



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Commerce**



# Department of Commerce

## Reconciliation Action Plan

2011 – 2013



## Department of Commerce - Reconciliation Action Plan 2011 - 2013

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## Message from the Director General

It is with great pleasure that I present the Department of Commerce's (Commerce) Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for 2011-2013. The RAP supports reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Western Australians by focussing on three key areas:

Relationships                      Respect                      Opportunities

Since the introduction of our first RAP in 2008, Commerce has achieved many important goals in improving relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Western Australians. Of particular note has been the expansion of consumer protection advisory services to provide information on tenancy, credit, fraud and other consumer issues. These areas have been identified as being of particular concern for Aboriginal communities across WA. Targeted educational initiatives were also provided for remote Aboriginal communities in the areas of labour relations, electrical safety, plumbing standards and occupational health and safety.

These and other reconciliation initiatives, which have proved successful in providing benefits to Aboriginal communities to date, will be continued in our refreshed RAP. In addition, new areas for reconciliation have opened with the incorporation of the Industry, Science and Innovation Division within Commerce during 2009 (formerly Science, Innovation and Business). This division is involved in the proposal to build a "Square Kilometre Array" telescope in the mid west of the State. The Square Kilometre Array is a global \$2.2 billion program to build the world's largest radio telescope. The telescope will probe some of the most important remaining questions in cosmology and physics.

The project potentially impacts Aboriginal communities in the area and provides considerable scope for developing improved relationships with these communities. Negotiations have already commenced with community elders to establish a liaison committee to discuss native title, employment opportunities and related issues. Reconciliation issues relating to this internationally significant project will be closely monitored by Commerce's Substantive Equality Committee which is responsible for the implementation of the RAP.

Internally Commerce is committed to creating an inclusive work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and where people are valued for their diverse experiences, knowledge and abilities. The refreshed RAP maintains a strong emphasis on increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers employed by Commerce and improving professional and career development for these employees.

Commerce hopes to re-introduce our program for cross cultural awareness training once Human Resource training responsibilities are transferred back to the department from the Office of Shared Services. This previously popular training program\* was well attended between 2008 and 10 and is designed to ensure all employees become familiar with the concept and objectives of reconciliation. I am proud to support this refreshed RAP as a reflection of this agency's commitment to reconciliation for 2011-13 and I ask all Commerce employees to be part of our organisation's reconciliation journey.

**Brian Bradley**  
**Director General**

28 July 2011

\*This training is dependent on staffing resources becoming available and is not shown in the RAP.

# Overview

## Our vision for reconciliation

The Department of Commerce (Commerce) understand the need to treat people differently where they have different needs. We recognise that rights, entitlements and opportunities are not equally distributed throughout the community and there may be barriers to accessing our services which result in unequal outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Commerce will strive to build positive and valuable relationships and networks with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through strategies based on respect, understanding and recognition.

Our vision is to:

- respond to the different needs of Aboriginal communities;
- identify and eliminate barriers; and
- provide career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

## Our business

Commerce works with the community to ensure a business environment that is productive, innovative, fair and safe.

Commerce achieves this by encouraging a contemporary diversified economy that provides for the growth, safety and protection of the community.

The agency is made up of eight divisions:

Building Commission	Consumer Protection	Corporate Services	EnergySafety
Industry, Science and Innovation*	Labour Relations	Office of the Director General	WorkSafe

\*Formerly "Science, Innovation and Business"

There are around 1000 employees that support Commerce to achieve its business goals, including four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Consumer Protection, Commerce's largest division, serviced 360,367 clients across Western Australia in 2009/10.

In addition to our six Perth locations, Commerce has 43 officers operating from regional offices in Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, and Karratha, extending our services throughout Western Australia.

Through our operational divisions and regional offices Commerce provides advice, information, education, and business and employment regulation services to the Western Australian community and enhances the prosperity of the State by promoting industry, science and innovation.

A full outline of Commerce's business and services is available by visiting our website located at [www.commerce.wa.gov.au](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au)

## Our Approach to Reconciliation

Commerce is committed to ensuring equal and inclusive access to the Department's services for all Western Australians. The Commerce RAP outlines strategies to promote awareness and for overcoming disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

The RAP was developed by, and is the responsibility of, the Commerce *Substantive Equality Committee* (Committee). The Committee provides a forum where reconciliation issues can be raised, discussed and referred. Membership of the Committee includes representatives from all Commerce divisions, plus a staff member representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Commerce recognises the particular vulnerability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in remote areas, where communities not only suffer from a lack of competition but are remote from the enforcement of protective industrial relations, occupational health and safety and consumer protection laws. Aboriginal communities are often deliberately targeted by rogue traders for this reason.

To address these disadvantages the "Indigenous Consumer Program" forms an important element of Commerce customer service. This program is supported by publications designed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, which includes advice on tenancy, credit and repossession.

Other Commerce divisions deliver targeted educational initiatives in remote areas. The department has a particularly important role in providing advice on employment rights, developing confidence in applying for work and maintaining positive employment relationships.

Internally, Commerce will continue to educate new staff on reconciliation initiatives by means of the department's online Induction Package.

The RAP launches Commerce's actions for the period 2011 to 2013. The RAP is considered to be a 'living' document; annual RAP reports help identify and refresh the RAP good practice and necessary changes.

**Relationships:** maintaining active and respectful relationships are critical to:

- Understanding the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples;
- The department and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working together productively;
- Ensuring the rights and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are protected and enhanced.

**Focus Area: Community Education / Cultural Networks / Information Sharing**

Actions	Responsibility	Time line	Measurable Target
1. The Substantive Equality Committee (SEC) monitor progress of the RAP and discuss initiatives to be implemented within their respective divisions. The Committee report to the Commerce Corporate Executive every six months.	Designated members from all Commerce Divisions. Chaired by Director, Policy and Planning, Office of the Director General.	October 2011	The Substantive Equality Committee meets four times a year to monitor progress of the RAP.  Membership of SEC includes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander officer.
2. Meet with Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) to discuss issues of relevance to both organisations	Consumer Protection: Commissioner for Consumer Protection	June 2012	Inter-agency meetings are held as issues arise.  Advise the ALS on which Consumer Protection services are accessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers to enable the ALS to provide appropriate advice and referral.
3. Maintain membership of the "National Indigenous Consumer Strategy Implementation Reference Group" (NICSIRG) Strategies include information sharing about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scams targeting remote Aboriginal communities and how they are targeted and committed;</li> <li>• the movement of perpetrators between jurisdictions; and</li> <li>• the comparison of compliance methods</li> </ul>	Consumer Protection: Director, Policy and Strategic Development	Annual Report June 2012	Consumer Protection liaise with the NICSIRG and participate in quarterly teleconferences of the Group  Improve service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers nationally.

Actions	Responsibility	Time line	Measurable Target
<p>4. Indigenous Community Education Officers to implement consumer education and consultation initiatives relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to increase awareness of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consumer issues;</li> <li>• services provided by consumer agencies; and</li> <li>• ensure continued communication between key stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p>Consumer Protection: Director, Policy and Strategic Development</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>Each of Commerce's offices meets with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups.</p> <p>Number of education and consultation initiatives undertaken.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander officers lead these initiatives.</p>
<p>5. Publish documents on Consumer Protection issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and make them available to Aboriginal communities through distribution and community education.</p>	<p>Consumer Protection: Director, Policy and Strategic Development</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>Publications are distributed as necessary and are available on request from Consumer Protection.</p>

**Respect:** Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures is fundamental to Commerce’s delivery of relevant, high quality services to all communities in Western Australia.

**Focus Area: Cultural Awareness/ Education and Development /Policy Integration**

Actions	Responsibility	Time line	Measurable Target
6. To include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumer issues at the National Consumer Congress relevant to the annual theme.	Consumer Protection: Director, Policy and Strategic Development	June 2012	At least one Western Australia issue is raised to include on the Congress’s agenda.
7. Perform a formal “Welcome to Country” at Commerce events in accordance with the department’s “Aboriginal Acknowledgement and Aboriginal Welcome to Country Policy” available on the Commerce intranet.	All divisions	June 2012	Perform “Welcome to Country” at significant events (number included in the RAP Report). Conduct “Acknowledgement of Country” by staff at events and meetings with stakeholders.
8. Promote and celebrate Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week and publish articles on the Commerce website.	Corporate Services: Director, Human Resources  All divisions	June 2012	Celebration and promotion of events via Commerce email and intranet newflash. Events held and numbers of staff attending.
9. Maintain and update the “ <i>Indigenous Consumer Program</i> ”	Consumer Protection: Director, Policy and Strategic Development	June 2012	Publications and web pages for this program are updated as necessary. The revised versions of a series of publications providing advice on renting property “Getting a Place”, “Keeping a Place” and “Leaving a Place” to be released in 2011/12.
10. Cultural Awareness Training	Corporate Services: Director, Human Resources	June 2012	All new Commerce staff to be educated on reconciliation initiatives by means of the department’s online Induction Package.  100% of staff have completed cultural awareness training.
11. Develop specific Commerce intranet pages with general RAP content and reference material	Office of the Director General:	Dec 2011	Designated pages published on the Commerce intranet.



**Opportunities:** Commerce recognises the valuable contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can make to our organisation and, equally, the contribution we can make in providing rewarding career opportunities.

Focus Area: Recruitment / Professional and Career Development /Mentoring			
Actions	Responsibility	Time line	Measurable Target
<p>12. Implement strategies in the Commerce Equity and Diversity Plan 2010-12 to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The plan includes strategies for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improving level 1/2 recruitment;</li> <li>• employment of trainees;</li> <li>• provision of study assistance;</li> <li>• mentoring;</li> <li>• flexible work arrangements; and</li> <li>• establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander network;</li> </ul>	<p>Corporate Services: Director, Human Resources Manager, Workforce Development;</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>Improved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, recruitment and retention across all Divisions.  2% employment by 2012.</p>
<p>13. The development of relationships with both Aboriginal stakeholders and the plumbing industry to improve plumbing standards for Aboriginal communities.</p>	<p>Building Commission Plumbers Licensing Senior Compliance Officer (Indigenous Communities)</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>Achievement of Improved plumbing standards and increased access to plumbing services in Aboriginal communities and extension of relationships</p>
<p>14. The ongoing implementation and evaluation of the ThinkSafe “Small Business Assistance Program” to raise safety awareness in remote Aboriginal communities.</p>	<p>WorkSafe: Manager, Education and Information Services</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>The number of remote Aboriginal communities where the program has been implemented.  Local Aboriginal communities consulted on its evaluation.</p>
<p>15. Liaise with Horizon Power regarding the level of electrical safety in remote communities. Discuss improvements, where relevant to ensure agreed standards are maintained</p>	<p>EnergySafety Director Business Services  Horizon Power’s Work Practice Coordinator</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>Provision by EnergySafety of assistance on safety issues to Horizon Power.</p>

## Tracking Progress and Reporting

Actions	Responsibility	Time line	Measurable Target
Launch Commerce's new RAP to increase awareness through email and Newsflash.	Office of the Director General:	Sept 2011	RAP launched and published on Commerce and Reconciliation Australia's Internet sites.
Reports on RAP progress for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="113 577 596 611">□ Reconciliation Australia.</li> <li data-bbox="113 656 596 689">□ Commerce Annual Report.</li> <li data-bbox="113 745 596 779">□ Corporate Executive.</li> </ul>	Substantive Equality Committee (SEC) Office of the Director General: Substantive Equality Committee (SEC)	July 2012 July 2012 Sept 2011 February 2012	Progress reported annually. Progress reported annually. SEC to meet and report to Corp Executive twice a year.
Update Commerce's RAP 2011-13. Review initiatives and expand consultation methods as necessary.	SEC Office of the Director General:	June 2012	RAP refreshed based on RAP Reports and Commerce's current circumstances  RAP endorsed by Reconciliation Australia