



## Office of the Australian Building and Construction Commissioner (ABCC) Reconciliation Action Plan Annual Progress Report for the Year 2009-2010

### **Our vision for reconciliation**

ABCC's vision for reconciliation is to contribute to closing the gap by improving employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We will do this by working in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and government bodies to ensure employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians are improved. We will support this by maintaining communication with Industry specific Indigenous enterprises and promote appropriate standards of conduct, provide education, advice and assistance to Indigenous Industry participants and others in the construction industry associated with projects in direct support to Indigenous communities.

The ABCC will seek opportunities to learn from Indigenous enterprises and organisations in the building and construction industry.

### **Our Reconciliation Action Plan for 2009-2010**

The ABCC is charged with educating building and construction industry participants about their rights and responsibilities and ensuring workplace relations laws are enforced.

The ABCC enacted a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) that identified the steps the ABCC would take to enhance opportunities for Indigenous Australians when carrying out our business.

Our focus mirrored parts of our vision by seeking opportunities to learn from Indigenous enterprises and organisations in the building and construction industry as well as our continued commitment to prioritising Indigenous affairs in a whole of government framework whereby working cooperatively with other government agencies and departments to improve opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our industry.

### **Summary and Key Learnings**

Whilst some of the targets in the RAP were ambitious we were able to meet, exceed or were on track collectively with 13 of 16 actions in 2009-2010. We consider this to be commendable taking into account the often limited opportunity to expand our sphere of influence in relation to Indigenous issues in the Industry.





It has become clear that implementing worthwhile and well-grounded initiatives takes time and patience. The timelines we set for some of our actions were optimistic and we have challenged ourselves and achieved the majority of these. Where actions have proven to be more complex than expected, in particular where Identification of specific Indigenous Industry enterprises where extensive consultations and discussions are required, some anticipated timeframes have not been met. The implementation for these actions will remain as a focus in our next RAP. (2010–2011)

A key outcome of our RAP has been a heightened awareness among ABCC staff of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture and history. Activities focussed on Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week celebrations were particularly well received and increased awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues across the organisation more broadly.

The new level of awareness among staff was reinforced when the ABCC’s cultural awareness training package was rolled out in late 2009 and earlier this year and the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive.

The ABCC’s next RAP will build on our achievements and consider lessons learnt from the development of our 2009–2010 RAP.



**Stop Light Outcomes Key**

Exceeded 	Achieved 	On track 	Not achieved 
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**Relationships**

**Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples positively to enhance industry objectives.**

**Focus area:** Expanding contacts and developing active relationships.

Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	Stop Light
Develop a database of Indigenous contacts for the ABCC. Make this widely accessible on the ABCC Intranet.	Data base established and operational.  Data base reviewed, maintained and expanded.	Completed.  Staff informed and maintain following interactions. Currently five entries recorded.	Has proven to be more complex than expected, in particular where identification of specific Indigenous Industry enterprises is required.	
Establish a RAP working group as part of our Reconciliation Committee made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, stakeholders and senior representatives from across the organisation including our executive.	Four meetings per year. Terms of reference established and minutes taken.	Completed.  Participants from various states and working groups volunteered their time to be active participants.	Frequency of meetings and attendance was sometimes challenging due to time differences between states and participants work commitments.	

## Relationships



### Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples positively to enhance industry objectives.

Focus area: Expanding contacts and developing active relationships.

Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	Stop Light
Create Information and services that meet the needs of Indigenous Consumers in the Building and Construction Industry • Liaison, Education and Advice to Industry	Keep a record of site visits. Create a database that houses this information nationally Investigate all complaints about contraventions of workplace laws with cultural awareness and consultation.	AIMS database updated to incorporate the recording of such information. National Data base established also to record individual / company contacts details.	Has proven to be more complex than expected, in particular where projects are in remote communities and identification of specific Indigenous Industry enterprises is required.	●
Provide assistance to Industry specific Indigenous enterprises to attain compliance with National Code of Practice Guidelines for Indigenous Housing in remote areas	Recorded Presentations. Site visits. Carry out presentations on National Code of Practice Guidelines for Indigenous Housing at all inspections and Audits of Indigenous enterprises and contractors working with Indigenous peoples.	Where identified specific Indigenous groups within the Industry have had presentations from National Code team of the ABCC.  Details recorded in AIMS and on National Indigenous Industry contacts database.	Has proven to be more complex than expected, in particular where projects are in remote communities and identification of specific Indigenous Industry enterprises is required.	●



**Respect**  
**An organisational appreciation of cultural diversity is important to improving the way we undertake our core business with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.**

**Focus area:** Cultural awareness for all staff.

Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	Stop Light
<p>Increase internal awareness, knowledge and respect of Indigenous culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver diversity/cultural awareness training to expand cultural awareness. (E.g.: APSC sessions); and</li> <li>• Actively participate in NAIDOC week celebrations and other key events.</li> </ul>	<p>Training compulsory for all operational staff in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.</p> <p>ABCC HR Training Records indicate numbers of staff trained.</p>	<p>Opportunity provided to all current ABCC staff nationally during late 2009 – early 2010. A total of 99 staff attended the training.</p>	<p>Training was “invaluable“ - feedback received was overwhelmingly positive e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Approach Indigenous cultures/persons with a broader knowledge and understanding”;</li> <li>• “Approach Indigenous issues with the respect it deserves”;</li> <li>• “Take a greater interest in the RAP. Encourage others to take a greater interest/awareness in cultural diversity. Think of the longer term impact of my own decision making”.</li> </ul> <p>Participants also noted an increase in knowledge of how to liaise effectively with Indigenous people and other cultures.</p>	
<p>Seek advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on engagement, protocols and ways of working with Indigenous peoples, organisations and communities</p>	<p>Develop protocols for further engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and formulate a guide for staff.</p> <p>Record of attendance at Indigenous specific meetings on national database.</p> <p>Annual Report to include examples of this engagement.</p>	<p>Partially met. Advice was sought during inter-agency interactions e.g.: IAPSEN’s. Limited results during Industry interactions. National Indigenous Industry contacts database records meeting attendance and Annual report includes details.</p>	<p>Has proven to be more complex than expected, in particular where projects generally in remote communities as well as key project management staff often being non-Indigenous. Action item may need refinement in 2010-2011 RAP.</p>	

**Respect**  
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**Focus area:** Cultural awareness for all staff.

Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	Stop Light
Acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional owners and invite them to perform Welcome to Country ceremonies at ABCC meetings where appropriate.	Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country policy and procedure developed and how-to guide palm cards distributed to all staff.	Not met nor proceeded with.	Occasions/opportunities for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country a rarity. Thus considered not appropriate course of action to distribute how-to cards to all staff. Amended since RAP development to have appropriate Acknowledgement wording example on Intranet for use if / when required. Action item will need updating in 2010-2011 RAP.	
Make ABCC staff aware of Indigenous celebrations that promote awareness and reconciliation i.e. NAIDOC week, Reconciliation Week, local Council initiatives.	Intranet calendar continually updated to promote Indigenous celebrations.  Staff are encouraged and supported to attend events.  Link to the Aboriginal Affairs Victoria's Newsletter to be available on the ABCC's intranet site.	Apart from targeted items ABCC included additional NAIDOC background and Indigenous cultural information on intranet during NAIDOC week, Posters for Reconciliation and NAIDOC week were distributed and displayed in each State office. ABCC contributed towards and were active participants in the Victorian whole-of-government NAIDOC event.	Agency could benefit from further such initiatives with dedicated focus on Indigenous events throughout the entire year e.g.: Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day to further assist in awareness raising and respect of pivotal Indigenous issues.	

## Opportunities

Proactively improving communications with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our agency is an important activity that underpins sharing and learning, innovation and excellence.




Focus area: Learning and sharing expertise in the building and construction industry.

Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	Stop Light
Learn from innovation and excellence in organisations and enterprises developed by Indigenous people.	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' stakeholder groups in the building and construction Industry.  Annual Report to include examples of this engagement.	Not met.	Once again highlights the difficulty in being able to identify Indigenous "specific" enterprises. Interaction through Industry has largely been with companies conducting works etc for use of/by/on behalf on Indigenous. Action item will need refinement in 2010-2011 RAP.	
Encourage and support recruitment and retention of Indigenous Australians within the ABCC: • Industry Based Learning Program; • Horizons Program; and • Advertise ABCC employment opportunities in Indigenous-specific media when appropriate	Record the actual numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples engaged by the ABCC.  Collect data on the number of Indigenous Australians applying for jobs at the ABCC.	Met and in addition ABCC advertise positions on an Indigenous specific employment website to further encourage recruitment within the agency. The current Indigenous representation is at 1.3% of ABCC staff. This has not increased during the reporting period despite initiatives from ABCC HR.	Due to the specific and specialised nature of the work carried out by the agency (Building Industry) applicants often choose to self "opt out" during the recruitment process. This applies to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous applicants.	



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Encourage and support involvement in networking opportunities with other Indigenous federal government employees e.g. • Offer involvement with IAPSEN to all Indigenous employees.	Seek feedback from staff who participate in IAPSEN.	Met. Continued staff involvement within IAPSEN saw representative being elected as Victorian Chairperson. Additional involvement with staff representative on organising committee for Victorian whole-of-government NAIDOC event.	Attendance and involvement in such activities raised a broader understanding of issues facing other and like agencies as well as raising ABCC agency profile. Contacts established through networking opportunities have proven very valuable.	
Learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples needs and experiences in terms of workplace relations in the building and construction industry.	Collate experiences and information in a national spreadsheet.	Not met.	Once again highlights the difficulty in being able to identify Indigenous “specific” enterprises. Interaction through Industry has largely been with companies conducting works etc. for use of/by/on behalf on Indigenous. Action item will need refinement in 2010-2011 RAP.	
New staff induction pack to include information about the Reconciliation Action Plan. All new staff to receive a copy of the RAP.	HR induction presentation amended to include information about the RAP.	Met and additionally new staff have RAP included as part of the ABCC orientation checklist.	Inclusion of RAP on the orientation checklist ensures staff are aware of the importance the RAP plays within ABCC.	

## Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Target	Actual Progress	Lessons Learned	Stop Light
ABCC Annual report outlining progress on items addressed in Reconciliation Action Plan.	Annual Report. Report to Reconciliation Australia	Met.	Some of the targets in the RAP were ambitious taking into account the often limited opportunity to expand our limited sphere of influence in relation to Indigenous issues in the Industry. Where appropriate some action item will need refinement in 2010-2011 RAP.	
Consult with stakeholders including Reconciliation Australia annually for input into review & refinement of Reconciliation Action Plan.	Annual Plan update endorsed by Executive and Reconciliation Australia.	In process of review and refinement of RAP.	Some of the targets in the RAP were ambitious taking into account the often limited opportunity to expand our limited sphere of influence in relation to Indigenous issues in the Industry. Where appropriate some action item will need refinement in 2010-2011 RAP.	
Reconciliation Action Plan Update • Use of recommended framework by Reconciliation Australia.	Annual Plan Update. New RAP uploaded on the ABCC Intranet and Internet and on the Reconciliation Australia website.	In process of review and refinement of RAP.	Some of the targets in the RAP were ambitious taking into account the often limited opportunity to expand our limited sphere of influence in relation to Indigenous issues in the Industry. Where appropriate some action items will need refinement in 2010-2011 RAP.	