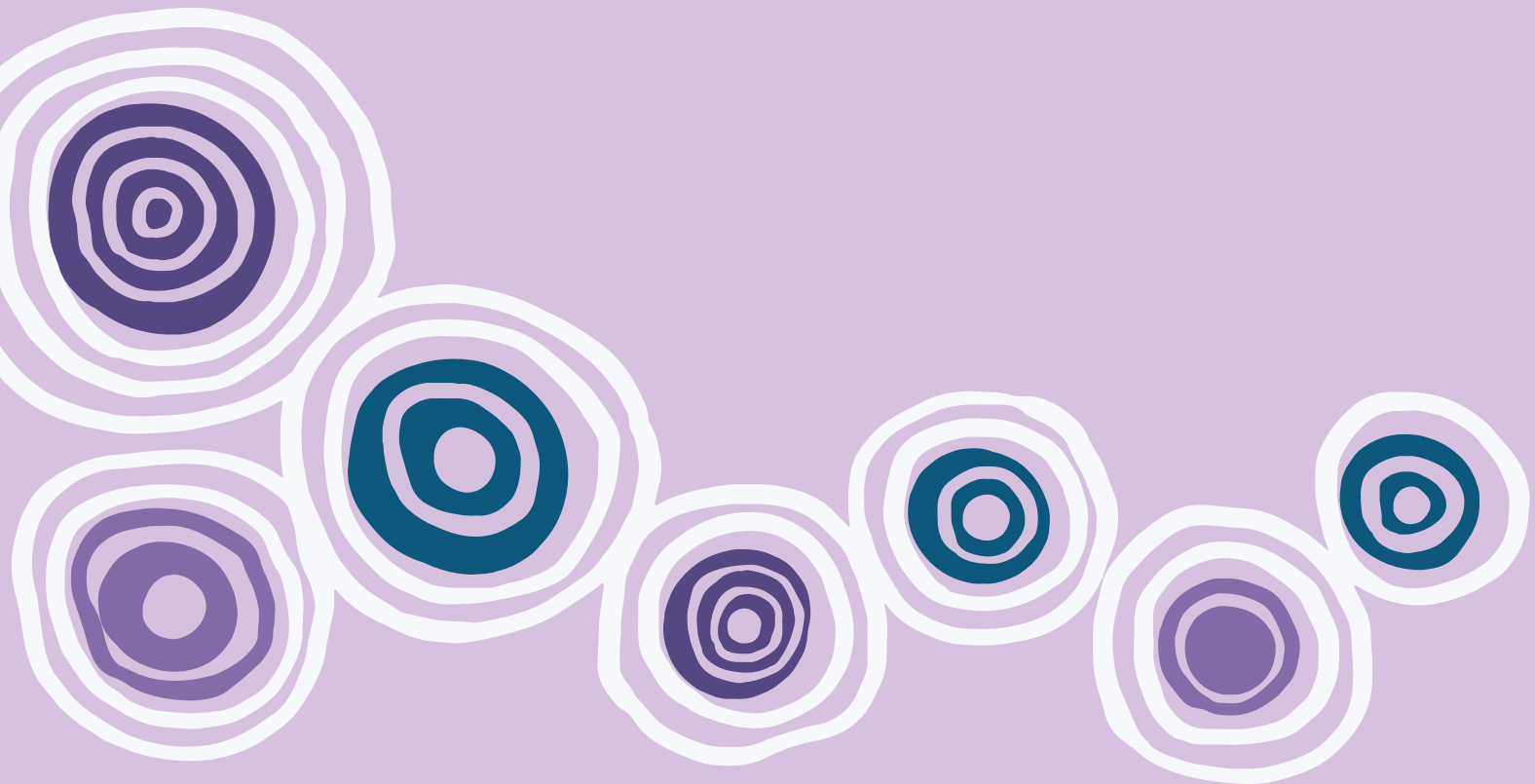




ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Women's Legal Service Queensland (WLSQ) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work, particularly the Turrbul, Yuggera, Gubbi Gubbi, Ugarapul peoples and the Yugambeh language region on whose lands our offices sit.

We recognise their continuing connection to this Country, its waters, and culture, and acknowledge that their sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present and we especially honour First Nations women and the traditions they carry.



ARTIST

Rachael Sarra's vibrant creative practice embodies her experience as a proud mixed race, First Nations woman from Goreng Goreng Country. Driven by a belief that art and design are vital to communication, connection and culture, Rachael invites us to see the world through her eyes with bold colours and dynamic contours. Her distinct contemporary style is resonating around the world, and challenging societal perceptions of Aboriginal art and identity.

Rachael is a change-maker. She is redesigning how First Nations businesswomen navigate success while anchoring their business in culture. Building a business bigger than herself, she is committed to significant charitable donations and pro-bono work that has a tangible impact back into the community.

ARTWORK TITLE *HER STORY*

At the centre of everything is our women, surrounded by respect, trust and care that WLSQ provides. Through care, collaboration and community we build trust and hold space to tell HER story. Through cultural safety and respect we empower our women to feel safe and worthy. This enables them to build strength within themselves, allowing this strength which has rippling effects to all women in our community.



MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA CEO

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Women's Legal Service Queensland to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Women's Legal Service Queensland joins a network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Women's Legal Service Queensland to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Women's Legal Service Queensland, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.



Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

MESSAGE FROM WLSQ CEO AND CHAIR

Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) marks the beginning of a long-term journey of supporting legal and social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

WLSQ is committed to the creation of a society in which every woman:

- Is safe from violence
- Is able to tell her story, have it heard and respected
- Receives a fair and just outcome from legal and social welfare systems

We acknowledge the resilience and agency of our clients, and all First Nations people. Their experiences and stories inform our work and continue to inspire us to pursue our mission.

Our RAP forms an important part of delivering on our values and our Strategy and identifies a number of key activities on our reconciliation journey including:

- Building on partnerships and developing new networks in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Further developing cultural safety and security training programs for staff
- Elevating and prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices through formal consultation with the Board

Our RAP has the full support of our Board and Leadership Team. We will work with our clients, our team, our partners and stakeholders to implement our RAP and report on our progress.

This is the first step of many for WLSQ to contribute to a more just and equitable Australia.



Nadia Bromley
Chief Executive Officer
Women's Legal Service
Queensland



Genevieve Dee
Chair
Women's Legal Service
Queensland

OUR ORGANISATION

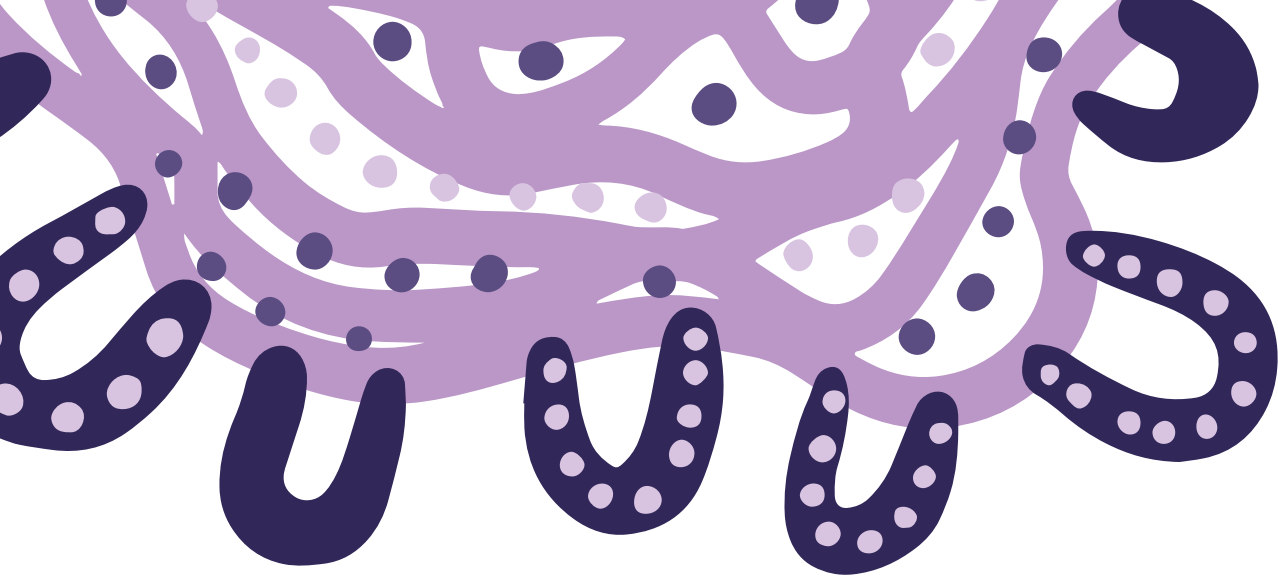
OUR HISTORY

Women's Legal Service Queensland (WLSQ) was established in 1984 after a meeting of committed women from social work and legal backgrounds identified the need for free legal services for women. Initially, WLSQ was a volunteer service. It wasn't until 1989 that WLSQ received enough funding for a full-time solicitor and coordinator.

In the mid-1990s, WLSQ supported the establishment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait legal and advocacy services for women. Like these services, WLSQ has grown significantly since this time and now operates from offices in Meanjin (Brisbane), on Gubbi Gubbi land (Caboolture), on Yuggera and Ugarapul land (Ipswich) and in the Yugambah language region (Gold Coast) with a team of over 70 staff, including one proud First Nations woman.

In 1996, WLSQ supported the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Women's Legal and Advocacy Service (ATSIWLAS) in recognition that First Nations women required their own standalone legal service. ATSIWLAS was initially co-located and auspiced by WLSQ, however was run by, and for, and with, First Nations women. ATSIWLAS obtained their own premises in 2004.





OUR SERVICES

WLSQ is a community legal centre informed by intersectional feminist values which provides free legal assistance, social work support and financial counselling to women across Queensland.

We provide assistance in domestic violence, family law, and sexual violence matters including:

- Separation
- Divorce
- Domestic violence protection orders
- Child protection
- Parenting arrangements
- Child support
- Family law property matters
- Sexual assault counselling notes privilege

WLSQ also provides community legal education and engages in law reform and advocacy for systemic change. WLSQ is committed to creating safer futures for women and children.

WLSQ has relationships with First Nations legal services across Queensland. In embarking on this reconciliation journey, we look forward to strengthening these relationships and building new connections with other First Nations services to ensure that our clients can access non-legal and other support services.



OUR VALUES – INFORMED BY FEMINIST PRINCIPLES



CARE

Caring for our clients, employees and volunteers and their wellbeing; supporting empowerment; trauma informed.



RESPECT

Treating our clients, staff, volunteers, partners, agencies with respect; being non-judgemental; valuing contribution.



INCLUSIVITY

Embracing differences and encouraging members of all communities to (equitably) access our services.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Demonstrating best practice; being responsible for our work; transparency in our dealings.



COLLABORATION

Working together with our clients, volunteers, partner agencies and communities to achieve sustainable change; reflecting and learning.

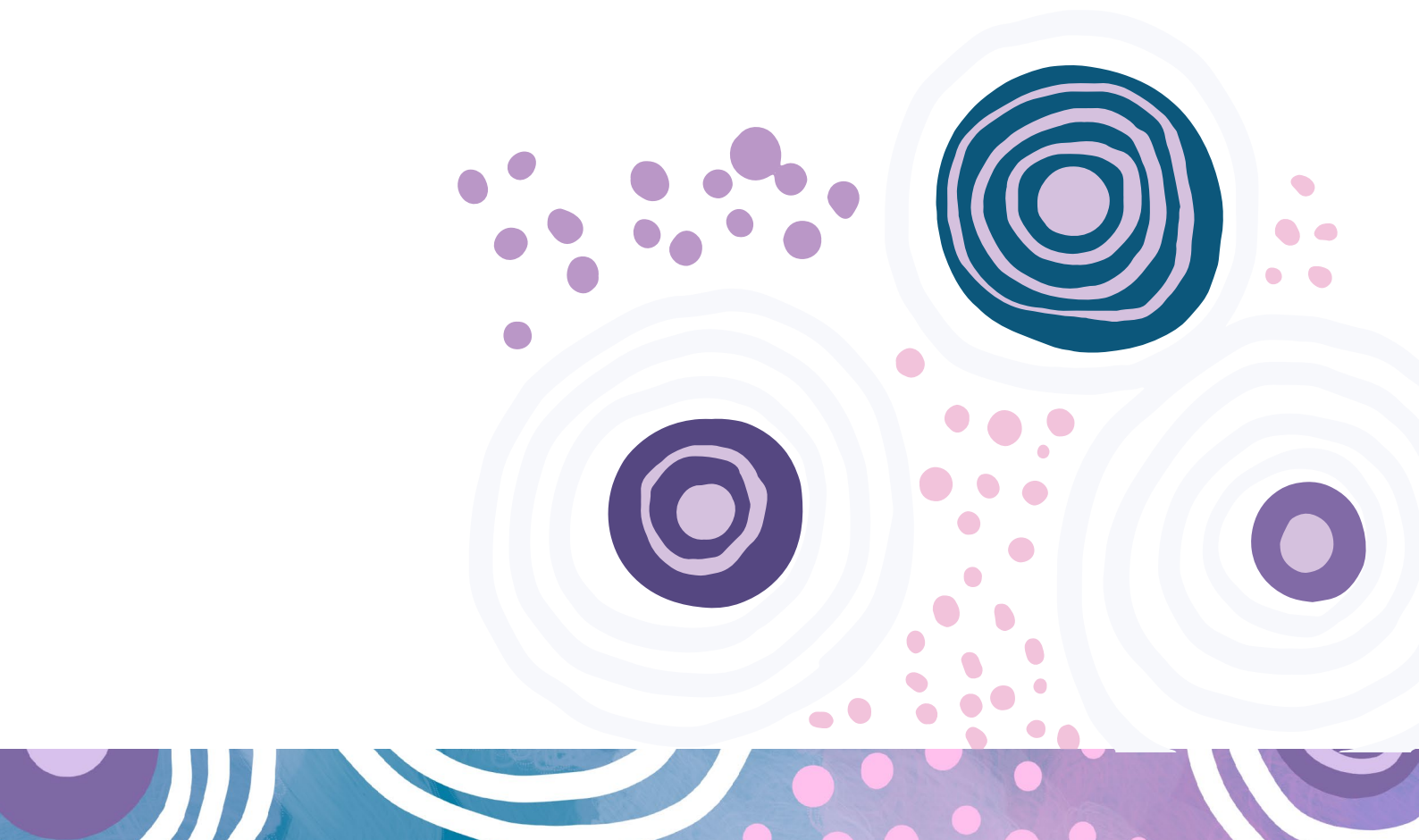


OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

We are committed to ensuring safer futures for women and children and believe that a society which values and respects the First Peoples of this nation is a fundamental element of this journey. We stand in solidarity with First Nations people in the fight for self-determination and equality and we recognise the ongoing injustices perpetrated against them. We recognise our position of privilege, and we will be allies in advocating for law reform and systemic change to address injustice and discrimination against First Nations people.

As a Queensland wide service, we strive to be inclusive of all Queensland women. Our priority is to provide services to the most vulnerable women in our society. In 2022/23, 7% of our clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. We know that this percentage is not reflective of the over-representation of First Nations women in every facet of the justice system. We commit to looking at the data and our service to ensure that we address any barriers that exist for First Nations women who choose our service, while respecting the place of First Nations specialist services

For us, this means ensuring our service is culturally safe and inclusive for our clients and staff, that we are connected with our community, and that we ensure First Nations women have access to the same legal and social justice as other women.



OUR RAP

Our goal in developing this RAP, supported by our RAP Working Group (RWG), is to create a culturally safe and aware place for the women who seek our services and for our staff. This includes developing the tools to collaborate, communicate, work with, and learn from, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly within the legal and community sectors.

This plan includes a range of actions we have committed to taking on during our reconciliation journey. While the operational responsibility for delivering many of these sits with our staff, the Board has a critical role to play and commits to supporting and enabling all the actions and being ultimately accountable for the implementation of the RAP.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women continue to experience disproportionately high rates of violence, incarceration, and intervention from child protection. We also acknowledge that the legal system is not well adapted to protecting the rights of First Nations Women. As part of that system, we acknowledge our role in advocating for systemic change and ensuring our services are accessible.

WLSQ is committed to working with First Nations women and prioritises services for First Nations women. The Reflect RAP is an important First step in delivering on WLSQs commitment to reconciliation.

OUR RAP WORKING GROUP

As an organisation we renewed our commitment to our reconciliation journey by forming a new Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RWG) in 2022 and registering our intention to create a Reflect RAP with Reconciliation Australia in September 2022.

Through conducting a thorough internal audit and discussions as a group and with Reconciliation Australia's guidance, we decided that we would need to start at the beginning. We realised that we have a way to go and much work ahead of us.

Honest reflection and assessment were key to see where we are now as an organisation and identify where we want to be to create meaningful steps.

Our first meeting was held in July 2022 with a dedicated team across leadership, locations and practice areas. Members of our RWG 2022-2024 have included: Angie Vlismas, Carrie Zhu, Lulu Milne, Marnie Collins, Debbie Hewitt, Natasha McGrow, Cherisse Breese, Fadzai Mamvura, and Gabrielle Adams.



2024-2025 RWG MEMBERS

Kelly Moore - Director of Corporate Services –
RAP Champion and RAP primary contact person

Michelle Levings - Marketing and Communications Officer –
RWG Co-Chair, Kaurareg woman

Cailin Hill - Helpline Team Leader – RWG Co-Chair

Bronwen Lloyd - Casework Solicitor

Claire Roberts - Social Worker

Emmalene Travers - Volunteer Manager

Amelia Torre - Solicitor

Aaliyah Talukdar - Community Legal Education Officer

We have implemented a number of initiatives in the lead up to our formal RAP journey including:

- Creating our standard Acknowledgement of Country. We use this on our website and in all meetings and external events.
- Arranging Cultural Awareness Training for all staff and including training as part of all future onboarding.
- Updating our style guides and all digital and physical communication templates to include recognition of Traditional names/regions.
- Establishing a central communication channel for the RWG to keep staff informed and involved with the RAP journey.
- Engaging with local First Nations organisations and Elders including incorporating a Welcome to Country for all our external events.

RELATIONSHIPS

In embarking on this reconciliation journey, we are committed to strengthening relationships with community-controlled organisations and building new connections with other First Nations services.

By working to prioritise meaningful relationships we can better understand how to support the work of others and how to make our service more culturally aware, inclusive, and safe for First Nations clients and staff.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	Establish a comprehensive network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our sphere of influence, including regional, rural, and remote locations.	May 2024	CEO
	Research best practice principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	March 2024	Practice Director of Social Work
	Develop and publish WLSQ partnership principles.	June 2024	Fundraising and Marketing Manager
	Invite feedback for strengthening partnerships from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	September 2024	Practice Director of Social Work
	Review current and potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander referral partners to inform future relationship building.	May 2024	Helpline Team Leader
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and information to our staff.	May 2024	Fundraising and Marketing Manager
	RWG members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2024	RWG Chair
	All staff will participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2024	CEO
	RWG members and Leadership Team to support an external NRW event with First Nations Stakeholders (for example, donate, staff resources, promotion)	May 2024	RWG Chair



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Build relationships through celebrating key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events	Identify non-NRW key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events to attend and support (for example, Ochre Ribbon Week, Sorry Day, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day)	March 2024	Fundraising and Marketing Manager
	Create and maintain a live calendar of non-NRW events to be circulated internally, updated quarterly.	March 2024	Fundraising and Marketing Manager
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	Communicate to all staff our commitment to reconciliation and provide opportunities for staff to regularly engage with reconciliation activities.	March 2024	RAP Champion
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation will engage with on our reconciliation journey.	May 2024	Practice Director of Social Work
	Publish RAP on our website and launch on our social media platforms.	March 2024	Fundraising and Marketing Manager
	Establish feedback avenues for staff and external stakeholders on our reconciliation journey.	September 2024	Volunteer Manager
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	July 2024	People and Culture Manager
	Conduct a review of human resources policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs to improve organisational cultural safety and responses to racial discrimination.	July 2024	People and Culture Manager

RESPECT

WLSQ recognises that a foundation of respect for and trust from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities is needed to successfully and meaningfully implement our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. Appropriately respecting First Nations clients and stakeholders requires more than mere acknowledgement. We accept that our past efforts have fallen short.

The Respect component of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan aims to ensure our values of respect and accountability are upheld by establishing an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, history, and traditional practices. Through building this sense of understanding and respect, we aim to affirm the right of First Nations women to be the experts and decision-makers about decisions affecting them.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.	March 2024	Learning and Development Officer
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	March 2024	Learning and Development Officer
	Identify cultural training options.	March 2024	Learning and Development Officer
	Implement cultural security training across the organisation.	July 2024	Learning and Development Officer
	Create a dedicated internal intranet and external website page for resource sharing to support understanding.	August 2024	Fundraising and Marketing Manager
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	Develop a deeper understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within Queensland.	May 2024	Practice Director of Social Work
	Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	April 2024	RWG Chair
	Display a Country map in each of the local offices.	April 2024	Fundraising and Marketing Manager
	Maintain a list of local contacts for Welcome to Country protocols for each of our offices.	May 2024	Director of Corporate Services
	Invite local Elders to perform a Welcome to Country where possible for larger events, with remuneration provided.	April 2024	Director of Corporate Services



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	Raise awareness and share information amongst staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2024	CEO
	Introduce staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting and encouraging participation in external events in our local area.	June 2024	CEO
	Develop NAIDOC marketing materials to be utilised by staff and shared externally.	June 2024	Fundraising and Marketing Manager
	RAP Working Group and Leadership Team to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week of July 2024	RWG Chair
Identify opportunities to improve cultural safety	Review the cultural appropriateness and safety of client and stakeholder materials.	July 2024	Practice Director of Social Work
	Review materials and processes used by WLSQ and other similar organisations to record the data and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.	July 2024	Practice Director of Social Work
	Identify opportunities to obtain feedback from existing and former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and stakeholders on their experience with WLSQ.	August 2024	Practice Director of Social Work
	Establish a framework for the review of service delivery to ensure cultural appropriateness and safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. This process will be informed by existing and former clients and external agencies as appropriate.	September 2024	Practice Director of Social Work



OPPORTUNITIES

We are committed to creating and fostering opportunities for all women to access justice regardless of their background, race or religion. We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities are not afforded the same opportunities as non-Indigenous peoples, and we are committed to contributing to bridging that gap.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	June 2024	Director of Corporate Services
	Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultant position on our Board.	September 2024	CEO
	Review and identify culturally appropriate training and professional development for current and future employees that identify as First Nations.	October 2024	People and Culture Manager
	Build an understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing issues or barriers to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	October 2024	People and Culture Manager
	Create and maintain relationships with external stakeholders to identify employment opportunities for First Nations women.	November 2024	People and Culture Manager
	Identify and establish partners to offer internship opportunities for First Nations university students.	November 2024	Volunteer Manager
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	July 2024	Director of Corporate Services
	Review and maintain current supplier database and identify new suppliers that are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled.	July 2024	WHS & Facilities Officer



GOVERNANCE

WLSQ is committed to embedding the RAP goals in organisational policy and strategy to ensure that the organisation's resources and activities align with the RAP objectives. WLSQ supports a holistic organisational approach to implementing and resourcing a workable and effective RAP and ensuring accountability mechanisms are in place.

WLSQ will engage with stakeholders, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, to develop policies and strategies that support the RAP's goals. WLSQ commits to ongoing evaluation and monitoring to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the RAP remains relevant and practical.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	2024: September 2025: March	WLSQ Board Chair
	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	September 2024	RWG Chair
	Hold RWG meetings a minimum of six meetings per year.	2024: March, May, July, September, November 2025: January, March	RWG Chair
	Continue to review membership of the RWG to ensure cross sector and organisation representation.	2024: March, May, July, September, November 2025: January, March	RWG Chair
	Review Terms of Reference for the RWG and review six monthly.	2024: May & November 2025: March	RWG Chair
	RWG to present updates on the RAP process and reconciliation journey in all staff meetings.	2024: May, June, July, August, September, October, November December 2025: May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December	RWG Chair

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	Continue to engage Leadership Team at WLSQ in the delivery of RAP commitments, and review engagement.	2024: September 2025: March	RAP Champion
	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	December 2024	Director of Corporate Services
	Allocate budget for RAP deliverables and relevant consultation, including supporting staff to attend events and networking activities during work time.	March 2024	Director of Corporate Services
	Define and then review consistent and appropriate systems and capabilities to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Define: March 2024 Review: September 2024	Director of Corporate Services
	Appoint a senior leader at WLSQ to champion our RAP internally.	March 2024	RWG Chair
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally	Ensure details are up to date with Contact Reconciliation Australia.	September 2024, and each September thereafter	RWG Chair
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	March 2024, and each March thereafter	RWG Chair
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	March 2025 and each March thereafter	RWG Chair
	Engage in shared learning by speaking to other organisations in the sector to share the challenges they have faced developing a RAP and how they overcome these.	September 2024, and March 2025	CEO
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	Research Innovate RAPs in the legal assistance sector to find examples of best practice.	February 2025	RWG Chair
	Confirm RWG's membership for next RAP development.	February 2025	RWG Chair
	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	March 2025	RWG Chair





ENQUIRIES

For all enquiries regarding the WLSQ Reconciliation Action Plan – Reflect, please contact

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