



Tasmania
Legal Aid

REFLECT

Reconciliation Action Plan

May 2021 – November 2022

EVALUATION REPORT

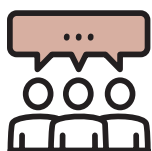
TLA is proud of the significant progress we have made on the actions and deliverables in our first Reconciliation Action Plan. We have strengthened our engagement with the Aboriginal community and increased the cultural competence of our staff, which are the key drivers to improving our services for First Nations clients. It provides a strong foundation for our ongoing work on reconciliation.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



The Rosie Smith Law Scholarship

The scholarship aims to encourage and support more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law students to graduate and pursue careers in the law. It is named to honour the 30 year contribution of Rosie Smith, one of the first Aboriginal people to be admitted as a solicitor/barrister in Tasmania. Through the partnership between TLA, Riawunna Centre for Aboriginal Education and the Faculty of Law at UTAS, the scholarship recipient receives financial and academic support and spends time at TLA gaining valuable experience across diverse areas of legal practice throughout their law degree. This builds their practice knowledge and understanding of the legal system and introduces them to the Tasmanian legal profession, helping to create career opportunities. The inaugural scholarship recipient, Tyenna Hogan, commenced her internship with TLA in August 2022.



First Nations Advisory Group

TLA's First Nations Advisory Group is in the establishment stage and is finalising its terms of reference. Chaired by the Director, it currently has four community members, and we anticipate this will increase over time as the group identifies its priorities and direction. Its members draw on their own and the lived experiences of Aboriginal community members to help us make our services more culturally safe and welcoming. It plays a key role in informing our advocacy for justice system reform for First Nations people.



Local Aboriginal artists making our offices more culturally welcoming

Artworks created by local Aboriginal artists were commissioned for our Hobart and Burnie offices. Artwork for the Launceston office will be commissioned when we move into the new premises. Two beautiful artworks by Michelle Maynard – 'The Family' and 'Remember you are so important, so very important they heard the stars say' – hang in the Hobart office reception area. Michelle Maynard is a contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal designer, artist and cultural practitioner who is passionate about advocating for her people and country through art and design. Launching the artworks, Michelle and TLA's Director spoke about the importance of these artworks as a collaboration between TLA and the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, and a reflection of TLA's ongoing commitment to working with community to strengthen our responses to our First Nations clients. The painting 'Salt' in the Burnie office is by Cheryl Rose, an emerging Aboriginal artist from North West Tasmania. Her paintings are reflections of the land that inspires and reminds her of who she is and where she comes from.



Working with Aboriginal organisations

We are working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) to strengthen our relationship and improve referral pathways between our organisations. The partnership is community-led, driven by community need and focused on improving outcomes for the community. Because TAC provides a range of services for community members, including family and children support services, mental health and NDIS support and counselling, effective referrals between our services means better outcomes for our Aboriginal clients. We're also delivering tailored community legal education and information sessions for different groups in the Aboriginal community. We continue to work closely with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service, as a legal assistance sector partner, through our Memorandum of Understanding.



Increasing staff knowledge, cultural understanding, and awareness

Since we began our RAP process to make reconciliation a priority for our organisation, there has been a range of positive changes across TLA. In a recent survey, our staff report increased knowledge about Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and history, greater recognition of the need to make our services more culturally respectful and welcoming, and a range of actions towards this. More staff report participation in events that recognise and celebrate Aboriginal history, culture and community issues. The percentage of staff who rate their knowledge and understanding of Tasmanian Aboriginal history and culture as 'very good' or 'good' has doubled since we've implemented the RAP, based on pre-RAP survey results. Key to this has been the support for staff to attend cultural awareness training and regular communications and information sharing through the TLA newsletter, intranet, and emails from the Director.

REPORTING PROGRESS ON OUR RAP DELIVERABLES

The traffic light report demonstrates our progress against each of the deliverables listed in our RAP. Green signifies that we have completed the action, amber means that work is underway and red means that work has not yet started. While we are proud of the achievements under our first RAP, continuing work on these deliverables is an ongoing part of our reconciliation journey.

RELATIONSHIPS

Actions

1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.
5. Develop new partnerships with local Aboriginal organisations and communities

Deliverables

Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	
Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	
Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	
RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	
Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	
Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	
Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	
Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	
Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	
Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	
Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service	
Establish relationships between TLA offices and local communities and organisations	
Collaborate with local Aboriginal organisations and communities to develop strategies to increase the awareness of and access to TLA services by Aboriginal people in the local regions.	

RESPECT

Actions

6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.
9. Create culturally safe and welcoming spaces in all TLA offices
10. Build culturally respectful services

Deliverables

Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	Green
Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Green
Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation’s operational area.	Orange
Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Green
Include Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners in all staff email signatures	Green
Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	Green
Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	Green
RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	Green
Display Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and Australian flags at reception in all offices	Green
Consult with local communities about how to make TLA offices culturally safe and welcoming	Orange
Promote and display appropriate art and signage in all offices:	
Display cultural materials in all offices	Red
Purchase artworks of local Aboriginal artists for each office	Orange
Koori Mail subscriptions for all office	Green
Establish an Aboriginal Clients Advisory Group	Green
Arrange cultural training and skills development for all TLA staff	Green
Promote staff adoption of culturally appropriate language where possible eg local language usage	Orange

OPPORTUNITIES

Actions

11. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.
12. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.
13. Increase advocacy to improve justice system outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
14. Create employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Deliverables

Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	
Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	
Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	
Investigate Supply Nation membership.	
Develop advocacy case to increase the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 years	
Build collaborative partnerships with external stakeholders and organisations to advocate for changes to justice system outcomes.	
Investigate opportunities for a work experience program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in non-legal areas.	
Collaborate with the Riawunna Centre for Aboriginal Education and the Faculty of Law (UTAS) to explore internships and scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and graduates.	

GOVERNANCE

Actions

15. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.
16. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.
17. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.
18. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

Deliverables

Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	
Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	
Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	
Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	
Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	
Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	
Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	
Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	