



QUEENSLAND ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT LEGAL SERVICES INC.

Reconciliation Action Plan

2014-2016



Reconciliation
ACTION PLAN
INNOVATE RAP

About QAILS

QAILS is the independent peak body for Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in Queensland and represents funded and unfunded member CLCs operating across the state. QAILS is an incorporated association established for the public charitable purposes of assisting the Queensland community, particularly disadvantaged and marginalised people, to obtain access to legal services.

QAILS is an incorporated association which operates through a small staff team along with the volunteered time and energy of Queensland CLC workers to provide

- representation for all members in relation to funding program and law reform issues
- coordination of the state administration of the national professional indemnity insurance scheme
- member support services including the coordination of an annual state conference, training on relevant issues and regular bulletins about matters of interest to CLC staff, volunteers and management committees
- encouraging community participation to make the legal system more equitable and accessible; and
- encouraging community participation in the work and management of community legal centres.

QAILS does not provide legal advice but may make referrals to member services.

QAILS' purposes include:

- assisting the Queensland community, particularly disadvantaged and marginalised people, to obtain access to legal services; and
- providing a collective voice advocating for social justice.



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Independent Legal Services Inc

At the time it adopted this RAP, QAILS had six staff members (3 EFT), none of whom identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island people.

Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the same human and legal rights as the broader population of Australia and to equality before the law at all stages of the legal process.

The Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services (**QAILS**) envisages a future where all Australians recognise and benefit from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. QAILS feels that it is important to make the broader Australian population aware of the power imbalance between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all other Australians, so that everyone works together to redress this imbalance.

We begin our journey by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay our respects to their elders, past and present.

Copyright in the cover artwork belongs to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services NQ Inc, which acknowledges the artist, Jaquanna Elliott. Jaquanna Elliott was born in Dubbo NSW and raised in South Australia. Her mother belongs to the Dughutti "river people" in Kempsey, NSW. Jaquanna has held several exhibitions as an artist in her own right and has worked extensively as an illustrator and mentor for Black Ink Press.

Our Innovation RAP

QAILS is committed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by working collaboratively with communities to provide services which help to overcome social disadvantage and promote social justice. This will include:

- ensuring better access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Community Legal Centres (CLCs) services;
- increasing the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities receiving CLC services;
- improving and enhancing the capacity of CLCs to provide effective and culturally competent services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and
- increasing the awareness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of their legal rights and the legal services available to them.

QAILS recognises that community legal services can benefit from engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at a community level and that this engagement will enhance the services provided to that community.

QAILS has developed this Reconciliation Action Plan (**RAP**) as a way to formalise its commitment to further developing the relationship between QAILS (and its member CLCs) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The RAP Working Group (**RWG**) together with the Human Rights and Social Justice Sub-Committee (**HRSJSC**), which includes the support of the Management Committee, will oversee the implementation of the RAP within QAILS. Through the development of this RAP, the RWG has included:

- Aboriginal co-convenor Katherine Lindsay – Solicitor, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women’s Legal Services NQ;
- Aboriginal co-convenor Terry Stedman – Solicitor, South West Brisbane CLC;
- Scott McDougall – President, QAILS;
- James Farrell – Director, QAILS; and
- Matilda Alexander – HRSJSC convenor, QAILS.

Support was provided by Rebecca Cantwell from Allens Linklaters.

Our RWG developed this RAP by:

- auditing the work of our member community legal centres, including their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ organisation, their own assessment of their cultural awareness and competence;
- reviewing the RAPs prepared by other, similar organisations;
- developing a draft RAP, and obtaining feedback from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Legal Services NQ, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, and Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service;
- refining a draft RAP, and obtaining feedback from our member CLCs; and
- obtaining feedback from Reconciliation Australia.

Relationships

QAILS recognises that since the arrival of Europeans in Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been subjected to the ongoing impacts of colonisation. QAILS is seeking to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a climate of mutual respect and co-operation, working together to build a sustainable, positive and mutually beneficial partnership with a view to improving the services which QAILS provides to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Support the development, implementation, annual reporting and refresh of the RAP	QAILS RAP Working Group to meet three times per year.	February, June and October each year Director
Collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to enable better access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to legal services.	Investigate and apply for grants that can assist in improving better access	December 2014 RWG Co-convenors
	Investigate and apply for grants that can assist in improving better access	December 2015
		Director
Promote QAILS RAP internally and externally to build understanding of reconciliation and improve CLCs' capacity to be accessible and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, clients and collaborators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A promotion strategy for QAILS is developed and in subsequent years reviewed Post RAP on QAILS website. QAILS members are aware of, and actively support, implementation of RAP 	March 2014 Director
Identify and further strengthen relationships with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, service providers and associations.	CLCs are more aware of, and are working appropriately with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, service providers and associations which deliver non-legal services (e.g. feature profiles of service providers in QAILS digests or on website).	December 2015 RWG Co-convenors
	QAILS's relationship with ATSILS is stronger; a Memorandum of Understanding is in place and there is an increase in the number of appropriate referrals between CLCs and ATSILS	December 2014 Director
	QAILS State Conference includes a session on the work of QAILS members whose work has a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and clients, and there is an increase in the number of appropriate (gender and cultural) referrals by QAILS members.	June 2014 Director
Celebrate National Reconciliation Week and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians to build relationships	Organise at least one internal event each year.	27 May – 3 June 2014, 2015 and 2016 Director

Respect

QAILS recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the original custodians of our land and that respecting their cultures is fundamental to our efforts to closing the gap.

QAILS also believes that respect and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures will extend the understanding and skills of our staff and member centres, which will then deepen their connection to provide culturally respectful and competent support. We endeavour to foster a culture of learning from and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and view reconciliation and cross-cultural learning as a dynamic and continuous process.

Ensure member CLCs are aware and understand days of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	A calendar of significant dates is developed and circulated to member CLCs.	March 2014
		Director
Engage employees in understanding the protocols around Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is a shared meaning.	A protocol document is developed with the advice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communicated and implemented which includes	June 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an acknowledgement of the traditional custodians at official QAILS events. an acknowledgment of the traditional custodians on QAILS email footers, website and other communications 	RWG Co-convenors
	At least one significant event for QAILS each year includes Welcome to Country from a Traditional Owner.	March 2014 March 2015 March 2016
		Director
Celebrate and participate in NAIDOC Week events	QAILS staff and members participate in at least one event during NAIDOC week	1 st – 2 nd Sunday July 2014, 2015 and 2016
		Director
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove any barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC.	June 2015
		Treasurer
Build and grow the cultural competence of QAILS and member CLCs to increase understanding and appreciation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures.	Build relationships with at least one local NAIDOC Committee in QLD to provide in kind support NAIDOC Week	April 2016
		Director
	Develop and implement a cultural awareness training strategy for QAILS staff members and workers in CLCs. In particular, provide opportunities for RWG members, RAP Champions, HR managers and other key leadership to participate in training.	December 2014
		RWG Co-convenors
	Promote the 'Share Our Pride website' to employees and member CLCs	March 2016
		Director
	A cultural awareness policy (e.g. mandating compulsory cultural awareness training and promoting the development of culturally sensitive CLE materials) is developed and circulated member CLCs, encouraging them to implement the policy within their centres.	December 2015
		Director

Opportunities

Providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities to contribute to the services provided by QAILS is vital to ensuring that QAILS provides the best services possible to these communities.

Investigate opportunities to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Review employment procedures and policies and address any barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.	December 2014 Treasurer
	Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy.	December 2014 Treasurer
	Advertise all QAILS employment vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.	June 2014 Director
	Participate in one Indigenous Career Expo annually.	June 2014 Director
Investigate opportunities to increase supplier diversity within QAILS and promote supplier diversity within member CLCs.	Educate staff and member CLCs about using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples businesses through QAILS Digest.	June 2014 Director
	QAILS Digest promotes use of <i>Black Business Finder</i> ¹	September 2015 Director
	Develop at least two commercial relationships with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander business. In particular QAILS identifies a business or businesses which can provide guests/speakers at QAILS events with gifts that recognise/celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures.	December 2015 Director
Encourage and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's representation on QAILS committees.	Appoint at least one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to the Management Committee.	November 2015 President
Investigate opportunities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples volunteering with CLCs	Trial an approach to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteers (this may include training pathways, internships, cadetships, work experience) through partnership with Indigenous Lawyers Association of Queensland.	December 2015 Director
Work with member CLCs to ensure employment policies and procedures support recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.	Provide member CLCs with the following template policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employment target policy; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples advancement policy; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples retention policy. 	December 2015 Director

¹ Black Business Finder is an online database established to help increase growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and employment in the state. Any Queensland business which has at least 50 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership or hires at least 75 per cent Indigenous workers is eligible to appear on the site.

Progress & reporting

Report achievements, challenges and lessons to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the RAP Impact Measurement Report.	Complete and submit the QAILS RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.	Before 30 th September
		RWG Co-convenors
Whole of organisation ownership of the RAP.	Agendas for HRSJSC meetings (and Management Committee meetings where appropriate) include monitoring progress for implementation of the RAP	October 2014 October 2015 October 2016
		QAILS President
QAILS Innovate RAP 2014 – 2016 refresh	RAP evaluated annually and refreshed if required.	October 2014 October 2015 October 2016
		RWG Co-convenors
A report on the progress of the RAP will appear in the QAILS Annual Report.	QAILS Annual Report includes a report on implementation of the RAP.	October 2014 October 2015 October 2016
		RWG Co-convenors



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