



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing



Reconciliation Action Plan

2013-2017

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Secretary's Foreword



The Australian health and aged care system is world-class. Our strong workforce has led to great achievements and we take pride in delivering high quality health outcomes and active ageing for all Australians.

We continue to strive for further success and are committed to Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes. This revised Reconciliation Action Plan reiterates the Department's commitment to improving health services for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to achieve health equality. We will embed this vision through a set of important principles and practical actions to ensure the Department continues to be a workplace of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Department needs a dedicated and inclusive workforce to deliver better health and active ageing priorities for the Australian community. We are committed to evidence-based policy, and delivering effective programs and regulation. We lead and work closely with other agencies to achieve results and engage in open and constructive consultation with professionals, providers, industry and community groups.

For example, under the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package, over 198,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, with or at risk of chronic disease, accessed more affordable PBS medicines through 99% of participating community pharmacies (as at 31 March 2013). Over 200,000 Medicare health assessments were provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 15 and over.

Under the Remote Area Health Corps Program, 598 health professionals were placed in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory – providing almost 2,000 weeks of health service delivery to help meet workforce shortages in remote communities.

Over the life of the previous Reconciliation Action Plan the Department delivered a new online cultural awareness training package, engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through a variety of entry level programs and general recruitment processes. We have also appointed a Workforce Diversity Manager to develop programs to attract and retain our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

This Reconciliation Action Plan:

- forms an essential part of our efforts to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in the Department;
- works to promote the Department as an employer of choice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- commits us to continue to promote an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, cultures, heritage and aspirations.

I commend our revised Reconciliation Action Plan to all our people, and encourage each of us to take actions as individuals, managers and leaders to implement it.

Jane Halton PSM

Secretary

Department of Health and Ageing

Our vision for reconciliation

The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) is dedicated to advancing reconciliation and to build an inclusive and diverse workplace that reflects the wider Australian community. DoHA is working collaboratively within a whole-of-government approach to facilitate change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to ensure equity in opportunities and access to high quality health and aged care services.

DoHA continues to build and maintain mutually respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people to support the delivery of targeted programs. Our focus and funding is dedicated to active management of chronic diseases - still prevalent in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities today. It is through the delivery of our programs for diabetes, cancer, respiratory, kidney and cardiovascular diseases that we will contribute to closing the life expectancy gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) articulates DoHA's vision for reconciliation through:

- increasing the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the department, in line with the 2.7% target under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation;
- encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in their contribution to the department and supporting their professional development;
- increasing the level of understanding, awareness, acknowledgement and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures across the department; and
- driving national change to improve the health status and life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through an increase in the access to high quality health and aged care services.

As a large government agency, DoHA actively nurtures an inclusive culture that values the contribution, skills and knowledge of all staff and promotes values embraced by, and significant to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. The measurable actions in the RAP will ensure consistent improvements are made in DoHA to support ongoing recruitment and retention strategies. The RAP is published on the Reconciliation Australia website.

DoHA continues to build and maintain mutually respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people to support the delivery of targeted programs.

Our business and commitment to reconciliation

DoHA's business focuses on “better health and active ageing for all Australians”. We work across government and in partnership with the States and Territories, communities and industry to implement our policies and programs.

As of 31 May 2013, DoHA had 5,390 employees of which 92 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, equating to 1.7% across our seven State and Territory offices and in the Central Office in Canberra.

DoHA is committed to advancing reconciliation through the RAP. With significant reforms expected in the areas of health and aged care over the next five years, DoHA is in a unique position to fundamentally contribute to improving the health status and access to high quality services for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and closing the life expectancy gap.

Statistically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience a burden of disease two and a half times that of other Australians. This is largely due to chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, respiratory, kidney and cardiovascular disease.



Our current and future policy and program focus is on a national package of strategies providing:

- significant new funding for preventative health focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders individuals, families and communities;
- support and funding for more coordinated and patient-focused primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in both Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and mainstream general practice; and
- an expanded and productive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.

DoHA is fully committed to reconciliation and “closing the gap”. Along with the programs we deliver, this RAP is one of the tools we are using to build positive relationships between all Australians.

Our RAP



This RAP was developed with significant input from DoHA staff, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network and Reconciliation Australia.

The Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAP Working Group) is responsible for reporting on and reviewing the RAP in order to maintain its focus and currency. The RAP Working Group membership consists of:

- Deputy Secretary, Andrew Stuart, Chair;
- First Assistant Secretary, OATSIH, Samantha Palmer;
- Assistant Secretary People Branch, Robert Wright;
- Director, OATSIH Northern Territory State Office, Tania McInnes;
- Co-Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network, Kirsty Glanville; and
- Deputy-Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network, Emma O'Neil.

This RAP incorporates many of the comments collected and is a living document that will continue to be reviewed and revised annually.

Our Commitment

To ensure the Department delivers against reconciliation, our plan in an evolving document that will be reviewed annually and updated with new initiatives. Our commitment is over the life of the RAP from 2013-2017; our immediate focus is delivering high quality outcomes in 2013-14. Over the 12 months, we will concentrate on the following: relationships, respect, opportunities and tracking progress.

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Relationships

The Department strives to proactively build and maintain internal and external relationships to ensure high quality outcomes in health and aged care.

Action 1:

Maintain a strong RAP Working Group to actively monitor progress against RAP actions.

Timeline: June 2013, September 2013, December 2013, March 2014 and June 2014.

Deliverable: Actively monitors the implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: All Divisions, PCCD, and the Network.

Measurable target:

- Actions are delivered by due dates in RAP.
- Outcomes are communicated internally in the Department with staff.
- Progress is documented on the Department's intranet.

Action 2:

Improve external relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Deliverable: Explore opportunities to work collaboratively with all areas in the Department and across the Australian Government to ensure access to health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is effective, and to extend these relationships to external bodies that provide strategic policy advice, direction and leadership.

Key area: Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Other areas responsible: All Divisions, PCCD, and the Network.

Measurable target:

- Work collaboratively with and seek feedback from key advisory groups, including:
 - National Congress of Australian's First People.
 - National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.
 - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equity Council.
 - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Standing Committee.
 - National Advisory Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data.
 - Commonwealth Indigenous Reform Group.
 - Executive Coordination Forum of Indigenous Affairs.



Action 3:

Improve external relationships with Australian Government Department's to ensure best practice is followed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Deliverable: The department will also build relationship externally within the Australian Public Service to provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Key area: the Network.

Other areas responsible: All Divisions, PCCD.

Measurable target:

- Regular contact with the Australian Public Service Commission.
- Invitations extended to external stakeholders to the Department's cultural events.
- The Network to engage with other departmental Networks.

Action 4:

Build relationships and understanding of cultures between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous staff by promoting the importance and objectives of National Reconciliation Week.

Timeline: As per significant dates of key events.

Deliverable:

- 27 May 2013 – Hold one National Reconciliation Week activity.
- 26 May 2014 – National Reconciliation Week celebrations and acknowledgement of National Sorry Day.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: Property Services, PCCD, and the Network.

Measurable target: Staff attendance at events and feedback from participants.

Respect

The Department abides by the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct and Values but extends respect to the wider community by continuing to invest in raising awareness and understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and engaging in significant cultural activities.



Action 5:

Encourage staff participation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural celebrations through delivering at least five key significant events in the Department per year.

Timeline: As per significant dates of key events.

Deliverable:

- 3 June 2013 – Internal Mabo Day event.
- 8-12 July 2013 – Departmental NAIDOC week celebrations.
- 13 February 2014 – Internal National Apology event.
- 26 May 2014 – Acknowledgement of National Sorry Day.
- 3 June 2014 – Internal Mabo Day event.
- 7-11 July 2014 – Departmental NAIDOC week celebrations.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: Property Services, PCCD, and the Network.

Measurable target: Attendance at significant events and feedback from the Network and attending staff.

Action 6:

Raise internal awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Deliverable: Communicate the meaning and significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: People Branch, and the Network.

Measurable target:

- Invite traditional owners to perform Welcome to Country at significant events.
- Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and artwork at Department buildings.
- Ensure review of Cultural Education and Awareness includes information on protocols.
- Delivery of internal communication strategy to raise awareness of the Network.

Action 7:

Continue to provide appropriate Cultural Education and Awareness training to all staff.

Timeline: Launch of upgraded Cultural Education and Awareness training by 30 June 2014.

Deliverable: Consult with staff and the Network to review current training modules and incorporate recommendations where appropriate to improve quality of training package.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: People Branch, and the Network.

Measurable target:

- An additional 10% of staff to complete the Department's Cultural Education and Awareness training package in 2013-14. Since July 2012, a total of 616 staff have completed the training.
- Feedback from staff and annual consultation with the Network Executive.

Opportunities

The Department is continually improving its efforts to explore new opportunities to improve business practices with the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and value the contributions made by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Action 8:

Continued commitment by the Department to support and consult with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network (the Network) on staff recruitment and retention.

Timeline: Hold National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network conference and deliver new revamped support program and other targeted initiatives by 30 June 2014.

Deliverable:

- Establishment of a Diversity Champion to focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and engage with staff to advocate and progress improvements to outcomes.
- Department to fund annual Network conference.
- Review existing support strategies and consult with Network on new approaches to supporting staff such as a newly designed mentoring program.

Other deliverables by 30 June 2014:

- Create a departmental calendar of culturally significant dates and place on intranet for all staff.
- Network to review relevant intranet pages and update with information for new starters.
- Network and People Branch to review and update Terms of Reference for the Network.
- Promote new brand and logo to build a professional identity of the Network and its members.
- Review and update the relevant intranet pages.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: All Divisions, the Network, and State and Territory Offices.

Measurable target:

- Monthly engagement between senior departmental staff from People, Capability and Communication Division (PCCD) and the Network Executive to discuss progress of departmental support.
- Feedback from Network and number of page hits for updated relevant intranet pages.
- Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff retention rates.



Action 9:

Recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Timeline: Action Plan by 31 July 2013 with commitments for 2014-2015.

Deliverable: Update Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan for endorsement by Departmental executive.

- Consult with the Australian Public Service Commission regarding recruitment and retention best practice based on the Indigenous Employment Kit.
- Consult with Network through the 2013 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network conference regarding future workforce strategy recommendations and preferences for support.
- Participate in Australian Government Entry Level Programs to attract new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to the Department.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: Departmental Executive, PCCD, People Branch, the Network, All Divisions.

Measurable target:

- Increase existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff numbers by 10% during 2013-14.
- Recruitment of staff through the APSC Indigenous Pathways Program and the DEEWR Indigenous Australian Government Development Program.

Action 10:

Provide tailored information resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers that promote the Department of Health and Ageing as an employer of choice at community, government and recruitment fairs or events.

Timeline: 30 June 2014.

Deliverable: Information about career opportunities and support available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the Department.

- Provide good news stories and quotes from our staff.
- Request Network member participation where possible.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: Departmental Executive, PCCD, People Branch, and the Network.

Measurable target:

- Feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers at community, government and recruitment fairs or events.
- Achieve a two per cent staffing level for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by 30 June 2014.

Action 11:

Organise internal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander themed information sessions.

Timeline: One information session every twelve weeks from May 2013.

Deliverable: A seminar will be arranged once every twelve weeks about an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander topic to share stories, experiences and information with departmental staff. The diverse sessions will range from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders discussing their personal experiences and providing advice to others about career choices to organisations sharing information about programs and lessons learnt that could be incorporated into project management planning.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: the Network.

Measurable target: Attendance at seminars and feedback from the Network and attending presenters.

Action 12:

Provide the opportunity for staff to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and culture, through advertising and raising awareness to all staff about how to apply for secondment opportunities to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations/corporations.

Timeline: Advertise in March 2014, with placements to take place in April/May 2014.

Deliverable: Make secondee positions available and support staff to take up positions. Promote an open and transparent EOI process for all staff to apply for a secondment to an Aboriginal community organisation under the Jawun secondment program, coordinated by the Australian Public Service Commission.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: All Divisions, People Branch, and State and Territory Offices.

Measurable target:

- Number of applications and take up of secondments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations/corporations.
- Feedback from participating staff and organisations/corporations.

Action 13:

Consider Supplier Diversity when undertaking procurement for goods and services.

Timeline: September 2013.

Deliverable: Promote the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines Exemption by procuring goods and services from an Indigenous small and medium enterprise (with at least 50 percent Indigenous ownership).

Key area: Office of the Chief Financial Officer Assurance and Advisory Branch.

Other areas responsible: Capability Branch, Internal Communications.

Measurable target: Raised awareness and increased understanding of when the exemption can be used to engage Indigenous Businesses for goods and services. Maintain the Department's membership of Supply Nation which provides a direct business-to-business purchasing link between Government agencies and Indigenous owned businesses.



Tracking Progress

Action 14:

Monitoring and reporting on implementation of the RAP to the RAP Working Group.

Timeline: June 2013, September 2013, December 2013 and March 2014.

Deliverable: Capability Branch to report to the RAP Working Group each quarter on progress against RAP milestones.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: All Divisions, PCCD, and the Network.

Measurable target:

- Accurate and timely delivery of report to the RAP Working Group each quarter on progress against RAP milestones.
- Commence consultations on new RAP in September 2013.

Action 15:

Monitoring and reporting on implementation of the RAP to the Department.

Timeline: September 2014.

Deliverables:

- Capability Branch to report to Executive annually.
- Capability Branch to provide input to the Annual Report.
- Capability Branch to update RAP commitments.
- Capability Branch to report to the Network annually.
- Provide updates on Department website.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: PCCD, the Network, All Divisions, and RAP Working Group.

Measurable target: Accurate and timely delivery of Annual Report to the Executive on outcomes against RAP following consultation.

Action 16:

Annual reporting to Reconciliation Australia on progress against the RAP through the Impact Measurement Questionnaire.

Timeline: September 2014.

Deliverable: Capability Branch to report to the RAP Working Group each quarter on progress against RAP milestones.

Key area: Capability Branch.

Other areas responsible: Departmental Executive, PCCD, The Network, All Divisions.

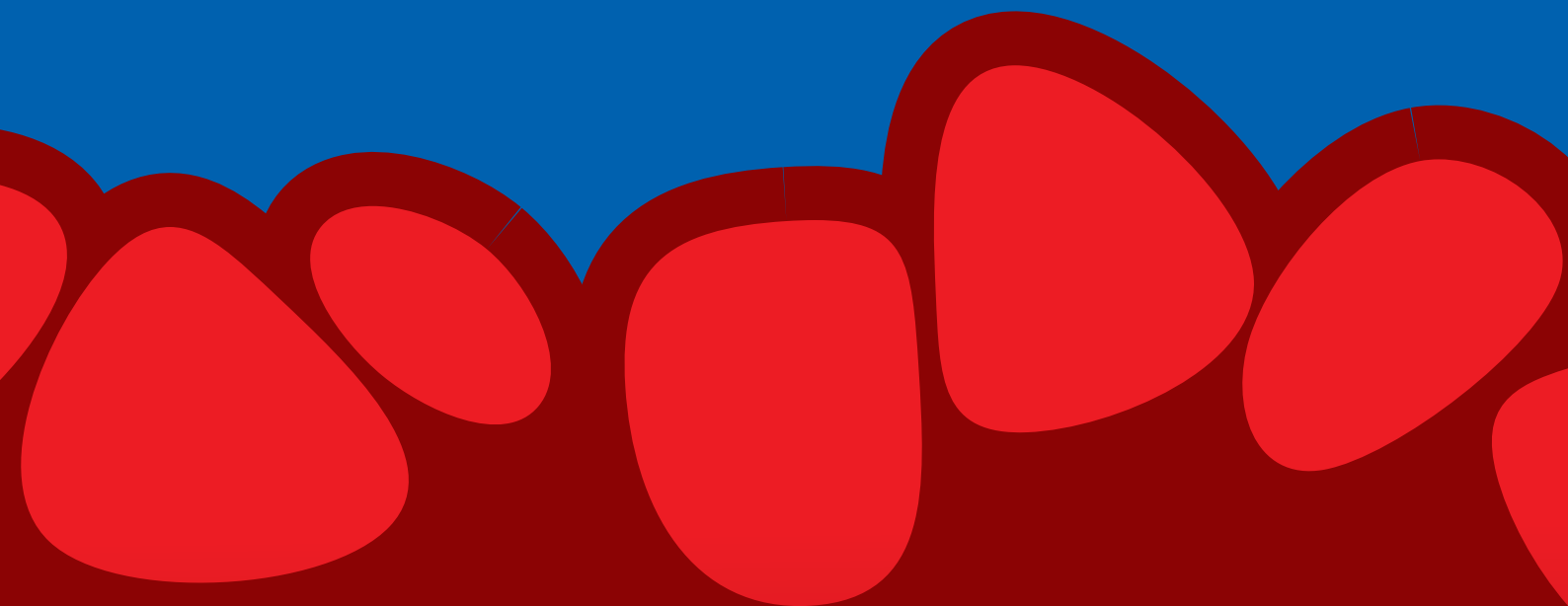
Measurable target: Accurate and timely delivery of annual report to the Reconciliation Australia on outcomes against RAP.



Referencing

External	Internal
<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>	Department of Health and Ageing Corporate Plan 2010-2013
<i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991</i>	Department of Health and Ageing Enterprise Agreement 2011-2014
Australian Public Service – Building an Indigenous Employment Strategy Kit	Department of Health and Ageing People Strategy 2010-2015
<i>Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988</i>	Department of Health and Ageing Reconciliation Action Plan 2010-2012
<i>Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Act 1992</i>	A framework for engagement between Australian Government Agencies and The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples
<i>Public Records Act 2002</i>	
<i>The Public Service Act 1999</i>	
<i>Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>	

For further information on the progress of the RAP, please contact the Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Diversity team at Workforce.Diversity@health.gov.au or by contact 02 6289 1693.



www.health.gov.au

All information in this publication is correct as at July 2013