



MAGISTRATES COURT OF QUEENSLAND

STRETCH RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

APRIL 2022 – APRIL 2025



QUEENSLAND
COURTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Magistrates Court of Queensland acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

© The State of Queensland (Department of Justice and Attorney-General) 2022

Published by the Queensland Government, May 2022, 1 William St, Brisbane, Qld, 4000.

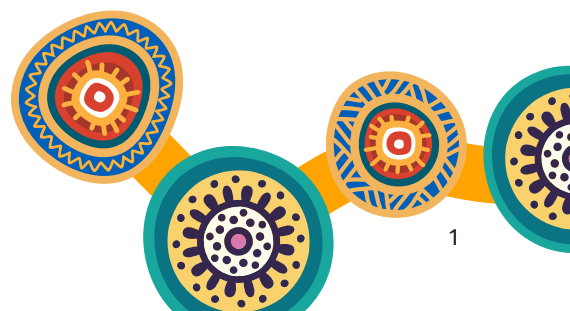


Unless otherwise noted, all copyright material in this document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License.

In essence, you are free to copy, communicate and adapt this document, as long as you attribute the work to the State of Queensland (Department of Justice and Attorney-General).

Contents

Message from Reconciliation Australia.....	3
Message from the Chief Magistrate	4
Message from the Executive Director.....	5
OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION	6
ABOUT THE MAGISTRATES COURT OF QUEENSLAND	7
Our business	7
Our Judicial Officers and staff.....	7
Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.....	7
Queensland Magistrates Court locations.....	8
Current initiatives	9
The Community Justice Group Program	9
Stronger CJGs	9
CJG Domestic and Family Violence Enhancement Program	9
The Remote Justice of the Peace (Magistrates Court) Program	9
Murri Court.....	10
Aurukun Restorative Justice Program (Thaa' Pant Services)	10
REFLECTING ON OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY SO FAR	11
Embracing challenges	11
Making change happen	11
Celebrating culture; embedding respect	12
Stronger relationships.....	13
OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN	15
What is Reconciliation and who is Reconciliation Australia?.....	15
Background	16
Developing this plan.....	16
Who developed this plan?.....	17
Governance (RAP Working Group)	17
The Cultural Advisory Group.....	18
Our People.....	18
RAP ACTION TABLE.....	21
Acronyms	28
ABOUT THE DESIGN	29
ABOUT THE DESIGNERS.....	29







Message from Reconciliation Australia

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I congratulate the Magistrates Court of Queensland (MCQ) on its formal commitment to reconciliation, as it implements its second Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

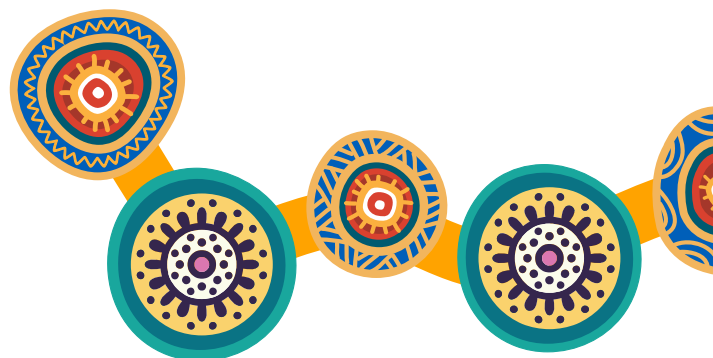
Formed around the pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, the RAP program helps organisations realise the critical role they can play in driving reconciliation across their work and sphere of influence. Through the creation of this Stretch RAP, the MCQ continues to contribute to the ever-growing community of RAP organisations that have taken this goodwill and transformed it into action.

Hearing the majority of cases in Queensland, the MCQ is the first tier of the state's courts system, operating a range of specialist courts and programs. Consequently, it stands to play a crucial role in addressing the historical harm the criminal justice system has enacted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as the ongoing and severe over-representation of First Nations peoples in the justice system. On its reconciliation journey so far, the MCQ has implemented a range of strategic and considered initiatives, with the aim of building a better and more equitable court system for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities it services. Stand out projects include its series of Magistrates Induction Booklets, which were tailored with place-specific information for each court, informing and educating magistrates on place-based cultural knowledge and connections. These initiatives show MCQ thinking seriously and thoughtfully about building reconciliation into its work and leveraging its sphere of influence to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The MCQ is open about the challenges it has faced during its previous RAPs, and it has acknowledged and built on these learnings to create further impact in this Stretch RAP. One such obstacle is that it takes time to embed cultural learning, and as such, this RAP sees MCQ continue to invest in cultural awareness training, with plans to deliver face to face programs to 125 specialist Domestic and Family Violence court stakeholders. In its last RAP, MCQ put in place the Framework for Stronger Community Justice Groups, in which it provides information on the groups for government agencies. It continues this important work in this Stretch RAP, with plans to develop a Community Justice Group Elders and Respected Persons Recognition Policy. It is also looking to developing and strengthening the role its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff play in its work, pledging to support five of its identified employees to complete a leadership program annually. Through these initiatives, the MCQ is embedding and expanding on its commitment to reconciliation in this Stretch RAP, to create substantive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend the Magistrates Court of Queensland on this Stretch RAP and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
CEO – Reconciliation Australia





Message from the Chief Magistrate

I am delighted to present the Magistrates Courts of Queensland's second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

This second stretch RAP builds on the achievements of the inaugural 2018–2021 RAP, continuing the vital partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and providing meaningful actions and practical steps that Magistrates Courts can take on the next leg of our reconciliation journey.

I gratefully acknowledge the leadership of former Chief Magistrate, His Honour Judge Rinaudo AM, the RAP Working Group, our Cultural Advisory Group, and courts staff in developing, implementing and embedding actions from the 2018–2021 RAP.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander magistrates, court staff, Community Justice Groups (CJGs) and the Cultural Advisory Group who are leaders and essential partners on the Magistrates Court's reconciliation journey and who ensure court initiatives are culturally appropriate.

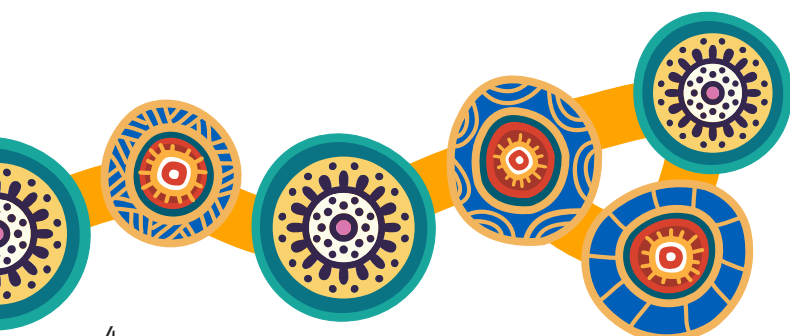
It is important to me to continue and consolidate the first RAP's focus on the themes of relationships, respect, and opportunities. It is vital that we, at Magistrates Courts – magistrates and court staff – deepen our relationships in order to improve justice experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our achievements include the development and delivery of tailored cultural awareness training to magistrates and development of a Magistrates Resource Booklet which includes a range of practical information to support magistrates' cultural awareness and to help provide a better understanding of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities which they serve.

In celebrating what we have achieved so far it is important that we remain dedicated to expanding our cultural learning and addressing the continuing impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. With each step forward we must remember there is always more work to be done to build a fairer and brighter future for all Queenslanders, work that we must do together.

Judge Terry Gardiner

**Chief Magistrate
Queensland Magistrates Court**





Message from the Executive Director

The Magistrates Courts have a vital role in protecting and promoting fairness and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people encountering the justice system.

As the Executive Director, Magistrates Courts Service, it is an honour to have partnered with the Chief Magistrate, Judge Terry Gardiner, to deliver our second RAP and continue our reconciliation journey.

The development of the 2022–2025 RAP demonstrates our continuing commitment to build partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and move towards a more positive future. The Magistrates Courts of Queensland (MCQ) RAP complements the commitment of the broader Department of Justice and Attorney-General's Cultural Capability Action Plan.

Magistrates and court staff have enthusiastically embraced our vision for reconciliation. Together we have shown our drive to improve access to culturally appropriate justice services, to value and nurture a culturally diverse workforce and actively demonstrate respect for, and understanding of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. I am immensely proud and grateful for what we have been able to achieve together over the past three years.

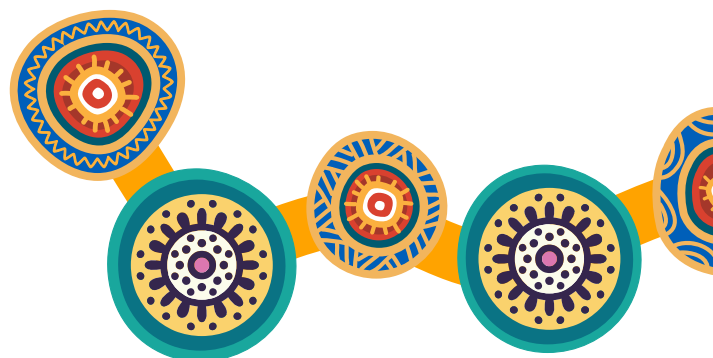
Some of the exciting initiatives we have implemented include initiating MCQ's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy, displaying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork in courts across Queensland, incorporating the RAP artwork into the design of courthouse renovations at Beenleigh and Townsville and engaging with CJGs and Elders to progress the naming of our Murri Courts in language.

There is however always more work to be done. The continued focus of the 2022–2025 RAP is on respect, relationships and opportunities. We pledge to continue to listen, to learn and grow our cultural awareness into cultural competency in the services we provide.

The launch of the 2022–2025 RAP provides another invaluable opportunity to pledge Magistrates Courts' commitment to reconciliation, to better meet the justice needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brigita'.

Brigita Cunnington
Executive Director
Magistrates Courts Service



OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION: growth, partnerships and respect

The MCQ is driven by the aim of providing contemporary and accessible court services that deliver fair and just outcomes for the court users who are the centre of our focus.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to experience unacceptable levels of over-representation in the Queensland criminal justice system. MCQ has an important role to play in tackling this issue and in protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights to fairness, equality and a culturally appropriate experience in the justice system. We acknowledge the historical injustice and harm to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that contributed to this disparity and pledge to remain responsive to needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Our vision is to provide justice services that inspire confidence in all Queenslanders and are dedicated to improving the accessibility of those services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We will ensure that our aims translate into action, and that our vision becomes embedded in our business.



Ipswich Murri Court Elders [L-R (front) Aunty Carmel Knox, Aunty Joanne McConnell, Aunty Paulene Houston, Uncle Rod Fuller L-R (back) Uncle Ralph Crawford and Uncle Ken Millar]

ABOUT THE MAGISTRATES COURT OF QUEENSLAND

Our business

The MCQ is established under the *Magistrates Courts Act 1921* (Qld) and the *Justices Act 1886* (Qld). It is the first tier of the Queensland courts system and is the busiest of all jurisdictions, averaging 95 per cent of the cases heard in Queensland. The courts deal with a range of offences including minor offences (summary offences) such as shoplifting, traffic infringements or disorderly behaviour. They can also hear more serious offences such as burglary, assault, fraud and drugs related offences. In civil matters, the MCQ deals with cases where the amount in dispute is \$150,000 or less.

The courts also operate a range of specialist courts and programs, including the Murri Court, Drug and Alcohol Court, Coroners Court of Queensland and the Domestic and Family Violence Court.

Our Judicial Officers and staff

Of the 100 judicial officers appointed in the MCQ, there are two Aboriginal judicial officers and two Torres Strait Islander judicial officers. There are 875 Queensland public servants who support the operation of the MCQ across the State, 36 of whom identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (approximately 4.1 per cent).¹

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 4.6 per cent² of the Queensland population, with Queensland's population recorded at 5,174,437³. In the 2020–2021 financial year, 42,094 defendants identifying as Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander presented with charges in the MCQ making up just over 19.25 per cent of the total court users for MCQ.

Defendants who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Children's Courts made up almost half the number of total defendants that presented during the 2020–2021 period.

During the 2020–2021 financial period, 2519 child respondents named in a child protection application before MCQ, identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This made up 40 per cent of the total number of child respondents named in child protection applications lodged in the MCQ.

In the 2020–2021 financial period, 4341 aggrieved identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander were named on DFV applications lodged in the MCQ, making up 15 per cent of the total number of aggrieved named in DFV applications lodged in MCQ. During this time, 4502 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were named as respondents in DFV applications, making up 16 per cent of the total number of DFV applications to MCQ.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to experience unacceptable levels of over-representation in the Queensland criminal justice system.”

1 Employee Opinion Survey Census diversity data September 2020

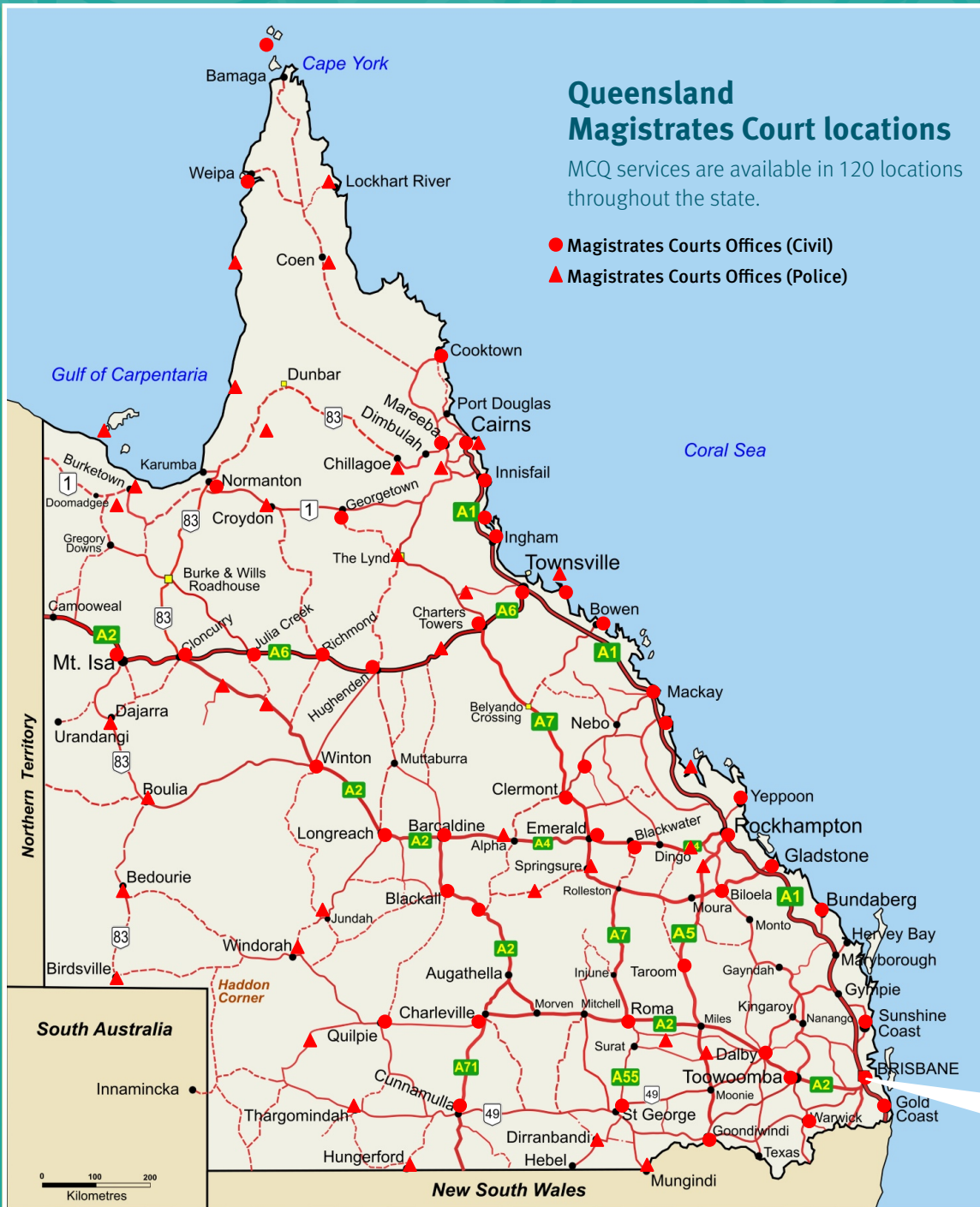
2 Australian Bureau of Statistics, as at 30 June 2016 – 221,276 persons in Queensland identified as Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander. www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/estimates-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/jun-2016

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, quarterly population estimates by state as at June 2020 – http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ERP_QUARTERLY

Queensland Magistrates Court locations

MCQ services are available in 120 locations throughout the state.

- Magistrates Courts Offices (Civil)
- ▲ Magistrates Courts Offices (Police)



- Brisbane Central
- Sandgate
- Wynnum
- Holland Park
- Ipswich
- Redcliffe
- Cleveland
- Caboolture
- Richlands

Current initiatives

The MCQ supports specialist programs designed to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defendants and victims, and decrease the number coming into contact with the criminal justice system. These include:

The Community Justice Group Program

The Community Justice Group (CJG) program was originally formed in 1993 as part of the Queensland Government's response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The purpose of the CJG program is to work towards reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders and victims within the criminal justice system.

CJGs aim to achieve this through the delivery of or referral to culturally appropriate support services to improve quality of life and to increase cultural understanding in the courts and the wider criminal justice system.

The Government is providing additional funding of \$19.1 million over four years and \$5.4 million per annum ongoing for CJGs⁴.

The funding provided for the CJG program includes funding for 40 CJGs across the state to:

- ▶ make cultural submissions on behalf of defendants
- ▶ identify culturally appropriate support and treatment programs
- ▶ provide support to victims and defendants
- ▶ develop strategies within their communities for dealing with justice related issues.

CJGs also play a key role in coordinating and supporting the Murri Court program.

A further ten CJGs located in the outer islands of the Torres Strait receive a small amount of funding to support the circuiting Magistrates Courts.

Each CJG delivers their tasks in slightly different ways to ensure their service meets the needs of individuals, families and their communities.

Stronger CJGs

The Framework for Stronger CJGs (the framework) is a high-level, overarching resource for government agencies.

It outlines the core functions and broader role of CJGs within their communities and the common challenges faced by CJGs and presents a refocused model for the CJG program which recognises the breadth of their service delivery. The framework also outlines how government agencies will enable CJGs to deliver justice-related outcomes in their communities.

⁴ <https://s3.treasury.qld.gov.au/files/BP4.pdf>

The framework reflects a collective commitment by key government agencies about how we will work with and support CJGs to deliver justice-related outcomes in and for their communities. It is a vehicle for government agencies to identify ways of working together to acknowledge, remunerate and support the work of CJGs.

CJG Domestic and Family Violence Enhancement Program

The CJG Domestic and Family Violence Enhancement Program (CJG DFV Program) is being rolled out in 18 remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in response to recommendations made by the Special Taskforce on DFV in the Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland report.

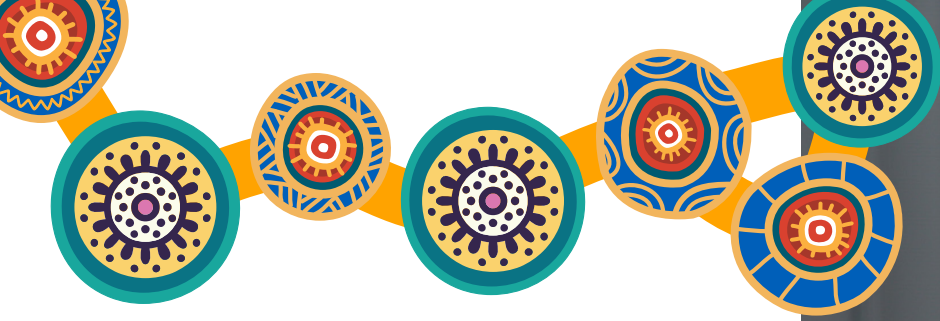
The CJG DFV Program aims to build the capacity of CJGs to respond effectively to DFV in their communities and strengthen support for the courts. It also aims to support the CJG to establish, or develop, the capacity of local authority groups to respond to DFV. A key part of the program is working collaboratively with CJG, Elders and Respected Persons, Government and agency partners and non-Government stakeholders to design their community's DFV Strategy. The local responses implemented range from employment of male and female DFV support workers, employment of DFV program manager/coordinators and delivery of on country and cultural healing programs.

The Remote Justice of the Peace (Magistrates Court) Program

The Queensland Government began the Remote Justice of the Peace (Remote JP) Magistrates Court Program in 1993 as part of its response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991.

This program aims to make the criminal justice system more culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It allows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to hold positive roles in the criminal justice system in their community by:

- ▶ identifying negative interactions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have with the justice system and finding ways to improve those interactions
- ▶ dealing with local matters more quickly
- ▶ using culturally appropriate practices with local knowledge and respect
- ▶ enabling communities to decide local solutions to offending within their community
- ▶ using language and processes that are easily understood by defendants.



Under the program, qualified Remote JP Magistrates can form a Magistrates Court. They are able to hear and determine outcomes for a range of matters, and in matters where a guilty plea is entered, they are able to sentence the defendant.

Murri Court

The Queensland Murri Court commenced operation in Brisbane in August 2002. Murri Court is a culturally appropriate bail-based court process. It includes support from Elders or Respected Persons in court to help the magistrate understand the lives and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people. Murri Court encourages participants to take responsibility for offending behaviour by meeting with Elders, receiving referrals to treatment and support services and participation in cultural activities such as yarning circles and men's and women's groups.

Murri Court is currently operating in 15 locations across Queensland: Cairns, Cherbourg, Caboolture, Townsville, Mount Isa, Mackay, Maroochydore, Rockhampton, Brisbane, Wynnum, Cleveland, Richlands, Toowoomba, St George and Ipswich.

Aurukun Restorative Justice Program (Thaa' Pant Services)

The Aurukun Restorative Justice Program (ARJP) aims to reduce violence through locally based, culturally inclusive mediation and peacekeeping to build local capacity to resolve disputes. The ARJP is intended to support community safety and positive community outcomes by building community conflict resolution capacity.

Mediators and nominated Elders facilitate mediations between disputing parties, including family disputes. Referrals come directly from families and other community members such as police, the court and service providers. Families can choose the Elders they wish to mediate their dispute and most mediations are conducted in the local Wik language.

ARJP has supported the training and development of staff and Elders, with one community member now qualified as a nationally accredited mediator and four other community members on their way to achieving this qualification.



Guest speaker and performer Kristal West at DJAG NAIDOC Flag Raising Ceremony 2020

REFLECTING ON OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY SO FAR

In implementing our 2018–2021 RAP, we learned that embedding cultural learning takes time, and that while it is important to celebrate our progress, we can always work harder, and do more. As we take the next steps in our reconciliation journey, we set our sights higher, strengthen our targets and identify areas for improvement. We continue to pursue the development of relationships and engage more people in openly promoting the values and actions of the RAP.

Embracing challenges

Applying a reflective lens, we acknowledge some of the challenges we faced over the past three years and how this informed the significant decision to deliver a second Stretch RAP. Challenges included our geographically dispersed workforce, the complexity of a single RAP uniting the commitment MCQ staff and the independent judiciary, the diversity of communities across Queensland and ensuring we meet nuanced community expectations. Further, the demands of the court system and embedding the RAP as business as usual proved challenging with limited resources and ongoing COVID-19 disruptions.

The ability to engage our people is crucial to our continued progress. In 2019, we distributed a MCQ RAP survey to understand the impact the RAP was having across the state and received over 300 responses from staff, magistrates and CJGs. These responses showed increasing engagement with the RAP, greater understanding and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and experiences and deeper reflection on how we can make our services more accessible, inclusive and culturally appropriate.

We targeted initiatives in response to the survey results, to advance our RAP aspirations into the daily work of a vast and dispersed workforce. To ensure widespread involvement, we developed an MCQ RAP channel on DJAG's social networking forum 'Yammer' and customised our monthly RAP Newsletters to serve as a platform to identify and showcase RAP activities right across MCQ and link readers to further culturally relevant reading, listening and viewing materials. To provide opportunities for all across MCQ to get involved with RAP events, we embraced virtual connectivity options and hosted online events such as a Deadly Tukka cooking class for National Reconciliation Week (NRW), a panel discussion about the Australian Dream documentary, and our seven-week online RAP Challenge which saw participants improve their knowledge

about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' histories, languages, achievements and cultures. These activities will continue as we strive to maintain a culture in MCQ of learning and knowledge sharing that is vital to creating positive change.

Making change happen

MCQ remains committed to embedding the RAP in how we do our business. We continue to develop the knowledge and understanding essential to providing culturally appropriate services including through a Cultural Awareness Training Strategy for magistrates and staff. The strategy provides increased access to cultural capability resources and training opportunities, such as inclusion and diversity training. An example of this was the development of a new series of Magistrates' Induction Booklets to support and inform magistrates engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the state. Significantly, the Magistrates' Induction Booklets include place-specific enabling cultural information for each court location. Magistrates and staff also participated in cultural intelligence workshops with the innovative and leading Banaam team and to commemorate the National Apology to Stolen Generations, the Chief Magistrate hosted a presentation by the Cherbourg Dormitory Boys attended by superior court judges, providing an opportunity to extend the influence of our RAP.

In 2020, DJAG introduced 'Starting the Journey', the Department's foundational Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability training. 'Starting the Journey' was provided to Queensland Government agencies by the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DSDSATSIP) to provide insights into both culture and the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland. To date, 38 per cent of MCQ staff have completed 'Starting the Journey'.

It is clear in implementing our first RAP that engagement is needed from senior leaders in MCQ to inspire the individual leadership, investment and responsibility that creates lasting cultural and organisational change. As we embrace the aims of our second RAP, MCQ endeavours to stretch the capacity of our organisation by embedding RAP actions into the performance expectations of senior management and wider staff and increasing the targets for our people to undertake structured, formal cultural learning activities.

“

... embedding cultural learning takes time, and ... while it is important to celebrate our progress, we can always work harder, and do more.”

Celebrating culture; embedding respect

One aspect of embracing reconciliation in MCQ is ensuring we cultivate workplaces that demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. To support our people to observe cultural protocols, we developed and distributed palm cards to assist staff and magistrates to acknowledge Traditional Owners at all formal meetings and gatherings.

As part of our commitment for Murri Courts to display artwork by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, a painting was created by proud Kalkadoon sisters Chern’ee and Brooke Sutton to welcome those who enter the Mount Isa Courthouse (*pictured below*). The painting, titled ‘Ntia Utinat Kutu Dreaming’ which means ‘Stone Emu Egg Dreaming’ in Kalkadoon language, symbolises the respect

held for the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who enter the space.

In implementing our RAP, we have embraced opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures by recognising significant dates such as the anniversary of National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week, Mabo Day, Coming of the Light, and NAIDOC Week. Staff across the state engage in activities each NRW and NAIDOC Week designed to aid reflection on the meaning of those dates and are encouraged to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in a wide variety of ways.

Activities have included: inviting local Elders to morning tea to speak with staff in Beenleigh, hosting NAIDOC art competitions and activities in Caboolture and Maroochydore, engaging Traditional Owners to perform a smoking ceremony in the Toowoomba Courthouse, and registry staff engaging with Indigenous Elders to compete in the annual Seniors Games in Charleville. MCQ proudly play the lead role in coordinating DJAG’s annual NAIDOC Week Flag Raising Ceremony, a highlight on the calendar.

Audience members experience Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers, traditional and contemporary music and dances, as well as the Attorney-General and esteemed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest speakers.

Important initiatives to name Murri Courts in traditional language and acknowledge Traditional Owners in Queensland Courthouses continue to be explored, with the engagement of CJGs and Traditional Owners in local communities. As we progress these initiatives, we continue to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in engaging Traditional Owners including the limited number of native title determinations. The ongoing



Chern’ee and Brooke Sutton
(Kalkadoon sisters and artists)

cultural guidance and support provided through our partnerships with CJGs is vital in addressing these complexities in a culturally appropriate way.

The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system was explored in a panel discussion in 2020 on the National Closing the Gap Agreement chaired by Chief Magistrate, Judge Terry Gardiner and attended by magistrates and staff from across the public service. Distinguished Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander panellists, including Magistrate Zachary Sarra, Donnella Mills, Queensland representative on the Joint Council on Closing the Gap, Aunty Veronica Ah-Wang, Murri Court Coordinator for the Mackay Community Justice Group and Alan Dewis, Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Programs and Partnerships engaged in an informative and inspiring discussion on the question “What would it take to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system?”. Themes emerging in the discussion were the need for unity and working together, hope, possibility and crucial empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities through respectful engagement and relationship building.

Stronger relationships

The relationships we build and maintain with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations continues. Over the life of our first RAP the CJG program has strengthened as we strived to increase awareness and recognition of our CJGs and the vital services they deliver. In 2020, we consulted with CJGs to develop and implement the Framework for Stronger CJGs (the Framework). The Framework is an important vehicle for government agencies to identify ways we can work together to appropriately



Reconciliation is about union and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.”

acknowledge, remunerate, and support the work of CJGs to achieve justice related outcomes in and for their communities.

An evaluation of the CJG program, including the CJG DFV program commenced and will continue until December 2023. The evaluation is being undertaken by Myuma Pty Ltd and led by Dr Michael Limerick and Dr Heron Loban. Myuma means ‘do good’ in the Indjalandji-Dhidhanu language. In line with ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, there is a strong emphasis on participation, developing capability of individuals and consulting with CJGs to deliver outcomes in local communities.

Interdisciplinary Seminar: National Closing the Gap Agreement – Panel Discussion



**Chief Magistrate,
Judge Terry Gardiner**



**Magistrate
Zachary Sarra**



Donnella Mills
Queensland
Representative on the
Joint Council on
Closing the Gap



Aunty Veronica Ah-Wang
Murri Court Coordinator
for the Mackay Community
Justice Group



Alan Dewis
Director of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Justice
Programs and Partnerships

Supporting and enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's social and economic development is an important feature of our RAP goals. To support the Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy (QIPP) a whole-of-government framework to increase procurement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business to three percent of addressable spend by 2022, DJAG, encompassing MCQ, has introduced a new procurement delegation. We can directly engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in the provision of goods and services up to \$100,000 inclusive of GST.

MCQ has continued to procure goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, forming valued partnerships along the way. We engaged Tagai Management Consultants to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy for recruitment, retention, and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The significance of this Strategy is that it was developed by a First Nation business in collaboration with First Nations staff and Judiciary.

As part of working to provide culturally safe workplaces for all our staff, we also established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peer Support Network to better support, encourage and retain our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

This 2022–2025 RAP sees MCQ build from those initial steps to reinforce the partnerships we are developing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and improve opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within and external to our organisation.

It is with high expectations that we set out to achieve the aims of our second Stretch RAP. We look forward to the opportunity for growth, positive change and unity that this process offers our organisation, our staff and particularly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who we are privileged to provide our services.



DJAG NAIDOC stall Musgrave Park (L-R front) Robert Mann and Adam Chapman (L-R back) Renee Kyle, Tamara Bell, Tealah Walsh, Stephen Tillett, Lucie Faine and Janine Matthews

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

What is Reconciliation and who is Reconciliation Australia?

Reconciliation is about union and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. It is about respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' heritage and valuing justice and equity for all Australians.

Reconciliation Australia was launched in 2001 and are the lead organisation responsible for reconciliation across the country. Reconciliation Australia are an independent, not-for-profit organisation who strive to promote and assist reconciliation through fostering relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Their goal is to empower all Australians to contribute to the reconciliation of the nation. Reconciliation Australia have developed a framework for reconciliation based

on five dimensions which was informed by a review of reconciliation in Australia and internationally.

The 2021 State of Reconciliation Report draws on the views of key leaders of First Nations organisations and communities, and other key Reconciliation Australia stakeholders; a series of practical examples of reconciliation in action; data from the Australian Reconciliation Barometer and desktop research undertaken by Reconciliation Australia. It tracks Australia's progress against the five dimensions of reconciliation and lays out some practical actions that need to be taken if we are to continue to progress the reconciliation process. View the report at www.reconciliation.org.au/publication/2021-state-of-reconciliation.

The five dimensions of reconciliation



Background

The Queensland Government is committed to a new way of working together, delivering real change and real outcomes through a genuine partnership approach, to continue the journey to reconciliation. The Tracks to Treaty – Reframing the Relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders initiative has been developed to give effect to this reframed relationship. A keystone of Tracks to Treaty is the *Statement of Commitment* to reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. It acknowledges, embraces, and celebrates the humanity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Tracks to Treaty also includes [Path to Treaty](#) and [Local Thriving Communities](#) (LTC).

LTC is a significant, long-term reform to bring decision making closer to Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. LTC is based on mutual respect, high expectations relationships, and applying a collaborative approach to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples a direct voice in decisions that affect them. In the first instance this will be achieved by enabling communities that opt into LTC to establish Local Decision-Making Bodies (LDMBs) and creating the enabling environment in government so Queensland Government agencies engage with LDMBs with cultural intelligence and whole-of-government processes facilitate the reform.

The Queensland Government developed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework to enhance the quality, level and delivery of government services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland. DSDSATSIP and the Public Service Commission lead this piece of work, under the leadership of the Cultural Agency Leaders (CAL) committee. The CAL committee is made up of Senior Executives representing all Queensland Government departments.

This Framework underpins all Queensland Government actions aimed at ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders experience the same social and economic opportunities as non-Indigenous Queenslanders. The Framework is to ensure that Government policies, program and services meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Each agency is responsible for developing their own measures and seeking suitable training to improve their organisational cultural capability in line with the Framework's guiding principles. The DJAG Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan provides an outline for how DJAG will implement the Framework to realise our vision.

The DJAG Action Plan aligns with the Framework's five key principles:

1. valuing culture
2. leadership and accountability
3. building cultural capability to improve economic participation
4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement and stronger partnerships
5. culturally responsive systems and services.

This plan will also work alongside the CAL's workplan to have a strong focus on the Queensland Government's [Tracks to Treaty](#) agenda.

MCQ remains committed to growing an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve. We are dedicated to continuing to develop genuine partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations. We recognise the mutual benefits of these relationships and will ensure these are built on foundations of trust and respect.

MCQ's 2022–2025 RAP will guide us to strengthen and build on the awareness and cultural competency of our staff, to improve our governance structures, decisions, processes and services. The intentions and actions within this RAP reaffirm our ongoing aim to develop culturally inclusive processes and initiatives that reflect the exceptional place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the history, achievements and future of Australian society.

Developing this plan

In developing this plan, MCQ:

- ▶ Developed actions under the guidance of the Reconciliation Australia's Stretch RAP Framework.
- ▶ Aligned actions with the Queensland Government Statement of Commitment⁵ and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General's Cultural Capability Framework.
- ▶ Established an external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisory Group.
- ▶ Consolidated and built on learnings from the first RAP.

5 [Statement of Commitment – Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders \(datsip.qld.gov.au\)](#)

Who developed this plan?

We acknowledge that meaningful consultation is an important step in our journey as it helps to build a strong foundation for the development, design and delivery of the MCQ RAP 2022–2025. The RAP Working Group was established in April 2017 and membership for the group is reviewed each year. The RAP Working Group engaged in important dialogue with a number of internal and external stakeholders to seek advice and draw on the distinct cultural knowledge and understanding of our partners, communities and workforce. In drafting the RAP, we sought assistance from MCQ staff including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peer support network, the Cultural Advisory Group and CJGs. Working in partnership to develop creative ideas and solutions, a number of draft iterations of the plan were circulated to the Cultural Advisory Group and members were encouraged to provide suggestions and feedback. An External Stakeholders' Group of executive leaders from relevant government and non-government organisations, chaired by the Executive Director, MCS was also consulted to collaborate in the development the new RAP actions.

In March 2021, we conducted a survey of MCQ staff including the judiciary and CJGs as part of our ongoing commitment to promote visibility of the RAP. The survey measured our participation and involvement in the first RAP and captured challenges in engaging with the RAP. The survey responses highlighted areas for improvement and provided an opportunity for people to share their views to help inform the development of the second MCQ Stretch RAP.

Governance (RAP Working Group)

The RAP Working Group (RWG) has led the development of the second MCQ Stretch RAP and will oversee the implementation of the RAP. The RWG comprises judicial officers, program, and Magistrates Courts staff members, inclusive of six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members. The 2022–2025 RWG members are:

- ▶ Judge Terry Gardiner, Chief Magistrate
- ▶ Deputy Chief Magistrate Brassington
- ▶ Magistrate Hennessy
- ▶ Magistrate J Payne
- ▶ Magistrate Pearson
- ▶ Magistrate Pirie
- ▶ Magistrate Previterra
- ▶ Magistrate Sarra
- ▶ Brigita Cunningham, Executive Director, MCS
- ▶ Natalie Sherrington, Regional Director, MCS (Central Queensland)
- ▶ Lisa Nother, Senior Director (Operations), MCS
- ▶ Kristina Deveson, Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program
- ▶ Alan Dewis, Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Programs and Partnerships, Courts Innovation Program
- ▶ Renee Kyle, Manager, Indigenous Justice Programs – Projects, Courts Innovation Program

RAP Champions

To advance the implementation of our RAP, we established a Reconciliation Champions Network that includes nine senior leaders from both the judiciary and MCQ staff. The network includes the Chief Magistrate and four fellow magistrates which reflects the commitment of the judiciary to our RAP outcomes.

The RAP Champions are positive leaders to drive and support change for reconciliation across our organisation. For example, the Chief Magistrate has taken on a mentoring role for an Aboriginal staff member studying law. The staff member was recently awarded the Queensland Law Society First Nations Student of the Year award and values the support she receives in the workplace.

The Cultural Advisory Group

Our first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Advisory Group played an integral role in the development and implementation of the first MCQ RAP. Their guidance and cultural knowledge have been essential, and we acknowledge their efforts and thank them for their help on our reconciliation journey.

Continuing the work of the first RAP, we have refreshed the membership of the Cultural Advisory Group to advise and provide guidance to the Chief Magistrate and the RAP Working Group in the implementation of the second Stretch RAP.

The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples voices from across Queensland is vital to ensuring the RAP is appropriately culturally informed and that we are meeting the needs of our diverse communities.

The 2022–2025 Cultural Advisory Group members are:

Cultural Advisory Group Member	Community
Colleen McLennan	Richlands
Gwendoline Taylor	Brisbane
Karl McKenzie	Townsville
Roy Chevathen	Napranum
Dean Brunker	Brisbane
Lyn Schonefeld	Brisbane
Estelle Bowen	Hopevale
Bob Kaigey	Thursday Island

This group plays a vital role in assisting the Chief Magistrate to understand and build relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. These members are integral to informing the direction of the Magistrates Courts in Queensland in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and what that means for the court system.

Our People

One of the definitions for Reconciliation is the restoration of friendly relations and this is what it means to me and would be the greatest outcome for our nation. Working together with First Nations people and understanding our history but more importantly learning from their traditions and cultures so we can create a more sustainable future for our beautiful country.

Katrina O'Connor, Registrar, Coolangatta Magistrates Court

Reconciliation to me means knowing & acknowledging where we come from in order to know where we are going in the future. It also means to me it is our responsibility as present elders to teach/educate our future generations with the same amount of respect, trust, and equality. As we educate the wider community it plants a seed, 'The seed of change'. Since being a member of the 'Cultural Advisory Group' the RAP plan has opened doors within the justice system, I was one of the many afraid of institutions especially when it came to the LAW! The group also gave us a voice to speak concerns on behalf of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples. As a group I believe we made a lot of friendships not only within the group also from the Chief Magistrate, colleagues, and staff. The benefits I have experienced as part of the RAP is naming the magistrate court room for Murri Court in Mackay "in language", who would have thought this could happen, all a part of the seed of change. I thank you from the heart for allowing me the opportunity to be a part of this amazing venture.

Aunty Veronica Ah-Wang, Mackay Community Justice Group Coordinator

Reconciliation to me means to have a better understanding of Indigenous culture and beliefs. My perception has always been that Indigenous people are very family and community oriented, and as a non-Indigenous person, I've never felt comfortable trying to discover more about their culture as I wasn't sure where to begin or if it would seem disrespectful. Recently, I've had the opportunity to work closely with some Indigenous people who are comfortable with my questions and I've thoroughly enjoyed hearing about their culture and history. They've also told me that my interest is not seen as disrespect but the opposite. Ideally, I'd like to see Indigenous history and culture taught in schools, not just Indigenous schools but mainstream schools to help bridge the gap between what non-Indigenous people presume and fact. I'd also like to see the guilt around celebrating Australia Day on 26 January resolved. I love to celebrate all things Australian on Australia Day as we live in an amazing country no matter what day it's celebrated on – but it needs to be on a date appropriate for all Australians.

Katrina Britton, A/Deputy Senior Registrar, Richlands Courthouse

The three words Reconciliation Action Plan exhort us all to do all three:

Reconcile with this nation's history as it relates to the relationships with, and the treatment of the First Australians from the time of colonisation to the present day:

Act to recognise the continuing consequences of that history on our First Australians communities in terms of ongoing vulnerabilities including the impact of poverty, homelessness, and inter-generational trauma. Such action requires much more understanding and significant funding to address the needs of their families, communities, and cultures within the wider Australian community.

Plan to involve the First Australians in every level of discussions as to how best to alleviate the suffering that continues despite the passage of nearly 30 years since the 393 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Murri courts throughout Queensland have assisted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make changes in their lives; and have assisted the wider community to understand that a different delivery of justice is needed to deliver equal justice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the criminal justice system. We all need to reconcile ourselves to this means of delivering justice, act to spread the word about its successes and plan to meet the challenges that still remain even in this culturally appropriate way of justice delivery.

**Magistrate Tina Previtara, Brisbane and Richlands
Murri Court Magistrate**

Reconciliation means patience and sharing. Our nation's history is a fractured one and unfortunately, its true extent was not always taught. Entwining our stories can overcome that, growing our collective understanding. Diplomacy and tolerance are our tools which lead to a richer social fabric.

**Craig Casey, Principal Training and Project Officer,
Indigenous Justice Programs – Projects, Courts
Innovation Program**



Flags flying outside the QEII Courts of Law





Relationships

We value our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, businesses, communities and families. We understand the importance of these relationships being continually strengthened. The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in many aspects of the court system (particularly in the criminal justice and child protection systems) remains an unacceptable reality. We also know that in some areas of the courts, including civil jurisdictions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are under-represented. As we seek to improve how we communicate and promote the work of the RAP, we seek also to listen, and to embed culturally appropriate consultative practices that include and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ voices to be heard. We continue our commitment to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities in respectful and meaningful ways, that in turn enable MCQ to understand the needs of individuals and communities.

Focus area: Customer focus – safeguarding equal justice and access to justice for all court users

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>1. Maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations to support positive outcomes.</p>	<p>a. Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to continuously improve guiding principles for engagement.</p>	December 2024	Executive Director, Magistrates Courts Service (MCS)
	<p>b. Implement and update engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.</p>	December 2023	Executive Director, MCS
	<p>c. Maintain at least ten formal two-way partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations.</p>	June 2024	Executive Director, MCS
<p>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</p>	<p>a. Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to all magistrates and staff.</p>	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS
	<p>b. RAP Working Group members to participate in two external NRW events each year.</p>	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate
	<p>c. Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in two external events to recognise and celebrate NRW.</p>	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	<p>d. Organise at least one internal NRW event in each of the four court administration regions each year and one organisation wide NRW event.</p>	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	<p>e. Register all NRW events on Reconciliation Australia’s NRW website.</p>	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023, 2024	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	a. Implement a reconciliation communication strategy to enhance awareness and engage all MCS staff and our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	December 2022	Executive Director, MCS
	b. Host an annual online forum to engage external stakeholders in our reconciliation journey.	December 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	c. Develop a 'our reconciliation journey' promotional video to engage external stakeholders and promote on DJAG social media sites.	December 2023	Executive Director, MCS
	d. Publicly communicate our commitment to reconciliation by circulating a monthly RAP Newsletter to all MCQ staff and external stakeholders.	Ongoing and reviewed annually in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS
	e. Collaborate with at least two RAP and other like-minded organisations to implement ways to advance reconciliation.	July 2023	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS
	f. Engage our senior leaders to be champions of change for reconciliation in the delivery of our RAP outcomes.	December 2022	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS
	g. Promote reconciliation to all staff by including information and stories on Yammer and internal DJAG intranet.	Ongoing and reviewed annually in annual RAP reporting in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	h. Host an annual online forum to engage all staff in our reconciliation journey.	December 2022, 2023, 2024	Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Programs and Partnerships
	i. Promote our reconciliation journey by creating and sharing an annual Sway series with all MCQ staff.	September 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	a. Continuously improve HR policies and procedures concerned with anti-discrimination.	April 2025	Executive Director, MCS
	b. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to develop our anti-discrimination policy.	April 2025	Executive Director, MCS
	c. Implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	April 2025	Executive Director, MCS
	d. Provide ongoing education opportunities for magistrates, senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism.	April 2025	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS
	e. Senior leaders to publicly support anti-discrimination campaigns, initiatives or stances against racism.	April 2025	Executive Director, MCS
5. Strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Justice Group program.	a. Procure and implement new Community Justice Group Program Grants Management System, which will enable improved reporting for the Community Justice Groups (CJGs) operating in 41 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	June 2023	Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Programs and Partnerships
	b. Embed the Framework for Stronger CJGs and build capacity across CJG communities.	June 2024	Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Programs and Partnerships
	c. Strengthen the CJG program by conducting an independent evaluation along with annual reports due from evaluator in November 2022, 2023 and 2024.	June 2024	Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Programs and Partnerships
	d. Support CJGs to contribute to local evaluation reports through the collation of local data to support data sovereignty.	June 2024	Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Programs and Partnerships



Respect

We acknowledge that respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures is vital for social change and progress towards reconciliation. We recognise the importance of embedding the values, actions and intentions of our RAP into our daily business as part of actively demonstrating that respect. To do this we will empower our people to further understand, engage with and celebrate the cultures, histories and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the unique position they hold in our society. We will support our people to observe cultural protocols in their work, provide opportunities for further learning and embrace dates of cultural significance. We will endeavour at all times to translate this respect into practice and policies within our courts that are effective in promoting access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Focus area: Customer focus – developing our people

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	a. Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	April 2025	Executive Director, MCS
	b. Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	April 2025	Executive Director, MCS
	c. Implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	April 2025	Executive Director, MCS
	d. Commit 50% of MCQ staff to attend online workshops.	Ongoing to be monitored and included in annual RAP reporting in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	e. Commit 15% of MCQ staff to attend face to face workshops or cultural immersions (unless restrictions are in place).	Ongoing to be monitored and included in annual RAP reporting in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	f. All new staff and newly appointed magistrates undertake SBS training online as part of their induction within 30 days of commencing in the role.	Ongoing to be monitored and included in annual RAP reporting in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS
	g. Magistrates to undertake cultural diversity learning and immersion activities as part of their ongoing professional development such as engaging with external resources, participating in local events and undertaking research about the Traditional Owners in their local area.	Ongoing and reviewed annually in annual RAP reporting in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate
	h. Commit all RWG members to undertake formal and structured cultural learning.	Ongoing and reviewed annually in annual RAP reporting in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by observing cultural protocols.	a. Complete and implement a Community Justice Group Elders and Respected Persons Recognition Policy.	June 2022	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program	
	b. Continue to increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols via RAP newsletter, internal social media platforms and annual forum.	June 2024	Executive Director, MCS	
	c. Implement and communicate a cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	June 2024	Executive Director, MCS	
	d. Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at least five significant events each year, including DJAG NAIDOC Week Flag raising ceremony and Magistrates Conference.	May, July, September 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS	
	e. Magistrates and staff to provide an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at all significant events including public events.	Ongoing and reviewed annually in annual RAP reporting in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS	
	f. Name nine (9) rooms of court buildings and/or court rooms using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language after seeking advice from Traditional Owners and CJGs.	April 2025	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS	
	g. Ensure all remaining Murri Courts (4 locations) display artwork created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists after seeking advice from Traditional Owners and CJGs. The Artist/artwork storyline to be acknowledged.	June 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS	
	h. Display nine (9) Acknowledgement of Country plaques in our office/s or on our Magistrates Courts buildings.	April 2025	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS	
	i. Work with DSDSATSIP to arrange separate cost code for Welcomes to Country.	January 2023	Executive Director, MCS	
	8. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	a. RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate
		b. Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	June 2023	Executive Director, MCS
c. Support all magistrates and staff to participate in at least two NAIDOC Week events in our local area, including DJAG Flag Raising Ceremony, Morning/ Afternoon teas, NAIDOC stalls.		First week in July 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS	
d. In consultation with the relevant head of jurisdiction, and where possible, fly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at all court locations throughout the entirety of NAIDOC Week.		First week in July 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS	
e. Promote NAIDOC week events on the Magistrate's intranet and DJAG intranet.		First week in July 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS	
f. In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, support one external NAIDOC Week event each year.		First week in July 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS	
g. Deputy Director-General and Chief Magistrate will annually broadcast emails encouraging all staff and magistrates to view and participate in the livestreaming of the annual DJAG NAIDOC Flag Raising Ceremony to acknowledge and celebrate the importance of NAIDOC Week.		First week in July 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS	

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
9. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating dates of significance.	a. Recognise and celebrate Mabo Day by promoting events and sharing the significance on internal social media platforms.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program
	b. Hold a virtual event (internal and external stakeholders) to celebrate the significance of the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples.	September 2022, 2023, 2024	Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Programs and Partnerships
10. Implement culturally appropriate court processes that respect and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.	a. Continue to strengthen Murri Courts by implementing the Murri Court Evaluation recommendations.	December 2023	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program
	b. Finalise implementation actions for Yarrabah, Lockhart River, Mapoon and Aurukun for a funded culturally appropriate DFV service model.	June 2024	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program
	c. Implement localised National Disability Insurance Scheme pathways for all Murri Courts.	April 2025	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program
11. Embed a culturally appropriate justice response for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in specialist DFV Court proceedings.	a. Procure and deliver face-to-face (unless restrictions are in place) cultural awareness training to a minimum of 125 specialist DFV court stakeholders.	June 2022	Director, Specialist Courts, Referral and Support Services
	b. Include culturally appropriate design elements, such as the display of artwork created by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artists, in court buildings at all specialist DFV court locations.	June 2024	Director, Specialist Courts, Referral and Support Services
	c. Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented within the Operational Working Groups at all specialist DFV court locations.	June 2024	Director, Specialist Courts, Referral and Support Services



Opportunities

We strive to be an employer of choice and an employer that provides culturally safe workplaces. We deeply value our commercial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and recognise the importance of reaching clear targets for the procurement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and services. As we continue to grow our diverse workforce, we will ensure that appropriate staff training and support is provided to enable us to embed these practices in our daily business. Through the implementation of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce strategy we will provide increased opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in our workforce, and to undertake professional development and senior level employment opportunities.

Focus area: Culturally diverse workforce

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
12. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	a. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employment to 5%.	January 2023	Executive Director, MCS
	b. Implement, embed and review the MCQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce strategy.	June 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	c. Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Ongoing to be reviewed annually in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	d. Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	Ongoing to be reviewed annually in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	e. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	March 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	f. Support 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to undertake a leadership program annually.	Ongoing to be reviewed annually in September 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	g. Strengthen the MCS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peer Support Network by developing a terms of reference and expanding the network to the Department.	Ongoing to be reviewed annually in November 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	h. Actively promote employment opportunities within MCS to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants through formal and informal networks and communities including partnering with relevant stakeholders such as Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.	Ongoing to be reviewed annually in November 2022, 2023, 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	13. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	a. Meet the target in the Queensland Government Indigenous Procurement strategy to increase procurement with Indigenous businesses to be 3% of all procurement contracts.	June 2023
b. Investigate Supply Nation membership.		June 2023	Executive Director, MCS
c. Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and staff.		June 2023	Executive Director, MCS
d. Maintain commercial relationships with at least 4 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.		April 2025	Executive Director, MCS
e. Train all relevant staff in contracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through Supply Nation or an equivalent organisation.		April 2025	Executive Director, MCS
f. Review and update our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.		September 2023	Executive Director, MCS
g. Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.		September 2023	Executive Director, MCS



Governance

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
14. Maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	a. Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Ongoing and reviewed annually in June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS
	b. Review membership and the terms of the RWG.	Annually in June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chair of RWG
	c. Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	February, July, September, December 2022, 2023, 2024	Chair of RWG
15. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	a. Embed resource needs for RAP implementation.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program
	b. Embed key RAP actions in performance expectations of senior management and all staff.	July 2024	Executive Director, MCS
	c. Embed appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March 2024	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program
	d. Maintain internal RAP Champions from the judiciary and senior management.	June 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS
	e. Include our RAP as a standing agenda item at senior management meetings.	April 2025	Executive Director, MCS
16. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	a. Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2022, 2023, 2024	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program
	b. Report RAP progress to all magistrates and staff quarterly.	March, July, October, December 2022, 2023, 2024	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program
	c. Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's Biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2022, 2024	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program
	d. Publicly report against our RAP commitments annually, outlining achievements, challenges and learnings.	December 2022, 2023, 2024	Chief Magistrate/ Executive Director, MCS
17. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	a. Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	January 2024	Senior Director, Courts Innovation Program

Acronyms

DJAG	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
MCQ	Magistrates Courts of Queensland
QLD	Queensland
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RWG	RAP Working Group
MCS	Magistrates Courts Service
CJG	Community Justice Group
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence
ARJP	Aurukun Restorative Justice Program
DSDSATSIP	Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships



ABOUT THE DESIGN

The Magistrates Court of Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan design constructed by Indigenous creative and digital design agency, ingeous studios depicts the practical steps Magistrates Courts are implementing to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout Queensland to ensure the five dimensions of reconciliation: Unity, Race Relations, Equality and Equity, Institutional Integrity and Historical Acceptance are advanced.

This is achieved through the Magistrates Courts of Queensland's connectivity to individuals, family and communities through Queensland in a continued effort to improve relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The outer contemporary elements of the design depict the connections to communities that the Magistrates Courts of Queensland are enhancing through localise engagement of local Elders, leaders and justice groups, in particular these motifs depict the interweaving of these through the Murri Courts and Magistrates Courts throughout Queensland.

This is a connectedness represented throughout the state with true connectivity to communities and individuals as represented in the inner motif that depict individuals, families and communities.

A main focal point of the design is the depiction of a healing embrace which represents the journey of healing and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Queensland and the Queensland Justice system.

ABOUT THE DESIGNERS

Creative Designer – Leigh Harris (Aboriginal)

Leigh Harris is a Cairns based Aboriginal business owner and serial entrepreneur with traditional connections to the Kanolu/Gangulu people of Central Queensland and Gungarri people of South East Queensland who is also proud of his Italian and Welsh heritage.

Consulting Artist – Teho Ropeyarn (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)

Teho Ropeyarn currently lives and works in Cairns. Teho comes from the Angkamuthi and Yadhaykana clans from Injinoo on the mainland, Badu, Moa and Murray Island in the Torres Strait on his Father's side and Woppaburra people (Great Keppel Island) and Batchulla people (Fraser Island) on his Mother's side.



For more information email
mcq-reconciliation@justice.qld.gov.au