

Law Access First Nations Action Plan 2023 - 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

Law Access acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

Uluru Statement From the Heart

Law Access supports the [Uluru Statement](#) from the Heart and stands with the First Nations peoples of Australia in their call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution, a Makarrata Commission for agreement-making and truth-telling about our history.

Message From Our CEO



Law Access acknowledges that its offices are situated on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja. We acknowledge that the area that we service (Western Australia) is made up of many First Nations with continuing cultures and custodianship.

We also acknowledge that First Nations people suffered greatly and continue to suffer inter-generational trauma and disadvantage as a result of colonialisation and under our current laws and legal systems.

Law Access' vision is "equal access to justice" and our mission is to assist those experiencing disadvantage through pro bono legal assistance.

As CEO, I personally commit to listening, reflecting, and challenging myself and to supporting our staff and stakeholders through this journey towards reconciliation.

It is a life-long need for us all to open ourselves to learning, greater understanding, empathy and self-awareness. And a life-long obligation to uphold fundamental human rights, advocate for and empower those experiencing disadvantage, and to reflect on our own privilege.

Law Access, as an organisation, makes commitments in this Action Plan that we will further together in 2023 and 2024. Continuous review and re-setting of priorities and actions will be necessary in the years to come, to ensure that our journey continues.

Alana Dowley
Chief Executive Officer



Our Vision For Reconciliation

Our Vision for reconciliation is an Australia that:

- Is proud of our heritage and honest about our history,
- Is actively working towards better race relations with traditional owners,
- Values all our people equally and treats them all fairly,
- Celebrates diversity as well as our common humanity.

Our Business

Our vision is equal access to justice for all Western Australians.

Law Access is a not-for-profit organisation that facilitates the giving of pro bono (free or low fee) legal assistance by the Western Australian legal profession to those who cannot afford a lawyer.

We are a service of last resort for those who cannot get legal assistance from legal aid, a community legal centre or other legal services.

We acknowledge the great work that is done by our colleagues in the legal assistance sector for First Nations people in need, particularly the Aboriginal legal services.

Law Access receives applications from individuals in genuine need of legal assistance, often through warm referrals from the legal assistance sector.

Our First Nations Action Plan Journey

Our reconciliation journey begins with listening to First Nations people as they speak to us about their heritage, the truths of colonisation, and the issues that First Nations people face today.

We then commit to actions that will advance the five dimensions of reconciliation.

It is an iterative process that requires us to constantly learn, adjust and strive.



Our First Nations Action Plan

What is a First Nations Action Plan?

A First Nations Action Plan (FNAP) is a strategic document that outlines concrete ways Law Access can contribute to the national reconciliation movement both internally and within our community.

What Does it Aim To Address?

A FNAP aims to address the five dimensions of reconciliation, these are:

1. Historical Acceptance
2. Race Relations
3. Equality and Equity
4. Institutional Integrity
5. Unity

Collaboration

Developing a FNAP is a collaborative journey.

We hope to take this journey with First Nations people as our guides and to take our community of stakeholders along with us as we learn, reflect and challenge ourselves.

We appreciate the support of First Nations people on our Board, from our legal assistance sector partners and other supporters who share their wisdom with us along the way.



Relationships

Law Access is dedicated to building enduring connections and partnerships with First Nations individuals, groups, and communities. Law Access aims to rely on these connections to create culturally inclusive services and produce better results for First Nations People seeking legal assistance.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1 Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	Identify First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	2023	CEO and Principal Lawyer
	Identify opportunities to learn from and work with these stakeholders and organisations.	2023	CEO and Principal Lawyer
2 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation materials to our staff and pro bono lawyers.	May (Annually)	CEO
	Encourage and support staff and pro bono lawyers to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May (Annually)	CEO
3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff and pro bono lawyers.	2023	CEO
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can bring along on our reconciliation journey.	2023	CEO and Principal Lawyer
4 Implement processes to allow for trauma informed practice.	Ensure trauma training is included for all new staff, students, secondees, pro bono lawyers and volunteers.	2023 - 2024	CEO
	Deliver trauma informed practice training for all staff and pro bono lawyers.	Annually	CEO and Principal Lawyer

Opportunities

Improving engagement opportunities internally and externally will allow Law Access to draw upon the unique knowledge and skills offered by First Nations people. Law Access also intends to expand its work on legal and policy reform on issues of particular significance to First Nations communities.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1 Prioritise experience working with First Nations communities in recruitment.	Promote Board membership, employment, internship, and volunteer opportunities for First Nations peoples.	2023	CEO and Principal Lawyer
	Develop questions to utilise during recruitment to identify understanding of First Nations culture and cultural competency.	2023	CEO and Principal Lawyer
2 Investigate opportunities to increase our current work in law and policy reform and submitting submissions on justice issues affecting First Nations communities.	In partnership with First Nations people, actively pursue opportunities for law reform submissions, together with others including: The Law Society A2J Committee.	2023 - 2024	CEO
	Seek opportunities within ALS/AFLS/LAWA capacity to contribute to policy reform on justice issues affecting First Nations communities.	2023 - 2024	CEO
3 Investigate opportunities with First Nations people to improve our services and implement initiatives focused on improving access to justice.	Review Law Access service initiatives (such as the Family Law Pilot) for First Nations sensitivity and accessibility.	2024	CEO and Principal Lawyer
	Identify areas of unmet legal need for First Nations people for future service initiatives.	2024	CEO and Principal Lawyer



Respect

Treating all people with dignity and respect is paramount at Law Access. We recognise the need to gain a deeper understanding of the values, culture, and knowledge of the communities we serve. By raising awareness amongst our staff, volunteers and stakeholders, we hope to promote truth-telling about our history and a greater appreciate of First Nations culture.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1 Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation, including pro bono lawyers.	2023	CEO and Principal Lawyer
	Maintain a calendar of significant First Nations cultural events, that is accessible to all staff and pro bono lawyers and encourage local participation.	2023 - 2024	CEO
2 Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	2023	CEO and Principal Lawyer
	Increase staff's and pro bono lawyer's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	2023	CEO and Principal Lawyer
3 Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff and pro bono lawyers about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June/July (Annually)	CEO
	Introduce our staff and pro bono lawyers to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June/July (Annually)	CEO

4	Implement processes to improve cultural safety within the organisation.	Implement a cultural safety training program by engaging a training provider to prepare and deliver team sessions to staff and pro bono lawyers.	2024	CEO and Principal Lawyer
		Develop volunteer induction cultural safety training video or content.	2024	CEO and Principal Lawyer
		Maintain a database of cultural safety resources available to all staff, pro bono lawyers and volunteers.	2024	CEO
5	Demonstrate respect for First Nations cultures by increasing the visibility of First Nations cultures and languages across our workplaces.	Translations of our informational videos for applicants into First Nations languages.	2023 - 2024	CEO
6	Provide Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for legal sector staff to increase knowledge and understanding on issues impacting First Nations peoples.	Summer series conference focusing on a topic/s that have an impact on First Nations people.	2024	CEO and Law Society
		Invite First Nation peoples to speak on First Nations issues.	2024	CEO and Law Society

Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1 Establish and maintain an effective First Nations Action Plan.	Provide regular updates to Board, stakeholders, and staff on progress.	2023 - 2024	CEO
	Undertake an annual review and re-positioning.	2023 - 2024	CEO
2 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of the FNAP commitments.	Allocate budget and/or training resources to implementation.	2023 - 2024	CEO
	Engage staff and stakeholders in the implementation of the FNAP and the review process.	2023 - 2024	CEO
3 Build accountability and transparency through reporting FNAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.	Publish an annual report on progress.	2024	CEO
	Publish a new FNAP approximately biannually.	2024	CEO

Contact Details

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