celebrations or activities each year;</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' intellectual property acknowledged throughout the department;</p> <p>Identify and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through internal and external department publications; and</p> <p>All offices to display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and plaques acknowledging traditional owners.</p>

Opportunities

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
8. Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the department.	People Capability Division supported by all managers.	Targets met by December 2014	Develop and implement an Indigenous Recruitment Strategy to achieve a departmental outcome of four per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by the end of 2014 and a departmental aspiration of five per cent by the end of 2015.
9. Reduce barriers to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to gain employment with the department.	People Capability Division supported by all managers.	Targets met by December 2014	Special measures developed and implemented to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment policy; Ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff that require a mentor have the appropriate access to a mentor; and Assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a disability to gain employment with the department.
10. Provide learning, development and leadership opportunities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation across the department and support promotion to more senior positions.	People Capability Division supported by all managers.	Targets met by December 2014	Identify opportunities and develop capability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to gain greater representation in senior roles in the department.



Providing employment and education opportunities

We strive to ensure recruitment and retention policies support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to assist us in establishing a workforce that reflects the communities in which we live, work and operate.

Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
11. Monitor RAP progress.	Governance Branch.	July 2013 January 2014 July 2014 January 2015	Bi-annual reports against the RAP produced and reported to the Executive Committee.
12. Report on RAP outcomes.	Governance Branch supported by all responsible business areas.	July 2013 January 2014 July 2014 January 2015	Progress reports are provided by relevant business areas to the Governance Branch.
13. Work with Reconciliation Australia to report on and refresh the RAP.	Governance Branch.	End of financial year 2013 and 2014 September 2013 September 2014	The RAP reported on in the department's Annual Report; and Ensure the RAP is refreshed and updated annually and published on the Reconciliation Australia and department's websites.

This RAP builds on our Statement of Commitment to reconciliation and our plan to work together to achieve our vision for reconciliation.

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