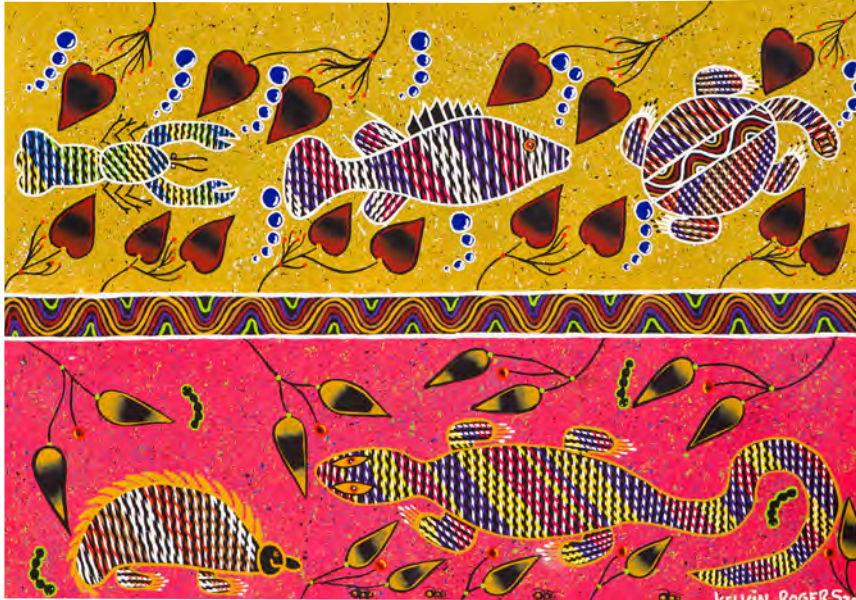


Victoria Legal Aid

Reconciliation Action Plan

July 2019–July 2021





ANIMALS OF THE MURRAY RIVER, KELVIN ROGERS

This artwork represents the Murray River and all the wildlife on the banks and in the water. The line work through the middle represents the journey of my life, what me and my family has gone through the ups and downs. The Murray River stays the same is always going to be there, as our home.

THE TORCH

The artwork has been supplied by The Torch, a project which provides support to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria through art, cultural and arts vocational programs. By embracing program participants as artists rather than offenders, The Torch provides an avenue to change. www.thetorch.org.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Victoria Legal Aid acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land where we work and pays respect to their Elders both past and present. We recognise their continuing connection to country and the resilience and strength of Victoria's Aboriginal communities.

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FOREWORD



On behalf of Victoria Legal Aid (VLA), we are proud to introduce our second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Victoria Legal Aid established its first Reconciliation Action Plan 2015–2018 to commit to practical actions that build on relationships, respect and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

An evaluation of our first RAP was completed in August 2018. This concluded that VLA had a solid foundation on which to build our policies and plans related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Victoria. Some key achievements of our first RAP saw increased opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment with the creation of the Associate Director – Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer and Aboriginal Clerkship roles. VLA has started a cultural shift designed to increase cultural awareness, diversity and inclusion.

Our strategic plan (Strategy 22) reflects VLA's desire to become a more client-centred organisation, by seeking feedback and client views in the design and delivery of our services. We must understand the needs and preferences of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and respond through culturally safe innovative services and true partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

VLA's RAP 2019–21 represents our continued commitment to the principles of reconciliation. This will see us strengthen our actions to ensure our services are culturally safe, responsive and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, who are priority clients for our organisation.

Our second RAP sees us continue:

- Our highly successful Aboriginal Clerkship, Graduate and New Lawyers programs which have increased the number of practising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lawyers at VLA and beyond.
- Our Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers in Civil and Family Law, who have contributed greatly to reducing the barriers between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and our services.

It also introduces new initiatives, including:

- Developing and implementing a Cultural Learning Strategy to ensure our staff and services are culturally safe and responsive for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Refreshing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy to strengthen recruitment, retention and career pathways.
- A new target for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment which will see us go from 1.8 per cent to 3 per cent.
- Increased and continuing support for our partnership with both the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) and Djirra through all their practice areas.

It is our view that these initiatives support our focus in providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients with services that are culturally safe and responsive. At VLA, we believe reconciliation is everyone's responsibility and we are committed to making this everyday business for our organisation. We are pleased to continue our reconciliation journey and our commitment to addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the justice system, closing the gap, and supporting self-determination in Victoria.

Bill Jaboor

Chairperson, VLA Board

Louise Glanville

CEO, VLA

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS



Victoria Legal Aid and Djirra have a long history of working together to meet the legal needs of vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.

We welcome the second VLA Reconciliation Action Plan and applaud the continued commitment to support Djirra's self-determination within the plan. We are looking forward to working with VLA to implement the plan and remain a dedicated supporter of VLA's Reconciliation Action Plan.

We must work together in a culturally responsive manner to improve access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence.

Antoinette Braybrook

CEO, Djirra

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) recognises the need for Victoria Legal Aid to ensure that it takes measurable steps to improve their service response to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We are pleased to have been a part in the processes of developing the Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–2021 and believe that this will not only deepen the relationship between VLA and VALS but also ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel a sense of inclusion and recognition whether they are seeking the services of VLA or choosing to work at VLA. We are confident that this RAP will go towards supporting self-determination for our communities, strengthening the understanding and respect VLA has for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Victoria, and ensuring their service delivery model is response to the needs of our communities. VALS supports these efforts towards the ultimate, ongoing goal of culturally appropriate and expert advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Nerita Waight

CEO, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service



OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Victoria Legal Aid's (VLA) vision for reconciliation in Australia is that we have a fair and just society where everyone is equal. We actively seek to contribute to Australia's reconciliation journey by working in unity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve social justice. As a legal service provider, we will play an important role in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the legal system. To improve outcomes, our organisation will develop meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, build culturally safe and responsive services, and enhance our staff professional development.

We acknowledge, respect and value the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's cultures, and embrace diversity and inclusion by prioritising the recruitment, retention and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. This Reconciliation Action Plan represents our commitment to help drive change across the Victorian justice and social system and to contribute to all dimensions of reconciliation. We strongly support and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination.

OUR BUSINESS

Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) is an independent statutory authority established under the *Legal Aid Act 1978 (Vic)* (the Act). VLA is a government-funded agency set up to ensure that people who cannot afford to pay for a private lawyer can get help with their legal problems. VLA is the biggest legal service in Victoria with over 900 staff (which includes 16 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples), providing legal information, education and advice and representation for Victorians.

Our clients are often people who are socially and economically isolated from society including people with a disability or mental illness, children, the elderly, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and those who live in remote areas. VLA helps people with their legal problems. These include criminal matters, family separation, child protection, family violence, immigration, social security, mental health, discrimination, guardianship and administration, tenancy, and debt.

VLA provides:

- free legal information through our website, our Legal Help phonenumber, community legal education, publications and other resources
- legal advice through our Legal Help phonenumber and free clinics on specific legal issues
- minor assistance to help clients negotiate, write letters, draft documents or prepare to represent themselves in court
- advocacy to people diagnosed with mental health issues, including cognitive, neurological, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, through our Independent Mental Health Advocacy service
- grants of legal aid to pay for legal representation by a lawyer in private practice, a community legal centre or a VLA staff lawyer
- a family mediation service for disadvantaged separated families
- funding to 36 community legal centres and support for the operation of the community legal sector.





VLA has 15 offices across metropolitan and regional Victoria. People living in regional and remote communities can feel isolated and find it difficult to access legal assistance. Our regional offices play a vital role in servicing the community, providing professional and timely advice to those living in rural and remote parts of Victoria.

VLA plays a coordination role in the legal assistance sector in Victoria, with legal services delivered from a variety of providers including private practitioners, community legal centres and Aboriginal Legal Services (often referred together as 'our practice partners'). The mixed model provides several benefits including the flexibility to respond to changes in demand for legal aid services, and support for a client to select a legal practitioner of their choice.

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

VLA acknowledges the disparity and inequality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians in health, economics, education and the judicial system more generally. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are grossly overrepresented in both the adult and youth prison populations¹ and in the child protection system. The legal needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are often complex with civil, family and/or child protection problems intersecting with criminal law matters.²

While there is a high need for legal assistance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, there can be barriers for these communities to receive the help they need due to gaps in services and the absence of culturally safe providers. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also have an understandable distrust of mainstream justice systems and government services due to current and historical injustices experienced by their communities.

VLA established its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2015–2018 to commit to practical actions that built on relationships, respect and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There are four types of RAPs: Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate. VLA's first RAP was an Innovate RAP, which focused on building relationships, showing respect and improving opportunities.

The University of Technology Sydney Institute for Public Policy and Governance were engaged to undertake an evaluation of the implementation of VLA's first RAP. The evaluation report was completed in August 2018 and overall the findings indicated that the first RAP was achieving short to medium-term outcomes and represented a solid foundation upon which to continue to build. The evaluation offered 18 recommendations, which have informed the development of this RAP and informed other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific policies at VLA.

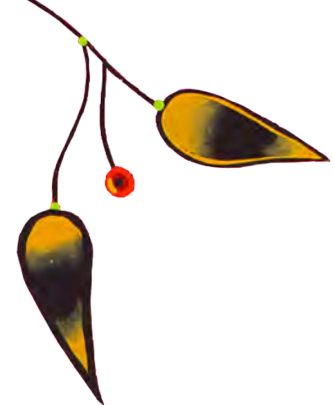
Some key achievements out of our first RAP include increased employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the creation of the Associate Director, Aboriginal Services, Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers and Aboriginal Clerkship roles. VLA also saw a modest organisational cultural shift with improved efforts at recognising and supporting cultural diversity and inclusion.

Although a solid foundation has been established, VLA has a lot more work to do in developing and maintaining culturally safe, responsive and accessible services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. VLA will continue with a second Innovate RAP to recognise the fact that while positive progress has been made, reconciliation is an ongoing journey, and the responsibility of everyone in Australia.

This RAP has been informed by the evaluation recommendations alongside the five critical dimensions: race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance. These five dimensions do not exist in isolation, they are interrelated, and we agree that Australia can only achieve full reconciliation by acknowledging all five.


¹ State of Victoria, *Burra Lotjpa Dungaludja: Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement – Phase 4*, Melbourne, 2018 Available at: <https://www.aboriginaljustice.vic.gov.au/the-agreement/aboriginal-over-representation-in-the-justice-system>

² Allison, F., Cunnen, C., Schwartz, M., *The civil and family law needs of the Indigenous people in Victoria*, The Cairns Institute, James Cook University, Cairns, 2013.



The actions established in this RAP will be implemented from 2019 to 2021, with the primary focus on ensuring services are culturally safe, responsive and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The action outcomes will be centred around Relationships, Respect and Opportunities, and will provide pathways to employment and career development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, forming strong partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and communities, providing high-quality and culturally sensitive services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients currently constitute at least five per cent of our overall clients; and in some regions this proportion can be over 20 per cent. VLA's aspiration is for our proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to be reflective of the proportion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients we serve. This requires significant commitment and investment. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing is a long-term investment and matching staffing levels with client access levels will not be met in this two-year plan. However, VLA is committed to progressing this goal through this plan and recognises that this plan includes enabling actions to support continuous improvement following this plan. Many staff at VLA have expressed a desire to learn how to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and we see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing growth as essential to influencing cultural change within the organisation, as VLA strives towards consistent delivery of culturally safe services. The RAP outcomes align with making a difference in the lives of clients and the community by resolving and preventing legal problems and encouraging a fair and transparent justice system.



The statistics below highlight the importance of ensuring legal services are culturally appropriate and accessible.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Although they make up around two per cent of the national population, they constitute 27 per cent of the national prison population.³
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented in child protection and out-of-home care services compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. As at June 2016, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were 14.6 times more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be in out-of-home care in Victoria.⁴
- Research suggests out-of-home care increases the likelihood of adult offending and incarceration. Family violence occurs at higher rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Family violence within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities needs to be understood as both a cause and effect of social disadvantage and intergenerational trauma.⁵
- In 2014–15, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were 32 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men were 23 times more likely to be hospitalised than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.⁶

While the statistics concerning the disproportionate incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are alarming, it is important to bear in mind that the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples never commit a criminal offence.⁷

VLA's strategic plan (Strategy 22) sets out a vision for a fair and just society where rights and responsibilities are upheld. The organisation's purpose is to make a difference for clients and the community through provisions of effective legal services and collaborative leadership of a strong and dynamic legal assistance sector by:

- listening to clients and make meeting their diverse needs a priority (**Clients**)
- designing services using evidence and feedback before deciding on how and where they are delivered (**Impact**)
- acting in ways that build trust and deepen relationships with colleagues, partners and the community (**Together**).

VLA's RAP aligns with Strategy 22 by:

Clients – Ensuring that our services are designed and delivered to meet the needs of our clients. This includes ensuring services are accessible, culturally safe and sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

Impact – Drawing on the advice, experience, recommendations and evidence from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and communities about what works to achieve our RAP objectives.

Together – Working in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to achieve common objectives for improving access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The development of VLA's RAP was guided by a RAP Working Group. The Working Group consists of key stakeholders within the organisation, including senior management and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are represented on the Working Group by the Associate Director, Aboriginal Services along with four representatives from the newly formed First Nations Staff Network.

3 State of Victoria, *Victoria Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018 -2023*, Melbourne 2018. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/system/user_files/Documents/av/VAAF%20FINAL.pdf

4 Australia Government Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services*, 2018. Available at: <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2018>

5 State of Victoria, *Burra Lotjpa Dungaludja: Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement – Phase 4*, Melbourne, 2018 Available at: https://www.aboriginaljustice.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/embridge_cache/emshare/original/public/2018/09/9d/784c6e742/Victorian%20Aboriginal%20Justice%20Agreement%20Phase%204.pdf

6 *Ibid*

7 State of Victoria, *Victoria Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018 -2023*, Melbourne 2018. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/system/user_files/Documents/av/VAAF%20FINAL.pdf

The current Working Group members are:

Alan Dewis	Associate Director	Aboriginal Services, Chair
Alethea Belford	Associate Director	Data Services, Corporate Affairs
Carman Parsons	Manager	Client Intake and Inclusion, Access and Equity
Craig Cairney	Senior Legal Help Lawyer	Legal Help
Jacinta Foley	Strategic Resourcing & Remuneration Manager	People and Culture
Jessica McDonald	Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer	Gippsland regional office, Morwell
Jessica Thomson	Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer	Mallee regional office, Mildura
Jon Cina	Associate Director	Access and Equity
Kate Bundrock	Program Manager	Summary Crime, Criminal Law
Kylie Browne	Change and Engagement Manager	Strategic Planning and Investment, Corporate Affairs
Kira Lee	Senior Evaluation Advisor	Research, Evaluation and Library
Peter Noble	Executive Director	Services and Innovation
Rebecca Burgmann	Managing Lawyer	Gippsland regional office, Morwell
Sharon Leffler	Managing Lawyer	Wimmera regional office, Horsham

The development of this RAP has seen the establishment of a First Nations Staff Network to provide a collective voice of expertise within the organisation and also to offer cultural support and connection between First Nations staff who may work across the State. The First Nations Staff Network is a key internal consultative group for the RAP Working Group. The network currently has 16 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members who have been involved in the development of this RAP. The network has actions within the RAP which relate to them being engaged in the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service design and policies.



The First Nations Staff Network member are:



First Nations Staff Network L-R: Tim Mansell, Alan Dewis, Jessica McDonald, Jessica Thomson, John Cattanach, Courtney McGann, Alethea Belford, Craig Cairney, Kye Hardie, Samantha Rudolph (not pictured, Declan Fry, Emma Field, Ron Davis, KerriAnne Whap, John Morrissey, Simone Lim)

First Nations Staff Network members support VLA's commitment to have a RAP and highlight its importance in supporting the self-determination initiative as it honours the rights set out in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and Victoria's *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2016*.

The First Nations Staff Network vision is:

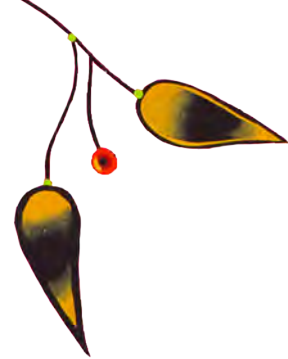
"To have a strong and visible network of First Nations staff to support cultural safety, accountability and awareness across the organisation. To be a collective voice that is influential in designing and implementing all VLA specific Aboriginal Services, programs, policies and decisions affecting our communities. To be a part of a workplace where all are equal and respected, where our role is valued, understood, and acknowledged by our peers as vital and important."

To advance the development and implementation of our RAP, a Reconciliation Champions Network has also been established with 32 members within VLA, across a range of roles and offices. Importantly,

the Reconciliation Champions Network includes a representative of the Board, as well as the Chief Executive Officer, reflecting the priority afforded to the RAP commitments in strategic decision-making. The Reconciliation Champions Network was established as a direct response to lessons learnt from our first RAP, where it was shown that staff wanted to be more involved and connected to the RAP. The commitment and passion shown by many VLA staff members to the principles of reconciliation is evident by the numbers who expressed interest to join the group.

VLA's RAP Champions will be active and positive leaders for reconciliation throughout the organisation. They will help their colleagues to understand and embrace the new RAP and maintain awareness through the two-year life of the plan.

Champions have been provided with cultural awareness training, as well as in-depth knowledge and support about our RAP to help translate the vision into practical actions that are relevant and meaningful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



The RAP Champions Network members are:

Aili Gomez	Deputy Managing Lawyer	Outer eastern office, Ringwood
Ajesla Siskovic	Senior Civil Lawyer	Outer eastern office, Ringwood
Anita Kousari	Lawyer - Legal Help	Civil Justice, Access and Equity
Amilee Myson	Civil Lawyer	Goulburn regional office, Shepparton
Christina GomezVazquez	Lawyer	Criminal Law Melbourne
Clare Wilkin	Senior Advocate –Youth Crime	Loddon Campaspe, Bendigo
Cynthia Ganesharajah	Project Manager, Reform Implementation	Criminal Law
Dan Nicholson	Executive Director	Criminal Law
Emma Hunt	Executive Manager	Office of the CEO
Fiona Reavley	Legal Assistant	Gippsland regional office, Morwell
Graham Wells	Senior Lawyer	Westernport office, Dandenong
Hannah Fearnside	Case Manager	Family Dispute Resolution Service
Hannah Sycamore	Senior Civil Lawyer	Mallee regional office, Mildura
Isabella Wilson	Legal Assistant	Central Highlands regional office, Ballarat
Jessie Taylor	Associate Director	VLA Chambers
John O’Donoghue	Non-Executive Director	VLA Board
Kate Windmill	Deputy Managing Lawyer, Family & Civil	Gippsland regional office, Morwell
Kimberley Ison	Managing Lawyer	Professional Support Team
Liraz Jedwab	Deputy Managing Lawyer	Western suburbs office, Sunshine
Lesley Ward	Business Partner	People and Culture, Corporate Affairs
Louise Glanville	Chief Executive Officer	Office of the CEO
Maire Grimes	Acting Managing Lawyer, Summary Crime	Criminal Law
Melanie Rudolphus	Deputy Managing Lawyer	Central Highlands regional office, Ballarat
Morgan Adams	Senior Lawyer	South Coast regional office, Warrnambool
Olivia Bakyew	Project Officer	Services and Innovation
Olivia Greenwell	Manager, Strategy	Family, Youth and Children’s Law
Peter Noble	Executive Director	Services and Innovation
Renee Blight-Clark	Manager Strategy, Policy and Projects	Legal Practice
Sally Johnston	Senior Communications Advisor	Strategic Communications, Corporate Affairs
Sarah Westwood	Senior Lawyer	South Coast regional office, Warrnambool
Sarah Winch	Project Officer / Executive Assistant	People and Culture
Simon Suttie	Lawyer, Assessment & Referral Court (ARC) List Therapeutic Courts	Peninsula office, Frankston

In developing the 2019–21 RAP, consultations took place with both key external and internal stakeholders:

- Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services (VALS)
- Djirra (formerly Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service – Victoria)
- VLA’s First Nations Staff Network
- VLA’s Reconciliation Champions Network
- VLA’s Senior Executive Team
- VLA’s Board.

Relationships



Strong relationships with Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations is vital to Victoria Legal Aid's (VLA's) position of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's self-determination. VLA has an established supportive relationship with both Aboriginal legal services, Djirra (formerly Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service Victoria) and the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS). The importance of maintaining strong relationships with both organisations and building new relationships with the community will ensure a collaborative approach to the delivery of responsive services.

It is important that VLA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are visible and included in building partnerships with Aboriginal organisations and to the delivery of a responsive and culturally safe service. The establishment of a First Nations Staff Network is a key element to enable the organisation to develop and strengthen relationships internally.





FOCUS AREA: The focus area targets in the relationship section of this RAP are designed to progress the reconciliation dimensions of unity and race relations by building and maintaining key internal and external relationships. The objective of these relationships is to ensure coordinated delivery of VLA services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ACTION 01 Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1.1. Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	July 2020	Chief Executive Officer
1.2. Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	July 2020	Associate Director, Strategic Communications

ACTION 02 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
2.1. Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	1 May annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
2.2. RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May 3 June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
2.3. Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May 3 June annually	Chief Executive Officer
2.4. Organise at least one internal NRW event each year.	27 May, 3 June annually	Executive Director, Services and Innovation
2.5. Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
2.6. Identify and develop a list of potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest speakers for annual NRW events.	April annually	Associate Director, Strategic Communications
2.7. Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community stakeholders are invited to VLA annual NRW event.	April annually	Associate Director, Strategic Communications
2.8. Ensure that VLA's First Nations Staff Network are all invited to VLAs annual NRW event.	April annually	Associate Director, Strategic Communications

ACTION

03

Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3.1. Implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation.	December 2019	Executive Director, Services and Innovation
3.2. Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	May annually	Associate Director, Strategic Communications
3.3. Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	May November annually	Associate Director, Strategic Communications
3.4. Investigate opportunities to collaborate with Reconciliation Australia, Reconciliation Victoria and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.	February annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services

ACTION

04

Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
4.1. Conduct a review VLA's policies and procedures to ensure compliance with anti-discrimination obligations and to promote the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.	December 2019	Head of People and Culture
4.2. Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	July 2020	Head of People and Culture
4.3. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	February 2020	Head of People and Culture
4.4. Educate VLA's senior leaders on the effects of racism.	January annually	Head of People and Culture

ACTION

05

Increase support to improve working in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS).

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5.1. VLA and VALS to establish and implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to strengthen our partnership.	June 2020	Chief Executive Officer
5.2. Explore collaborative partnerships with VALS to establish improved communications between all legal and non-legal areas of both organisations.	June annually	Executive Director, Criminal Law Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children's Law Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity
5.3. Explore collaborative partnerships with VALS to establish mutual training opportunities for staff from both organisations.	June annually	Executive Director, Criminal Law Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children's Law Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity
5.4. Quarterly meetings between senior staff at VLA and VALS to ensure MOU is supported and continually explore opportunities to strengthen the partnership.	February June September December annually	Executive Director, Criminal Law Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children's Law Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity

ACTION

06

Increase support to improve working in partnership with Djirra (formerly Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service Victoria).

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6.1. VLA and Djirra to establish and implement a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen our partnership.	June 2020	Chief Executive Officer
6.2. Explore collaborative partnerships with Djirra to establish improved communications between all legal and non-legal areas of both organisations.	June annually	Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children's Law
6.3. Explore collaborative partnerships with Djirra to establish mutual training opportunities for staff from both organisations.	December annually	Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children's Law
6.4. Quarterly meetings between senior staff at VLA and Djirra to ensure MOU is supported and continually explore opportunities to strengthen the partnership.	February June September December annually	Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children's Law

ACTION

07

Enhance VLA's accountability to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7.1. Engage with Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Groups and Local Aboriginal Justice Advisory Groups on the appropriateness of a VLA representative participating in meetings to provide updates on RAP activities and VLA's services in specific areas.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
7.2. Explore opportunities for more community engagement through technology. (e.g. social media and online sponsored ads).	December 2019	Associate Director, Strategic Communications

ACTION

08

Strengthen the relationship between VLA Chambers and Aboriginal legal services (VALS and Djirra).

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8.1. Communicate briefing guidelines and procedures for committals, County Court appeals, County Court pleas and trials to VALS, and encourage VALS staff to brief VLA Chambers.	June annually	Chief Counsel
8.2. Communicate family law briefing guidelines to Djirra staff and encourage Djirra staff to brief VLA Chambers.	June annually	Chief Counsel
8.3. Encourage both Aboriginal legal services to engage in specific training offered by VLA Chambers	June annually	Chief Counsel
8.4. VLA Chambers will establish a nominated Chambers contact for both Aboriginal legal services to provide legal support, where appropriate.	June annually	Chief Counsel
8.5. Explore other opportunities that may assist in enhancing Aboriginal legal services, such as secondment or shadowing opportunities with VLA Chambers.	June annually	Chief Counsel





Respect



The foundations of respect will be built and maintained through education, which will focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights. Cultural awareness and cultural competency requires continuous learning for VLA to be a culturally safe and responsive organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and staff.





FOCUS AREA: The focus area targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Training and Services. This focus area is designed to progress the reconciliation dimensions of historical acceptance, unity and institutional integrity.

ACTION
09

Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9.1. Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	December 2019	Head of People and Culture
9.2. Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff in consultation with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors.	December 2020	Head of People and Culture
9.3. Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, People and Culture managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	July 2020	Head of People and Culture
9.4. Develop and implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency standards for VLA staff in consultation with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors.	May 2021	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
9.5. 120 staff to undertake cultural awareness training under each year of the RAP.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
9.6. All Executive Directors are to participate in cultural awareness training and continuously promote the importance of cultural awareness to staff.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
9.7. Implement policy changes to require all new starters to complete the e-learning cultural awareness module.	December 2019	Head of People and Culture
9.8. Develop a guide for VLA staff to assist in identifying and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.	December 2019	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services

ACTION
10

Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10.1. Review, strengthen, implement and communicate an updated cultural protocols document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	January 2020	Associate Director, Strategic Communications
10.2. Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June 2020	Associate Director, Strategic Communications
10.3. Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocols at significant events each year.	June annually	Associate Director, Strategic Communications
10.4. Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	June annually	Chief Executive Officer
10.5. Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country.	January 2020	Associate Director, Strategic Communications
10.6. All current employees will be reminded of the Acknowledgement of Country plaques in all offices.	December 2019	Executive Director, Services and Innovation
10.7. All new starters will be made aware of the Acknowledgement of Country plaques in their office as part of their induction.	December 2019	Executive Director, Services and Innovation
10.8. VLA recognises the conflicted nature of the Australia Day celebrations on 26 January for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians by providing choice for staff in terms of whether they work on the January 26 Public Holiday.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
10.9. Circulate materials to our staff on the Uluru Statement from the Heart made at the Referendum Council on 26 May 2017.	June annually	Chief Executive Officer

ACTION

11

Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11.1. RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July annually	Chief Executive Officer
11.2. Review VLA's policies and procedures to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	December 2019	Head of People and Culture
11.3. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to engage with their culture and community through NAIDOC Week events.	First week in July annually	Head of People and Culture
11.4. Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services

ACTION

12

Continue to improve VLA's culturally safe workplace practices and working environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and clients.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12.1. Identify an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation to deliver cultural safety workshops to VLA staff.	July 2020	Head of People and Culture
12.2. Cultural safety workshops will be provided to 150 VLA staff.	May 2021	Head of People and Culture
12.3. Consult with the First Nations Staff Network to evaluate the cultural appropriateness of workplace practices.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
12.4. Explore opportunities to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on media platforms such as Comet and Yammer.	December 2019	Associate Director, Strategic Communications
12.5. Actively engage all staff through VLA's media platforms to highlight the importance of culturally safe practices.	June annually	Associate Director, Strategic Communications



ACTION

13

Raise VLA's profile and presence at major Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community events and celebrations.

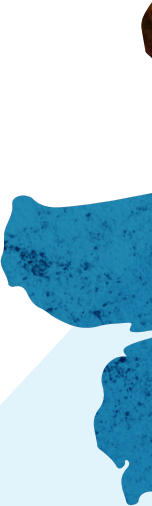
Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
13.1. Attend major community events when endorsed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, including: Djirra's Sisters Day Out, Dardi Munwurro's State-wide Men's Gathering, VACSAL State-wide Sporting Carnivals, Koori Youth Council annual summit and the Aboriginal Justice Forum.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
13.2. Provide legal education and promote VLA's services at major Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community events and celebrations.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services

ACTION

14

Increase the briefing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander barristers by both VLA lawyers and practice partners.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
14.1. Continue to communicate both internally and externally to lawyers to consider the Victorian Bar Indigenous Equal Opportunity Briefing Policy to encourage briefing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander barristers.	June annually	Executive Director, Legal Practice
14.2. Continue to promote the briefing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander barristers through the coordinated briefing process.	June annually	Executive Director, Legal Practice



ACTION

15

Support practice partners to provide culturally safe services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
15.1. Look for meaningful ways for VLA to support the cultural awareness of private practitioners and Community Legal Centres (CLCs).	June annually	Executive Director, Legal Practice
15.2. Collaborate with Aboriginal legal services where possible to influence private practitioners and CLCs to improve cultural safety and culturally responsive services.	May 2021	Executive Director, Legal Practice
15.3. Explore opportunities to ensure accountability of practice partners to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.	May 2021	Executive Director, Legal Practice



Opportunities



VLA acknowledges that increased employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contributes to supporting Aboriginal self-determination.⁸ VLA aims to increase its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to be reflective of the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients we serve. The importance of a diverse workforce is essential to achieving services that are culturally safe and responsive to our clients. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff bring unique knowledge, skills and expertise to the workforce and understand the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.⁹

⁸ State of Victoria, *Tharamba Bugheen: Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy 2017-2021*, Melbourne, 2017. Available at: [https://www.vic.gov.au/system/user_files/Documents/av/AV%20-%20Tharamba%20Bugheen%20Aboriginal%20Business%20Strategy%20-%20March%202017\(2\).pdf](https://www.vic.gov.au/system/user_files/Documents/av/AV%20-%20Tharamba%20Bugheen%20Aboriginal%20Business%20Strategy%20-%20March%202017(2).pdf)

⁹ State of Victoria, *Victoria Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018 -2023*, Melbourne 2018. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/system/user_files/Documents/av/VAAF%20FINAL.pdf





FOCUS AREA: The focus area targets are to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment both in legal and non-legal roles, whilst ensuring a career pathway with professional development is provided for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. This focus area is designed to progress the reconciliation dimensions of equality and equity, and institutional integrity.

ACTION
16

Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
16.1. Build understanding of the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing profile to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2019	Head of People and Culture
16.2. Consult with our First Nations Staff Network on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2020	Head of People and Culture
16.3. Review, strengthen and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2020	Head of People and Culture
16.4. Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	June 2020	Head of People and Culture
16.5. Review VLA's recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	June 2020	Head of People and Culture
16.6. Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at VLA to three per cent.	May 2021	Head of People and Culture
16.7. Identify and promote education and leadership opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
16.8. Explore the opportunity for a scholarship award to provide financial assistance for ongoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to pursue professional development through further studies.	December 2020	Head of People and Culture

ACTION

16 cont...

Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
16.9. Establish a network to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with job applications, interviews and mentoring to advance career opportunities with VLA.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
16.10. Provide opportunities for a minimum of two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to attend the annual National Indigenous Legal Conference.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
16.11. Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in non-legal roles at VLA.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
16.12. Ensure development and career progression opportunities for current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in both legal and non-legal roles are identified and implemented.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
16.13. Explore the opportunity to establish new recruitment pathways to non-legal roles into VLA for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (for example, clerkships/graduate roles in Finance, People and Culture, etc).	June 2020	Head of People and Culture
16.14. Maintain the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clerkship Program each year.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
16.15. Maintain two positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law students in the Graduate Program each year.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
16.16. Maintain two dedicated positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lawyers in the New Lawyers Program each year.	June annually	Head of People and Culture



ACTION

17

Strengthen VLA's policies and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
17.1. Consult with VLA's Aboriginal Services in relation to the development and implementation of all new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service initiatives and recruitment strategies.	June annually	Executive Director, Services and Innovation
17.2. VLA's First Nations Staff Network's expertise is sought and embraced, ensuring members have the opportunity to provide input into new policies and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at its quarterly meetings.	June annually	Executive Director, Services and Innovation

ACTION

18

Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to consider a career with VLA.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
18.1. Engage with the Indigenous Law Students and Lawyers Association of Victoria (Tarwirri) to promote VLA as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law students.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
18.2. Engage universities directly with a view to promoting VLA as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
18.3. Develop promotional material (such as a video) featuring the current VLA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lawyers involved in the Graduate and New Lawyers program.	December 2020	Head of People and Culture
18.4. Distribute promotional materials developed about VLA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment programs to relevant stakeholders.	February 2021	Head of People and Culture
18.5. Explore opportunities to promote VLA as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across non-legal roles.	June annually	Head of People and Culture
18.6. Explore the opportunity to establish scholarships for secondary students.	December 2020	Head of People and Culture

ACTION 19

Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
19.1. Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	December 2020	Chief Financial Officer
19.2. Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2020	Chief Financial Officer
19.3. Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	December 2020	Chief Financial Officer
19.4. Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	December 2020	Chief Financial Officer
19.5. Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	December 2020	Chief Financial Officer

ACTION 20

Strengthen access to legal assistance to respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander civil and family law needs.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
20.1. Improve access to Legal Help for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients by establishing and implementing a priority line.	December 2020	Associate Director, Access and Equity
20.2. Develop and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific VLA Legal Help cards for clients, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Community Legal Centres.	February 2020	Associate Director, Access and Equity
20.3. Develop practical civil and family law resources for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.	February 2021	Associate Director, Access and Equity

ACTION

21

Explore the opportunity to expand the Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers Program.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
21.1. Evaluate the Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers program with a view to strengthening and expanding it across VLA offices, based on evaluation outcomes.	January 2021	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
21.2. Research and compile a position paper on the benefits and estimated costs of increasing the Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers program to other VLA offices, following the evaluation.	May 2021	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services

ACTION

22

Investigate opportunities for VLA to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client access to civil law services.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
22.1. Research and document the benefits of establishing an Aboriginal Civil Justice team to undertake outreach in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria.	June 2020	Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity
22.2. Explore the opportunity to collaborate with practice partners and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to establish integrated civil law services.	December 2020	Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity
22.3. Explore the opportunity for the Aboriginal Civil Justice team staffing model to include designated non-legal roles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	December 2020	Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity
22.4. Explore opportunities to obtain funding for a pilot Aboriginal Civil Justice team.	December 2020	Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity

ACTION

23

Explore opportunities to increase the development of integrated or co-located services.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
23.1. Draw on the findings of the mid-term evaluation of VLA's health justice partnership in the Mallee and consider further opportunities for similar partnerships across Victoria.	January 2021	Executive Director, Services and Innovation
23.2. Explore, identify and consider establishing partnerships to integrate or co-locate VLA's services with organisations that are providing complex wrap-around services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.	January 2021	Executive Director, Services and Innovation
23.3. Engage with state and commonwealth health and justice agencies to obtain funding for integrated or co-located service partnerships.	May 2021	Executive Director, Services and Innovation

ACTION

24

Strengthen the referral processes between VLA and Aboriginal legal services and other non-legal Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
24.1. Maintain referrals between VLA, Aboriginal legal services and, where appropriate, to other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.	June annually	Associate Director, Access and Equity
24.2. Explore and identify additional Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to establish and increase warm referral pathways or agreements.	June annually	Associate Director, Access and Equity
24.3. Evaluate referral process with a view to strengthening referrals to Aboriginal legal services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.	May 2021	Associate Director, Access and Equity

ACTION
25

Explore strategic advocacy opportunities with Aboriginal legal services.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
25.1. Explore collaborative partnerships with Aboriginal legal services where possible to undertake strategic advocacy.	June annually	Executive Director, Criminal Law Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children’s Law Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity
25.2. Support Aboriginal legal services, where possible, to be a collective voice in lobbying for constructive changes in the law to address systemic injustices.	June annually	Executive Director, Criminal Law Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children’s Law Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity
25.3. Ensure policy and law reform submissions which affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients have the involvement of Aboriginal Services to ensure appropriate consideration of cultural issues.	June annually	Executive Director, Criminal Law Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children’s Law Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity
25.4. Explore collaborative partnerships with Aboriginal legal services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to increase access to VLA’s services.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services



ACTION

26

Increase access to VLA services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
26.1. Explore collaborative partnerships with the Aboriginal Justice Caucus of the Aboriginal Justice Forum for community guidance to increase access to VLA's services.	September annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
26.2. Consider whether our existing eligibility criteria or intake processes create barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who would benefit from our services.	July 2020	Associate Director, Access and Equity
26.3. Engage VLA's First Nations Staff Network, Aboriginal legal services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and people with lived experience in designing and delivering CLE for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	June annually	Associate Director, Access and Equity

ACTION

27

Increase Community Legal Education (CLE) resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
27.1. Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources to be used by VLA, Aboriginal legal services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to increase legal education in the community.	June annually	Associate Director, Access and Equity
27.2. Ensure that at least two resources are developed each year to increase CLE materials for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	December annually	Associate Director, Access and Equity
27.3. Explore opportunities to establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lived experience focus groups across the diverse practise areas of VLA.	December 2020	Associate Director, Access and Equity

ACTION
28

Support Aboriginal self-determination and include lived experience in the design and delivery of VLA services.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
28.1. Explore opportunities to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with lived experience in existing groups, (i.e. the Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) Speaking from Experience group).	December 2020	Associate Director, Access and Equity



Governance



ACTION

29

Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
29.1. RWG oversees the development, endorsement, launch and implementation of the RAP.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
29.2. Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
29.3. Establish and apply terms of reference for the RWG.	December 2019	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
29.4. Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services

ACTION

30

RAP Champions Network to engage both internally and externally to promote VLA's RAP 2019–2021.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
30.1. Review the RAP Champions Network annually to provide opportunities to refresh and renew the group.	June annually	Chief Executive Officer
30.2. RAP Champions Network will promote VLA's RAP both internally and externally.	June annually	Chief Executive Officer
30.3. RAP Champions Network will be invited to participate in VLA's major community events, NAIDOC week and National Reconciliation Week	May, June annually	Chief Executive Officer
30.4. RAP Champions Network will meet a minimum of four times per year, and, additionally, will have a minimum of two joint meeting with the First Nations Staff Network.	June annually	Chief Executive Officer
30.5. Ensure the Board is engaged with, and briefed on, progress against the RAP - including through direct participation of a Board representative in the RAP Champions Network.	June annually	Chief Executive Officer

ACTION

31

Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
31.1. Define resourcing needs for RAP implementation.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
31.2. Engage senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
31.3. Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services

ACTION

32

Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
32.1. Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
32.2. Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders twice a year.	April October annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
32.3. Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	June annually	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services
32.4. Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2020	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services

ACTION

33

Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
33.1. Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	January 2021	Associate Director, Aboriginal Services



Victoria Legal Aid's Reconciliation Action Plan can be downloaded from our website www.vla.vic.gov.au in pdf format.

If you have any questions, suggestion or comments about VLA's Reconciliation Action Plan, contact Alan Dewis, Associate Director-Aboriginal Services, Victoria Legal Aid
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