



Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia



(16/7170)

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Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan for the years 2016 – 2018

Our vision for reconciliation

Working in partnership with Aboriginal¹ peoples and with agencies and others that provide services and support, the Commissioner for Children and Young People (CCYP) in Western Australia and staff envision a future where all Aboriginal children and young people are heard, healthy, safe, able to reach their potential, and welcomed as valued members of the community.

Our business

The Commissioner is responsible for promoting and monitoring the wellbeing of children and young people in Western Australia. Under the [Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006 \(WA\)](#) priority is given to the wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people.

The Commissioner must always act in the best interests of children and young people with the aim of improving their wellbeing, and is dedicated to ensuring their voices are heard. The Commissioner is required to give priority to the interests and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and to the vulnerable or disadvantaged.

The Commissioner works proactively with children and young people and their families, government, not-for-profit organisations and others in the community to improve the wellbeing of children and young people, and commissions research, publishes reports, and hosts events to highlight specific aspects of children and young people's wellbeing. Using research and the other evidence available, the Commissioner seeks to positively influence legislation, policy, services and attitudes, meeting regularly with key decision makers and advises on legislation and policy through submissions and issues papers and speaking directly to government and the broader community.

Key areas of the Commissioner's work include:

- promoting the participation of children and young people to give them a voice in decision making

¹ In this document, the term 'Aboriginal' is respectfully intended to be inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- developing and promoting use of the Wellbeing Monitoring Framework, which provides a central resource of data and research to enable agencies to plan and deliver more effective services and programs for children and young people
- running an annual, child-focused Thinker in Residence program
- turning the spotlight on important issues affecting the wellbeing of children and young people, including mental health, early childhood, sexualisation, youth justice, reducing alcohol-related harm, child protection and making complaints systems child-friendly.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People has 16 FTE (full time equivalent) staff. The office has one identified Aboriginal position for a Community Engagement Officer and a candidate who identifies as Aboriginal was recruited to this role. The Commissioner's office is a Western Australian state government agency, the office has a geographical reach to children and young people² throughout Western Australia.

Our RAP

This **Reconciliation Action Plan** (RAP) is a statement of the Commissioner's commitment to bringing Western Australians together. The aim is to deliver realistic, achievable and measurable actions that support Aboriginal children and young people. The Commissioner and staff are committed to working together with Aboriginal children and young people, their families, carers and communities towards closing the gap and to ensure that Aboriginal children and young people enjoy the same life opportunities as other Australian children.

Consultation with Aboriginal peoples plays a significant part in the work of this office and the outcomes from these ongoing consultations have been applied in the development of this RAP. All staff have a role in championing the principles contained within this RAP, both internally and externally. As detailed in the Commissioner for Children and Young People Strategic Plan, consultation with Aboriginal children and young people, their families, carers and organisations that work with Aboriginal peoples and children plays a strong role in all of the Commissioner's work, including key actions within this RAP.

The framework for the actions described in this plan includes:

- the legal requirement for the Commissioner to give priority to, and have special regard to, the interests and needs of Aboriginal children and young people
- the provisions of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and
- the Commissioner for Children and Young People five-year strategic plan, [Our approach and priorities 2016–2020](#).

All Corporate Executive staff have a role in promoting the RAP internally and externally. The RAP champions are the Director of Policy and Research and the Aboriginal Engagement Officer, who identifies as Aboriginal. Due to the small size of the agency, all staff are members of the RAP working group.

² Defined as being aged between 0 and 18 years.

Our RAP Journey

The views of Aboriginal children and young people, their families and communities inform the content of this plan. Since CCYP's first RAP in 2009, CCYP has undertaken a number of projects that focus on Aboriginal children and young people's personal views on a range of matters. This work and our knowledge and understanding of contemporary research on the factors that influence children and young people's wellbeing, have been used to inform the development of this RAP. At the same time the Commissioner recognises that the process of reconciliation will always remain a work in progress that demands a continuous process of dialogue and learning.

A significant factor in the CCYP RAP journey has been the integration of RAP activities with the day to day business of the Commissioner. The CCYP RAP does not sit separately to other work of the office. Its principles are embedded in all agency policies and practices, whether this is the use of Aboriginal artwork in publications, ensuring Acknowledgement of Country and of Traditional Owners in public presentations made by the Commissioner or ensuring cultural awareness forms a part of staff professional development. Every staff member of CCYP is recognised as having a role in undertaking the actions outlined in this RAP and ensuring that all work they perform takes this into account.

An emphasis on reconciliation is integrated within CCYP Strategic focus/vision document *Our approach and priorities 2016-2020* and Business Planning processes and supported through the Commissioner's decision-making processes, accountability structures and project management activity. This vision guides the Commissioner's work whenever and wherever the Commissioner advocates, promotes and monitors the wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people. Through this work, and through inquiries into matters affecting the wellbeing of young people generally, the Commissioner will act to promote awareness and understanding in the community about the wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people. The Commissioner will seek to promote and support strong partnerships between all agencies, groups and individuals involved in working with Aboriginal children and young people. The Commissioner works to build and maintain effective and respectful relationships with Aboriginal people in general and in particular with Aboriginal children and young people.

Corporate Executive members have a particular responsibility to demonstrate this commitment to reconciliation, through monitoring the implementation, practice and performance of reconciliation activities. This includes annual reporting of reconciliation action plan activity and ensuring that Aboriginal children and young people's wellbeing and cultural needs are considered in all relevant project management activity. All submissions presented to Corporate Executive are reviewed by the Director Policy and Research for their relevance to Aboriginal peoples prior to endorsement. Any submissions with direct impact on Aboriginal people will be developed in consultation with appropriate Aboriginal staff, consultants or community representatives, including Aboriginal children and young people where appropriate.

At the discretion of the Commissioner, consultants with relevant expertise may be retained from time to time to advise and assist in the reconciliation process or activities. These include the four Aboriginal members of the Ambassadors group, and will also include the Aboriginal Advisory Group when established later in 2016.

In 2015, the Commissioner published the results of a state-wide consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. The three publications are *Listen to Us – Using the views of WA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to improve policy*

and service delivery; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Speak Out; and This is Me, a collection of profiles on WA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. There are several briefings planned or have taken place on these publications. Copies of these publications, along with a teaching resource on reconciliation, have been sent to all public schools in Western Australia.

Relationships are at the core of our work advocating for the wellbeing of all children and young people. In 2015, following our consultation, there is a focus on the wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people and advocating and influencing to overcome disadvantage. The results of these consultations allow us to understand and act on the views of Aboriginal children and young people.

In both 2015 and 2016, the Commissioner sponsored banners in the National Reconciliation Week Banner project.

Relationships			
Engaging and building strategic relationships with Aboriginal children and young people, their families, carers, communities and organisations that work with Aboriginal peoples and children helps us understand the issues, and to advocate with government to appropriately address the needs of Aboriginal children and young people.			
Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the revision and launch of the RAP. Ensure there is internal and external involvement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the RWG. Meet at least four times per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation. All senior management to be internal RAP Champions. Establish Terms of Reference for the RWG. 	<p>August 2016</p> <p>August, November 2016 and February, May, August, November 2017 and 2018</p>	Corporate Executive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) to strengthen and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and staff and other Australians, organisations and agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit to holding and participating in at least one NRW event each year Register our NRW events via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website. Encourage staff, RWG and senior leaders to participate in external events to recognise and celebrate NRW. Continue to participate in the NRW Banner project as per 2015. 	<p>27 May – 3 June 2017 and 2018</p>	Corporate Executive

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and leverage mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory Groups³ of children and young people, comprising Aboriginal peoples and other Australians, are appointed to assist the work of the Commissioner . Reference groups and expert advisory groups⁴ established to support specific projects to have representation of Aboriginal peoples. Ambassadors for Children and Young People to include at least two Aboriginal representatives⁵. Establish and support an Aboriginal Advisory Committee to advise the Commissioner, made up of members from across the state. Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement. In planning regional visits, liaise with local Aboriginal organisations to ensure effective and appropriate engagement with Aboriginal children and young people. 	<p>March, 2017 and 2018</p> <p>June, 2017 and 2018</p> <p>June, 2017 and 2018</p> <p>September 2016</p> <p>September 2016</p> <p>September 2016</p>	<p>Director Policy and Research</p> <p>Director Policy and Research</p> <p>Commissioner</p> <p>Commissioner</p> <p>Commissioner</p> <p>Corporate Executive</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders All staff engaged in delivery of RAP outcomes. Refreshed RAP forms part of induction process for new staff. RAP placed on website for external reference. Commissioner to launch refreshed RAP. Implement and review a strategy to communicate our 	<p>June 2017 and 2018</p> <p>August 2016</p>	<p>Corporate Executive</p> <p>Commissioner</p> <p>Director Communication and</p>

³ 'Advisory Groups' are existing groups of children and young people, such as a school class, a youth group or another community of common interest, which are appointed for a one-year term to be a source of advice to the Commissioner on specific policy areas. Groups have been both selected from applications and invited to become committees in various years. In 2016 the Advisory Committees are students from the Follow the Dream program at Swan View Senior High School and students from North Albany Senior High School, including members of the Rising Albany Yorgas program.

⁴ 'Reference groups' and 'expert advisory groups' are established as required on a project-specific basis. These various groups may include representatives of government agencies, community organisations and not-for-profit entities, as well as subject matter experts. Children and young people may be included depending on the individual project.

⁵ currently four of thirteen Ambassadors – Professor Colleen Hayward, Professor Ted Wilkes, Ms June Oscar and Mr David Wirrpanda – are Aboriginal people.

	RAP to all internal and external stakeholders.	August 2016	Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed RAP commitments in all CCYP work to ensure Aboriginal peoples' needs are considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All submissions to Corporate Executive are reviewed by Director Policy and Research to ensure consistency with our commitments in the RAP. Corporate Executive Submission template includes question on compliance with RAP commitments. 	June 2017 and 2018	Corporate Executive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for Aboriginal children and young people to contribute to CCYP consultations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal self-identification question to be included in all surveys and information from children and young people examined in this context. Commit to 50% of CCYP consultations to include Aboriginal children and young people. Commit to at least 7% of survey responses from Aboriginal children and young people, in line with the proportion of Aboriginal children and young people in the overall youth population in WA. 	October 2016 and January, April, July, October 2017 and 2018	Director Policy and Research and Director Communication and Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visiting subject matter experts to meet with Aboriginal Elders/leaders/key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Aboriginal leaders invited to key events involving subject matter experts. Consider opportunities to conduct one-on-one meetings or targeted group meetings where appropriate to ensure visiting experts can gain an improved understanding of matters relevant to WA Aboriginal peoples. 	December 2016, 2017 and 2018	Director Policy and Research

Respect

The Commissioner for Children and Young People respects the cultural heritage and relationships to lands and waters of Aboriginal peoples and celebrates the role of Aboriginal children, young people and families in maintaining and promoting culture and these relationships.

Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue cultural learning activities for new and existing staff by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new staff to participate in cultural learning activities (face-to-face cultural awareness workshops) within 12 months of commencement; all staff to participate in at least one cultural learning activity each year; mandatory cultural awareness training included in all Performance and Development System plans (completed six monthly for staff). Distribution of Reconciliation Australia material to all staff, including Share Our Pride module. Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness training. Provide opportunities for RWG members, RAP champions, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in intensive cultural training. 	<p>June 2017 and 2018</p>	<p>Manager Corporate Services and Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities by embedding cultural protocols as part of the way our organisation functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Aboriginal Terminology Policy and the Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Guidelines documents (originally established in 2012), in light of suggestions and findings from consultations with Aboriginal children and young people in 2014-15. In accordance with the Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Guidelines document, incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Welcome to Country by Traditional Owners at all significant CCYP events Acknowledgement of Country at all CCYP important internal and public events. 	<p>August 2016</p> <p>June 2017 and 2018</p> <p>June 2017 and</p>	<p>Manager Corporate Services</p> <p>Director Communication and Engagement</p> <p>Director Policy and</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and review the list of key contacts relevant to each area of WA for conducting a Welcome to Country. 	2018	Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an office environment that is inclusive and welcoming for Aboriginal peoples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display artworks by Aboriginal artists, particularly children and young people, in public spaces. Display relevant publications featuring Aboriginal children and young people. Develop and display a statement acknowledging traditional ownership of the land on which the office stands. 	October 2016 and January, April, July, October 2017 and 2018 July 2017	Manager Corporate Services Director Policy and Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate NAIDOC Week and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with culture and community during NAIDOC Week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal staff to participate in local NAIDOC Week events. Support all staff to participate in NAIDOC Week events in the local community. Hold an internal or public NAIDOC Week event. Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. 	First week of July 2017 and 2018 September 2016	Corporate Executive Manager Corporate Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote positive images of Aboriginal children and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Aboriginal children and young people are included in CCYP promotional and communications material. Ensure promotional photographs collection includes diverse selection of Aboriginal children and young people. With permission, use photos of Aboriginal children and young people taken at events to promote the work of the Commissioner. 	September 2016, 2017 and 2018	Director Communication and Engagement

Opportunities
Identifying opportunities to improve services and support to Aboriginal children and young people through advocacy and promoting their voice in CCYP processes, and to ensure opportunities for employment in the agency.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and enhance CCYP Participation Guidelines by updating relevance for and participation by Aboriginal children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include as example at least one agency working with Aboriginal children and young people. For all seminars on Participation guidelines, include at least one presenter from an Aboriginal organisation, working with Aboriginal children and young people. 	June 2017 and 2018	Director Communication and Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to update existing data and track significant changes relating to Aboriginal children and young people's wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the auspices of the Wellbeing Monitoring Framework Project, provide comparative data in relation to the wellbeing of Western Australia's children and young people, including data specific to Aboriginal people and make this available to agencies, community and researchers. All appropriate policy briefs include data relevant to Aboriginal children and young people. 	July 2017	Director Policy and Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research and produce reports which highlight the wellbeing needs of Aboriginal children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote report of consultation with Aboriginal children and young people. Release publications based on the findings of the consultation with Aboriginal children and young people. Conduct seminars and webinars on relevant findings from the consultation. 	August 2016	Commissioner

Tracking progress and reporting			
Action	Target	Timeline	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the RAP Impact Measurement Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer. 	30 September 2016, 2017 and 2018 March 2017	Manager Corporate Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include statement in relation to RAP achievements in the CCYP Annual report Relevant statements on reconciliation to be included in the Face to Face annual report for children and young people. 	September 2016, 2017 and 2018	Director Communication and Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, refresh and update RAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, refresh and update RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements. Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement. 	December 2017	Manager Corporate Services

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