Government of Western Australia
Housing Authority

Reconciliation Action Plan 2014-2017

‘a home is where your story begins’
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Message from the Chief Executive Officer

In leading the Housing Authority (Housing) as a key policy-driven organisation working across all parts of the housing continuum, we work together with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians in committing to reconciliation.

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the custodians of this land and their elders past and present. We respect their connection to the land and sea and the importance of their traditional culture which is based on family and community.

Housing’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a welcome opportunity to play a vital role in closing the gap through providing affordable housing solutions and services that enhance the lives of the Aboriginal community. Our values are strongly reflective of our commitment to reconciliation through teamwork, respect and open communication as it provides our diverse workforce with opportunities for partnering and engagement.

The RAP also shows how Housing is committed to providing a culturally inclusive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be employed through traineeships, graduate programs and our culturally appropriate recruitment practices that are espoused through the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

As Chief Executive Officer, I am committed to ensuring our RAP 2014-2017 aligns with our Strategic Plan 2020 and Workforce and Diversity Plan 2014-2017 and that through identifying and translating our intent into specific outcomes and actions we will assist in closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Paul Whyte

Acting Chief Executive Officer
Housing Authority

Disclosure: People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent are warned this Reconciliation Action Plan may contain pictures of people who are deceased.
Vision for Reconciliation

The Housing Authority is a culturally inclusive workplace that respects and values the contribution of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and partners.

Acknowledgement and celebration of First People

We acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians as the first peoples and traditional custodians of the land and celebrate their customs, values and traditions that have been around for over 40,000 years, making them one of the oldest cultures in the world.

Promote opportunities for career development

The Authority is committed to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in its workforce which is managed as part of the Authority’s Aboriginal Employment Strategy. This is done through targeted recruitment strategies, annual Traineeships and the Graduate program.

Provide sustainable business growth and economic participation

Partnerships are vital to the success of the Housing Authority. We have developed strategies and initiatives with our partners to increase the supply and diversity of affordable housing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have done this through securing providers to manage and support services for transitional housing; providing affordable housing options through shared equity, subsidised rentals and home ownership and through native title agreements that support regional Aboriginal outcomes.

Contributing to WA community – social impact and economic participation

The Authority is dedicated to making a real difference in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes across Western Australia and within the organisation. Initiatives such as the Derby Aboriginal Short Stay Facility and Employment Related Accommodation (ERA) have responded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people visiting regional service centres and ERA.
Celebrating NAIDOC.

Flag raising ceremony at a NAIDOC event.

Transitional Housing Program participants.

Aboriginal trainee in a regional office.

Housing Authority staff showcasing the organisation in Ashfield.

Aboriginal Customer Support Officer.
Sparked by a desire to make the Housing Authority a more welcoming and culturally sensitive workplace, the Indigenous Art Program (IAP) was an important action to come out of the inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan 2011.

Launched in 2013, in consultation with the Department of Culture and the Arts, a selection of Indigenous artworks are proudly displayed in metropolitan and regional offices in acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as well as a sign of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as traditional custodians of the land.

RAP committee members chose the artworks from a selection gathered by a professional curator.

The IAP was launched at Head Office in the Executive Boardroom, chosen symbolically for its significance as the centre point for Housing decision making.

**Culture through Art**

Artist: Lance Chadd, Kadjininy Wirin Boodja.

Artist: Kittey Malarvie, Luga – Cracked Mud.

Artist: Kristie Taylor, Wadjak Wagyl Dreaming.

Artist: Alan Griffiths, Wickham River.
Work Place Initiatives

The value of working towards reconciliation is highlighted internally through initiatives such as online cultural awareness training and the Corporate Induction Day, which begins with a Welcome to Country, and provides an opportunity for the RAP working group members to brief inductees on Housing’s Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, vision and goals and how they can participate.

NAIDOC Week at Housing hosts a range of interactive activities for staff to join in recognising and celebrating Indigenous culture. The Elders category of the WA NAIDOC awards is annually sponsored in recognition of the important roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders in their families and in the community.

Since late 2014, plaques acknowledging the traditional owners of the land greet visitors at the entrance of 30 Housing offices. This initiative formed part of actions identified in the first phase of the RAP.

Creating opportunities for affordable housing is a key part of our mission, with programs to help Indigenous people access housing in metropolitan areas and in regional areas through housing programs such as the East Kimberley Development Program and the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing.

Through this second phase of the RAP, Housing continues to pursue its focus on promoting and fostering reconciliation in the workplace culture, programs and policies that reflect the RAP’s key areas of building respectful relationships and creating opportunities for Indigenous people.

Ultimately, success relies on this commitment to continuous improvement underpinning the vision for reconciliation, to assist Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to find their place to call home; the place where they begin their stories.
Commitment

The Housing Authority remains committed to Reconciliation, and progression of our RAP 2014-2017 sees us continue to focus on:

Relationships:

Promoting positive relationships between the Authority’s workforce and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is important to the way we do business for people and communities.

Respect:

Understanding each other and respectfully acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land underpins our commitment to enriched culturally competent outcomes. This includes creating an environment of cultural security to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Opportunities:

Inclusiveness brings richer social and cultural understanding. It provides us with an ability to respond more effectively to future needs.

The Housing Authority recognises the need to demonstrate leadership, innovation and collaboration as a service provider to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Through our commitment to Reconciliation, and a continued focus towards strengthening Relationships, building Respect and improving Opportunities we will progress our journey through sustainable economic development and enrich the cultural diversity of our workforce.

Through transparency and accountability we envisage:

• Moving towards the ongoing development of a culturally competent workforce.

• Increasing opportunities for strengthened partnerships and enriched mutual outcomes with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

• Striving to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce representation that effectively responds to the diversity of the Housing Authority’s client base.

• It builds our ability to respond more effectively to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The RAP acknowledges the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
The focal action points within the plan outline the following Objectives:

The Housing Authority acknowledges and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of the Lands.

The Housing Authority demonstrates leadership towards reconciliation through continuous improvement of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in accordance with Substantive Equality.

The Housing Authority also takes a dedicated position in achieving cultural competency embedded across all areas of Housing’s business to support staff in acknowledging, engaging and embedding culturally appropriate services.

Governance Framework

A formalised RAP Governance Framework will support accountability of actions within Key Performance Indicators which will assist all divisions of the organisation to achieve the objectives of the RAP.
Aboriginal Trainee Graduates.

Providing Housing opportunities.

Donation of Sorry Day fundraiser proceeds to Not-For-Profit agency Manna.

Targeted Apprenticeships.

Offering pathways to home ownership.

Acting chief executive Paul Whyte makes the first hand print on Wadjak Wagyl Dreaming.
RAP Phase Two

Governance
All RAP actions will be mapped and reported across a range of the Housing Authority’s plans to monitor and report our achievements.

ReThink
The ReThink Social Housing Campaign has been created to educate the general public about the real people who live in social housing, and help them to understand why it is so important to the community.

Social Housing is the term to describe all subsidised housing in Western Australia. It includes public housing, which is managed by the Housing Authority, and Community Housing which is affordable housing for people, including Indigenous people, on low to moderate incomes with a housing need.

ReThink presents the opportunity to visit the website and read some of our tenant’s stories. http://www.rethinksocialhousing.com/Home.

Learning Circles
In the RAP Phase II we will conduct learning circles based on bringing the knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal staff together to talk through new ideas and ways for Indigenous people to explore a range of different options for their housing pathways.

By sharing with staff and community we can improve our communications, policies and processes to bring real cultural understanding show respect and talk about the best solutions.

It is also an opportunity to consider best practice thinking and approaches by networking with other RAP organisations and engage various areas from the Authority from frontline services, communications, Human Resources.

Increasing Indigenous Representation
The Housing Authority will continue to develop and implement initiatives to help increase the representation of Indigenous staff.

Housing Authority Indigenous trainees who have completed the Cert II or III in Government are automatically placed in a permanent level 2 position. In addition any Aboriginal candidates who have completed the Public Sector Commission Aboriginal Traineeship with another agency can apply for and be automatically shortlisted in a Housing Authority Level 2 pool recruitment process.

Service Delivery will also continue its focus on improving the retention of frontline Indigenous staff.

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Aboriginal Employment Strategy

As of 30 June 2015 82% of employees have completed Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training. An Aboriginal Cultural Competency framework has been developed, including learning and assessment strategies. Work is underway to develop the content and staged roll out.
Relationships

Developing positive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are important to the Housing Authority as they lead to inclusive outcomes that enhance the way we do business, and are key to successful delivery of our services and products.

Focus area: Working in collaborative partnerships

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| 1. Promote an endorsed RAP to Housing Authority staff and the broader WA Community. | RAP Committee | Ongoing to 2017 | • RAP is promoted to Housing Authority staff and the public via intranet (iNhouse), corporate website and Corporate Induction.  
  • The RAP is also available on the Reconciliation Australia website. |
| 2. Provide learning and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to increase leadership and cultural competency through third party partnerships. | Workforce Development | Ongoing to 2017 | • Sponsor up to two candidates annually for the Jawun Indigenous Program  
  • Aboriginal employees to attend Public Sector Commission (PSC) induction  
  • Sponsor one candidate for an Aboriginal Women in Leadership program externally  
  • Implement an Aboriginal Cultural Competency Framework                                  |
| 3. Build stronger links and work collaboratively with Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Unit. | Workforce Development | Ongoing to 2017 | • Inclusion in PSC Aboriginal Employment Strategy Implementation program.  
  • Access up to six PSC Aboriginal trainees per year  
  • Access two Aboriginal graduates per year  
  • Contribute one case study per year to the Public Sector ‘Good Practice’ publication         |
| 4. Identify, engage and consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community stakeholders when new projects are commencing. | Workforce Development, Strategic Communication and RAP Committee | Ongoing to 2017 | Annual consultation undertaken for:  
  • NAIDOC  
  • Reconciliation Week  
  • Sorry Day  
  • Mentor Program  
  • Cultural Advice         |
| 5. Increase opportunities through selective capital works and goods and services contracts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be employed. | General Managers | Ongoing to 2017 | • Aboriginal Australian employment targets (20% Kimberley and Pilbara; 10% Goldfields; 2% other) applied to all construction contracts for 2016/2017  
  • Aboriginal Australian employment targets (20% Kimberley and Pilbara; 10% Goldfields; 2% other) applied to civil works contracts above threshold of $600,000 (subject to approval) for 2016/2017 |
| 6. Provide opportunities for reconciliation by engaging internal staff and Aboriginal tenants in initiatives that support positive perceptions of housing products e.g. Rethink - social housing | Strategic Communications | Ongoing to 2017 | • Include tenants in social housing campaign  
  • Include success stories in promotional material and website that recognise Aboriginal role models |
Respect
Respectfully acknowledging the traditional owners of the land underpins effective business relationships and leads to mutually beneficial policy outcomes.

**Focus area: Cultural Awareness and Competency**

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| 1. Housing Authority employees attend Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training. | Workforce Development                       | December 2015          | • Implement an Aboriginal Competency learning and development program  
                                                                                                                                  • 90 percent of staff complete cultural awareness training.                                                                                   |
|                                                                        |                                             | Ongoing 2017           |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2. Continue to celebrate events that acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements. | Workforce Development, RAP Committee and Strategic Communications | Ongoing 2017           | Significant annual events are held. Staff attend and participate in events such as:  
                                                                                                                                  • Reconciliation Week  
                                                                                                                                  • NAIDOC Week  
                                                                                                                                  • Sorry Day.                                                                                                                                     |
| 3. Develop guidelines for appropriate use of cultural protocols.      | Workforce Development and Strategic Communications | December 2015          | • Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols developed and used at major public events and Corporate Induction.  
                                                                                                                                  • Brand Strategy to include action items to incorporate Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners in corporate publications, promotional material and website pages  
                                                                                                                                  • Traditional owner Acknowledgement plaques to be displayed in Housing Authority offices                                                                 |
|                                                                        |                                             | Commenced Feb 2015     |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 4. Reconciliation Action Plan promoted to new staff.                  | Workforce Development                       | Ongoing to 2016        | • Reconciliation Action Plan included as a standard mandatory component of Corporate Induction.                                                                                                             |
| 5. Provide Mentoring program.                                         | Workforce Development                       | Commenced August 2015  | • Mentoring Aboriginal Australians through a formal mentoring program                                                                               |
| 6. Provide opportunities for engagement with Reconciliation Australia to host learning circle forums. | RAP Committee                              | December 2014          | • Host one RAP learning circle with Reconciliation Australia with external focus.  
                                                                                                                                  • Host two RAP learning circles with Reconciliation Australia with metro and country internal focus.  
                                                                                                                                  • Host three RAP learning circles with Reconciliation Australia with external, metro and country focus.                                             |
|                                                                        |                                             | December 2015          |                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                                        |                                             | December 2016          |                                                                                                                                                    |
Opportunities

Recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent enables the Housing Authority to enrich the cultural diversity of our workforce.

Focus area:
1) Recruitment, retention and professional & career opportunities
2) Providing long-term economic and social participation opportunities
3) Increase Aboriginal Australian representation

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<tr>
<td>1. Initiate entry level youth programs to build an inclusive workplace</td>
<td>Workforce Development Human Resources</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>2. Develop strategies and initiatives to increase supply and diversity of housing options for Aboriginal people through partnerships</td>
<td>GMCO</td>
<td>December 2014</td>
<td>June 2015</td>
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<td>3. Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers in procurement chain.</td>
<td>ED Human Resources</td>
<td>Ongoing 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Continue Community and Tenant Education initiatives</td>
<td>ED Human Resources</td>
<td>Ongoing 2017</td>
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<td>5. Drive RAP outcomes through building recognition and respect for contributions of Aboriginal Western Australians</td>
<td>Office of Director General</td>
<td>Annually</td>
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Tracking progress and reporting
Achieve sustainable outcomes from the RAP and recognise that Aboriginal people contribute to the reporting on progress through two way feedback.

**Focus area: RAP Governance and Key Performance Indicators**

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| 1. Review RAP Governance and Key Performance Indicator reports.         | RAP Committee      | Annually 2017 July Annually | • RAP Terms of Reference reviewed  
                                                                             |                    | • Refresh RAP and make available online through website every three years  
                                                                             |                    | • Review completion of Aboriginal Employment Strategy/Plan to RAP initiatives |
| 2. Annual reporting on RAP.                                            | Business Planning Improvement | Annually               | • RAP Report developed  
                                                                             |                    | • Annual progress report tabled at Corporate Executive.  
                                                                             |                    | • RAP report placed on the Reconciliation Australia website.          |
| 3. Include initiatives and achievements in Chief Executive Officer reporting. | Business Planning Improvement | Annually               | • Initiatives and achievements reported in Annual Reports and Chief Executive Officer Performance reports. |