

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I release the Indigenous Action Plan for 2014-2016 for the Family Court of Australia.

The Family Court acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as First Nations people and traditional owners of this land. The Court respects the unique position of Indigenous Australians in contemporary Australian society and acknowledges the challenges they face.

With this plan, we strive to translate our commitment to access to justice into practical approaches and policies that deliver equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families.

Access to justice does not just occur in the courtroom. It starts at the front line, with the National Enquiry Centre and the counter staff of the various registries. It then extends to our family consultants, registrars and judicial officers. Hence there needs to be training and improved use of limited resources to enable both judicial officers and court staff to better understand the culture and needs of the first Australians.

To improve our understanding, we must value relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and its representatives. We must acknowledge that these relationships will inform us of the needs and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families as well as being the foundation for our service delivery to Indigenous Australians.

The Court will continue to interact with Indigenous communities and community leaders, including Aboriginal Legal Services, health liaison officers, Native Title groups and the like. Members of the court will engage with their State and Territory counterparts and with their colleagues in the Federal Circuit Court and the Family Court of Western Australia.

Indigenous communities experience multiple barriers when trying to access the Court including literacy and language barriers, a lack of understanding about the family law system and a lack of service access for communities in regional and remote areas. These barriers often exist against concerns about Western notions of child-rearing, kinship and family.

This plan commits the Court to continue working to overcome such barriers.

In terms of family law, it has been and will continue to be important that the approach by the Family Court of Western Australia, the Federal Circuit Court and the Family Court as the three main courts exercising jurisdiction under the Family Law Act work cohesively and harmoniously in these ongoing and long term objectives.

Any approach adopted by the Family Court will continue to be considered in a child focused way having regard to the lifestyle, culture and traditions of the child, and his or her family. This must include the child's right to enjoy his or her Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander culture and the impact any parenting order may have on such rights.



Diana Bryant AO, Chief Justice, Family Court of Australia



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NOTE

This Indigenous Action Plan is yet to be formally endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

As the plan has been developed with the specific intent of it becoming an endorsed Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), it has been developed using the RAP template and guidelines.

When the plan is formally endorsed by Reconciliation Australia it will be re-titled to become the Family Court of Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan.

Our vision for reconciliation

The Family Court of Australia strives to improve access to the court's services for Indigenous families in the domain of family law.

About the Family Court of Australia

Our business

The Family Court of Australia (the Court), through its specialist judges and staff, has assisted Australians to resolve their legal family disputes since it was established in 1975. The Court's goal is to deliver excellence in service for children, families and parties, while respecting the needs of separating families, by delivering effective judicial and non-judicial processes and timely high-quality judgments.

The Family Court of Australia deals with the most complex family law cases and appeals¹. Cases brought before the Court often include high levels of conflict between the parties and multiple issues such as:

- international family law (including Hague convention abduction matters)
- significant family violence
- serious allegations of child abuse
- special medical procedures
- mental illness and/or substance abuse; and/or
- complex property issues.

Chief Justice Bryant, in the Family Court of Australia Annual Report 2011–2012, observes that family law is often difficult, as it:

intersects with the breakdown of relationships, loss of companionship and closeness of family².

Our registries and staff

The Court maintains 19 family law registries across Australia (except in Western Australia) providing services including the lodgement of documents, providing procedural advice and responding to enquiries, mail handling, and listing of cases.

Across Australia the Court has 33 judicial officers and 810 staff³. The Court employs 9 staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander people and currently employs an Indigenous Family Consultant in the Cairns Registry⁴.



¹ The majority of all family law matters are now conducted in the Federal Circuit Court with only the more complex matters being dealt with by the Family Court.

² Family Court of Australia, Annual Report 2011–12.

³ Note that administrative staff provide services to both the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court.

⁴ Prior to 2006, the Court employed 5 Indigenous Family Liaison Officers who assisted the court in meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. However since the 2006 Commonwealth Government decision to establish Family Relations Centres to undertake the early intervention and voluntary dispute resolution, this role has shifted to community-based agencies. Responsibility for early intervention and engagement with Aboriginal families is now the province of the Family Relationship Centres who, in many instances employ Indigenous Advisors to assist in liaison with Indigenous families and to assist in shaping agency policy and practice in this area.

The Family Law Courts⁵ respond to on average:

- 4,297 phone calls per week to the National Enquiry Centre
- 2,073 email enquiries per week
- 4,680 counter enquires per week
- over 33 000 unique visitors per week to our websites⁶
- almost 18 000 filings per annum⁷

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients

Applications for Final Orders in the Family Court of Australia where one/or both parties are Indigenous made up 1% of all final orders in 2010–2011 despite the Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples making up 3.0 % of the general Australian population⁸.

APPLICATIONS FOR FINAL ORDERS IN THE FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA							
	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11*
NON-INDIGENOUS	12,192	10,926	7685	4424	3800	3649	2901
INDIGENOUS	207	255	146	52	38	55	28
TOTAL % INDIGENOUS	1.7	2.3	1.9	1.2	1.0	1.5	1.0

* Note: Statistics for 2010–11 do not include June 2011. For a short period statistics on Indigenous status were also not kept.

From these numbers, the percentage of Indigenous people engaging in family law litigation is substantially below what might be expected according to population statistics, even allowing for the problems associated with data collection⁹.

The Court's approach to understanding these figures, and more broadly understanding and addressing the barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in accessing the Court, are the focus of this plan.

Our Indigenous Action Plan

Recent reports, including those by the Family Law Council and indigenous consultant Stephen Ralph, suggest that family law system services are under-utilised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families for a number of reasons including:

- a lack of understanding about the family law system among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients
- resistance to engagement with, and even fear of, family law system services
- literacy and language barriers
- a need for indigenous specific and culturally competent mainstream services
- the challenges arising from lengthy and multi-step Court processes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients

⁵ The Family Law Courts comprise the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court. Courts' services are provided by a joint administration.

⁶ Includes the Family Court of Australian and Family Law Courts sites and excludes Federal Circuit Court.

⁷ Includes final orders applications, application in a case (interim), consent order applications and other applications.

⁸ <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3238.0.55.001>. Accessed on 6 March 2014.

⁹ Stephen Ralph cited that "there are significant gaps associated with the reliable capture of data pertaining to Indigenous status that may lead to an under-representation of the number of Indigenous litigants in the courts' Casetrack system. Casetrack statistics however are the best figures available to indicate the extent to which Indigenous people are involved in family law litigation."

- the setting being based on Western notions of child-rearing, kinship and family, and concerns as to whether they operated in a culturally safe way; and
- lack of access to services for communities in regional and remote areas.

This Indigenous Action Plan 2014–2016 (the “Plan”) aims to address the barriers that exist for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders when accessing the Family Court of Australia.

Background - previous plans and initiatives

The Family Court made its first concerted efforts to promote and improve access to justice for Indigenous families in the domain of family law in 1993 when it established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness Committee comprised of senior court staff. Under the broad direction of the Committee the Court implemented a number of initiatives designed to promote Indigenous people's access to justice. These included cross-cultural education for judicial officers, registrars and mediators; the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy; the creation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-identified positions within the Court's mediation service, and recognition of the customary adoption practices of Torres Strait Islander families.

Since then, the court has built on these actions and developed and implemented:

- the 2004 *Family Court of Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan*; and
- the *Indigenous Plan 2010–2013*

Access and equity

The Court has an Access and Equity Framework which serves as a guide to supporting access to justice for all.

The Framework also acknowledges that to improve access to justice the court must:

- develop the infrastructure (IT, training, physical, performance development and more) needed to support actions
- recognise that a one size fits all approach does not deliver justice equality
- improve understanding of, and address the complexities and barriers experienced by, different client groups when accessing Court
- acknowledge that most individuals do not neatly fit into a single client group. And as such the Courts must adopt a flexible model of service delivery that allows the needs of each individual
- play a role in providing information, and linking clients to community organisations that can provide support services

The Framework is based on the premise that the Court's administration and judiciary must work hand in glove to ensure access to justice. And that a client's capacity to participate in Court processes is significantly influenced by the quality of information and level of support they receive prior to their day in court.

The Access and Inclusion Strategy requires the Court to develop and implement the following:

- Multicultural Plan
- Family Violence Plan
- Indigenous Action Plan
- Disability Action Plan
- Mental Health Support Plan

These plans aim to address the needs of both self-represented and represented litigants.

The Family Court of Australia is committed to improving access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This Indigenous Action Plan captures the work planned for the Judiciary, Family Consultants and administration of the Court.

Who developed this plan

The Indigenous Working Group (IWG), established in May 2009, developed the *Indigenous Plan 2010-2013* and building on from this work has created this plan. The IWG has judicial, Aboriginal, family consultant and administrative representation, and has been chaired, since its inception, by Justice Robert Benjamin.

In May 2013 the Chief Justice of the Family Court renamed and reconstituted the IWG under the previous chair to continue the work on and about this plan. That committee now includes Justices, Peter Tree, Colin Forrest, Margaret Cleary, Garry Foster, Victoria Bennett, David Berman, Garry Watts and Hilary Hannam together with the Principle of Child Dispute Services, Pam Hemphill. The Committee is now called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee).

The Court also employs, in an advisory and awareness raising capacity, Stephen Ralph, a forensic psychologist who has extensive experience in the field of family law and child protection¹⁰.

The plan has been developed in consultation with Reconciliation Australia who have provided not only the template to assist in its content, but have also provided insights into the actions and approach available.

The Court's Executive Advisor, Leisha Lister and the Access and Inclusion Projects Manager, Theresa Layton have aligned this plan to the Access and Inclusion Strategy and provided advice on the administrative actions of the Court.

Developing this plan

The Court also acknowledges the significant work and research undertaken by the Family Law Council, the Court's Working Group, the Committee, Stephen Ralph and others to improve understanding of the barriers faced by Indigenous peoples when accessing the Family Law System.

In developing this plan, the Indigenous Working Group and Committee has:

- developed actions under the guidance of Reconciliation Australia's *RAP Minimum Elements for an Innovate RAP*
- responded to the finding and recommendations in the Family Law Council's 2012 report: *Improving The Family Law System for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clients*
- responded to the presentation to the Family Law Council: *Expert Reports In Matters Involving Aboriginal Children* tabled at the Family Law Council Meeting 20-21 February 2014, by the Directors of Aqua Dreaming Ltd., Ms Colleen Wall, Mrs Lynette Johannessen and Ms Cheryl Viellaris
- responded to the finding and recommendations in Stephen Ralph's 2012 report: *Indigenous Australians and Family Law Litigation: Indigenous Perspectives on Access to Justice*
- built on the Family Court's: *Indigenous Plan 2010–2013* and associated *End of Plan Report* (Family Court of Australia, 2014), and
- aligned actions to the Family Court of Australia and Federal Circuit Court of Australia's *Statement of Strategic Intent* (2012).

¹⁰ Stephen has worked within the family law system for most of his professional career. He previously held the role of National Coordinator (Indigenous Programs) in the Family Court from 2002–2008. Being Aboriginal and a Koori from the Sydney region, Stephen has a strong interest in working with Aboriginal families and a commitment to promoting access to justice for Aboriginal people.

Actions

Relationships

We value relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and its representatives and acknowledge that these relationships will inform us of the needs and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families as well as being the foundation for our service delivery to Indigenous Australians. These relationships are vital to ensuring that Indigenous Australians are able to have confidence in the Family Law Courts and that it is recognised that the values of justice and “a fair go” are integral to the Courts' operations.

Focus area: The Judiciary/ Indigenous Working Group

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
1. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee) continues to actively monitor Plan development, including implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee)	Ongoing	The Committee oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the Plan. Meet at least twice per year to monitor and report on the Plan's implementation.
2. Through the Chief Justice's National Consultative Forum, ensure that regular liaison occurs with representatives of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, and where available the local Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, and other key stakeholders with a view to sharing information and views that will contribute to the development of effective and cooperative working relationships.	Executive Advisor	Quarterly from 2014	Revised terms of reference. Evidence of engagement and communication with ATSI representative bodies.
3. Monitor and continually improve the registry-based team approach to managing and determining Indigenous cases using judges, registrars, family consultants and client service officers who through ongoing professional development are encouraged and supported in developing expertise in working with Indigenous families. <i>(Supports Stephen Ralph 's Recommendation 3: A Coordinated Registry-Based Team Approach to Managing and Determining Indigenous Cases)</i>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee) and Executive Advisor	Ongoing	To meet at least twice per year and report on the various approaches against targeted outcomes.

Focus Area: Family Consultants

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
<p>4. Continue the requirement that all Family Consultants and registrars be directed to inquire into the Indigenous status of all clients on the first occasion of contact when Indigenous status is marked 'unknown' in Casetrack and that they then be responsible for amending the Casetrack record.</p> <p><i>(Supports Stephen Ralph 's Recommendation 2: Information Systems and Data Collection)</i></p>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee) and Executive Advisor	Ongoing	To meet at least twice per year and report on the various approaches against targeted outcomes.
<p>5. Ensure that a select group of Family Consultants continue to undertake Indigenous cultural competency training with the expectation that these consultants will be routinely allocated Indigenous cases in the future.</p> <p><i>(Supports Stephen Ralph 's Recommendation 5: Training and Professional Development of Family Consultants)</i></p>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee) and Executive Advisor	Commenced in Sydney, 27/02/14. Continuing on a cyclical basis, with next training session to be held mid-2014 in Townsville.	To meet at least twice per year and report on the various approaches against targeted outcomes.

Focus Area: Registry operations/Administration

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
<p>6. Celebrate NRW by providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and other employees to build relationships.</p>	Managers	27 May 2014 to 3 June 2014	Organise at least one internal event each year.
<p>7. Examine whether the Casetrack system can be enhanced to allow for the recording of Indigenous status as 'unknown' and that it be mandatory for the field of Indigenous status to be completed in entering data into Casetrack.</p> <p><i>(Supports Stephen Ralph 's Recommendation 2: Information Systems and Data Collection)</i></p>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee) and Executive Advisor	1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015	To consider the data on quarterly calculations and continue into the following years.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
<p>8. Each registry will compile and maintain a list of local Indigenous resources and support services, including Indigenous legal services, family violence, counselling and child care services, and other relevant services, that will be made available on the Courts' website and to the National Enquiry Centre (NEC) for Indigenous clients of the Court.</p> <p><i>(Supports Family Law Council Recommendation 1: Community Education)</i></p> <p><i>(Supports Family Law Council Recommendation 3: Building Collaboration and Enhancing Service Integration)</i></p>	<p>Registry Managers National Enquiry Centre</p>	<p>From April 2014</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resources are regularly updated and available for distribution to Indigenous clients of the Court.</p>
<p>9. Ensure all Registry Operations and NEC staff are aware of ATSI support services and are able to link Indigenous clients to them.</p> <p><i>(Supports Family Law Council Recommendation 3: Building Collaboration and Enhancing Service Integration)</i></p>	<p>Regional Registry Managers and Registry Managers</p>	<p>June 2015</p>	<p>Increased awareness of staff of services available.</p>

Respect

We acknowledge the diversity of Australian culture and society and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as First Nations people and traditional owners of this land. We will show respect for, and understanding of the unique position of Indigenous Australians in contemporary Australian society and the challenges they face. We will endeavour at all times to translate this into practices and policies within the Family Law Courts that are effective in promoting access to justice for Indigenous people.

Focus area: The Judiciary/Indigenous Working Group

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
<p>10. Engage judicial officers in understanding the protocols around acknowledgement of country and welcome to country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies.</p> <p><i>(Supports Family Law Council Recommendation 2: Cultural Competency)</i></p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee) and Executive Advisor</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Develop, implement and communicate a ceremonies protocol.</p> <p>Identify at least one significant event for which a welcome to country from a Traditional Owner will be included.</p>
<p>11. Engage judicial officers in cultural learning to increase understanding and appreciation of different cultural backgrounds in order to lay the foundation for other Plan actions to be achieved.</p> <p><i>(Supports Family Law Council Recommendation 2: Cultural Competency)</i></p> <p><i>(Supports Stephen Ralph Recommendation 4: Judicial Education and Training)</i></p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee) and Executive Advisor</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Develop and pilot a cultural awareness training strategy for your organisation. In particular, provide opportunities for IWG members, Plan Champions, HR managers and other key leadership to participate in training.</p>

Focus Area: Family Consultants

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
<p>12. Family Law Council Recommendation 6: Family Consultants and Liaison Officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ increase the information available to the courts about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and children's needs to courts through family reports (with reference to specific communities and cultures in specific cases) ○ Review of current Professional Directions on Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Families ○ Review of Core Knowledge in relation to key literature and research ○ Selection of Family Consultants to attend cultural competence training who will prepare Family reports and develop relationships with local Indigenous Communities and elders. 	Principal, Child Dispute Services	<p>June 2014 (Professional Directions)</p> <p>December 2014 (Core Knowledge Database)</p> <p>May 2014 (Cultural Competence Training)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that clinicians preparing family reports with people of an Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander background, have completed the cultural competence training and are able to refer to cultural issues within the clinical documentation that they prepare for the court. ○ To ensure that the assessment and report writing recommendations outlined in the Indigenous Cultural Competence Training (delivered to Family Consultants by Stephen Ralph) are incorporated into the governing Professional Directions document. ○ To ensure that extant academic literature concerning Indigenous issue is up to date and to communicate updates to all clinical staff. ○ To have at least one Family Consultant in each region undertake specialist training relating to cultural competence, and encourage those clinicians to develop and maintain linkages with local Indigenous communities.

Focus area: Registry operations/Administration

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
13. Provide opportunities for the Court's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to engage with their culture and community through NAIDOC Week events.	Human Resources	July 2014 July 2015	Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in local NAIDOC Week events.
14. Review and update existing "welcome to country" protocols in each registry (through liaison with relevant Indigenous stakeholders) to ensure inclusion of acknowledgement of traditional owners and elders for use in all official programmes.	Registry Managers Communications		All welcome to country protocols reviewed and updated.
15. Update and implement cultural competency training based on building a better understanding and respect for the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into the Court's induction and registry operations training.	Executive Director Client Service Registry Managers	By End 2015	Staff induction program adapted to include information on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the provision of culturally appropriate services.
16. Build requirement for ATSI competency into the Court's professional development system for Registry Operations staff			
17. Review and update all registry operations and NEC Indigenous "Tips and Scripts" guides for use when working with Indigenous Australians including the requirement to offer referral to support services. <i>(Supports Family Law Council Recommendation 3: Building Collaboration and Enhancing Service Integration)</i>	Executive Director Client Service Registry Managers	By End 2015	Tips and scrips are updated and staff are aware of any changes.
18. Review and update interpreter protocols to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients with language issues are made aware of the availability of an interpreter, are asked whether they need an interpreter, and are provided with an interpreter if they are identified as in need of one. <i>(Links to Family Law Council Recommendation 8: Interpreter services)</i>			

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
<p>19. Develop a specific webpage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people where relevant resources and the details of community based support organisations can be easily accessed</p> <p><i>(Supports Family Law Council Recommendation 1: Community Education)</i></p> <p><i>(Supports Family Law Council Recommendation 3: Building Collaboration and Enhancing Service Integration)</i></p>	Communications	By December 2015	<p>New internet page tailored to provide information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>New internet page easily accessible from the "client" landing page.</p>
20. Maintain statistics regarding ATSI status	Registry managers and team leaders	Ongoing	<p>All staff are aware of their obligation to identify Indigenous status on Casetrack.</p> <p>Accurate statistics are kept regarding ATSI status.</p>
<p>21. The Family Court brochure titled "Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients of the Family Law Courts" is updated and distributed to all registries and be available to clients of the Family Law Courts.</p> <p><i>(Supports Family Law Council Recommendation 1: Community Education)</i></p>	Communications	December 2014	Brochure updated and made available online.
22. Examine opportunities to adapt materials already developed in areas such as Family Violence, Mental Health Support, Disability and our Client Service Charter for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.			
23. In consultation with local Indigenous communities develop and promote cultural awareness by encouraging attendance at and participation in Indigenous community activities and special events.	Registry Managers	September 2014	Consultation completed with local Indigenous communities on developing means of formally acknowledging NAIDOC week and Reconciliation Week and the importance of these events to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
<p>24. Examine the possibility of enhancing the court's user surveys to promote and facilitate follow-up with Indigenous clients as part of an ongoing process of continuous improvement directed to facilitating access to justice for Indigenous families.</p> <p><i>(Supports Stephen Ralph: Recommendation 2: Information Systems and Data Collection)</i></p>	Executive Director Client Service	June 2014	Feasibility of enhancing the survey examined and a recommendation made (and implemented).

Opportunities

We will seek to incorporate Indigenous Australian perspectives into all areas of the Courts' operations. This will involve providing increased opportunities for Indigenous Australians to participate more fully in the work of the Courts. A key component of this strategy will be the development and implementation of the Court's Indigenous Employment Strategy directed toward the recruitment, training, development and retention of Indigenous staff in all areas of the Court's operations.

Focus area: The Judiciary/ Indigenous Working Group

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
25. Encouragement or requests of Executive and/or Legislative Government to take or adopt change, research and/or particular funding proposals to achieve the Courts objectives. This includes adoption by Government of the recommendations of the 2012 Family Law Council's report "Improving the Family Law system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients".	As to Action 1 – the Chief Justice upon considered recommendations from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee)		
26. Developing legal literacy and education concerning the family law system. This may include where appropriate engaging with Indigenous legal service providers, or "pathways groups", and the Court producing its own publications.	As to the remaining issues the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Committee (the Committee) and the Executive Advisor		
27. Reviewing the accessibility and appropriateness of court processes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in particular in regional and remote areas and promoting those processes such as the less adversarial trial, which may be particularly appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander court users. This would include consideration of the development of national protocols on the use of indigenous interpreters in the family law system.			
28. Work with Family Court of Western Australia and the Federal Circuit Court to have similar approaches and systems in conducting hearings where indigenous Australians are parties or children subject to proceedings under the Family Law Act (Indigenous proceedings).			
29. To consider and recommend better focused case management in respect of Indigenous Proceedings.			

Focus area: Family Consultants

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
30. [Include other unique actions related to your core business, 'sphere of influence', and 'vision for reconciliation'.]			

Focus area: Registry Operations/Administration

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
<p>31. Investigate opportunities within the Court to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities.</p> <p><i>(Supports Family Law Council Report 5: Building an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce in the Family Law System)</i></p>	Human Resources	Ongoing	<p>Review HR procedures and policies to ensure barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are able to be addressed.</p> <p>Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.</p> <p>Pilot different approaches to increasing Indigenous employment within the Court (this may include training pathways, apprenticeships, internships, cadetships, work experience).</p> <p>Advertise all vacancies in Indigenous media.</p>
<p>32. Investigate opportunities to increase supplier diversity within your organisation.</p>	Human Resources Contracts		<p>Review procurement policies in regards to any barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses are able to be addressed.</p> <p>Investigate becoming a member of AIMSC or partnering with your local Indigenous Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>Educate staff about using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.</p> <p>Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business.</p>

Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
33. Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the Annual Impact Measurement Report.	Indigenous Working Group		Complete and submit the Plan Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.
34. Establish a Plan steering committee that is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Court's Plan, and which reports directly to the Indigenous Working Group on progress in reaching the measurable targets identified in the Plan.	Indigenous Working Group		The Plan steering committee is formed and meetings are scheduled for at least every six weeks during the life of the current Plan.
35. Annually report on actions undertaken as part of the Plan.	Indigenous Working Group	Annually	Achievements against the plan reported in the annual report.
36. Plan reviewed, learning and achievements identified and considered in drafting of the Indigenous Action Plan 2017–2019.	Indigenous Working group	End 2016	End of Plan Report.

Contact us

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