



IPSWICH HOUSING &
SUPPORT SERVICES INC



Reconciliation ACTION PLAN

INNOVATE RAP

2014 – 2016



Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision of reconciliation sees equality, dignity and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures. Reconciliation will be achieved when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the same opportunities as other Australians and that over-representation in many social, economic and health inequality areas declines.

We will achieve this in our organisation by continuing to offer services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples via our program areas, and continue with our commitment to house (at minimum) one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander family in our Emergency Housing program at all times.





Our business

History: Since 1985 Ipswich Housing & Support Services Inc (IHSSI) has provided emergency accommodation and support to families and individuals in financial crisis within the Ipswich region.

- ❖ Ipswich Housing & Support Services Inc. (IHSSI) is a welfare service offering the following programs to our community: Short Term Temporary (Emergency) Housing for families with children in their care, Emergency Relief, No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) and Tax Help. We have visiting services that also assist community members such as Legal Services, Human Services (previously Centrelink) Outreach worker and Computer Tutoring.
- ❖ Our organisation area catchment is primarily the West Moreton region of South East Queensland.

Our Mission: To promote the health, welfare & social aspirations of families, individuals & community by assisting in the provision, promotion, support & expansion of welfare & support services to families & individuals; & by encouraging a sense of mutual support, community spirit & pride.

- ❖ Ipswich Housing & Support Services Inc employs four part-time workers and casual employees for backfill. We have a small pool of volunteers engaged with the service on a regular basis assisting in program delivery.
- ❖ Our organisation does not have any current Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employees; however we do have an Aboriginal Board Member that represents our local community. This member assists with Governance of our service and cultural capabilities of the organisation.
- ❖ Ipswich Housing & Support Services Inc has fostered connections locally through the Murri Aboriginal Interagency Network and we support local Aboriginal Services with complimentary service provision. We are members and supporters of a number of key Peak bodies and campaigns such as the National Sorry Day Committee, Combined Voices, Close the Gap, Recognise & Reconciliation Australia.



Our RAP



Our organisation developed a RAP for 2012 - 2013, and has decided to continue with this initiative for 2014 - 2016. We are dedicated to this process due to having a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and believe a RAP will strengthen our cultural awareness and assist in culturally appropriate service delivery. We view our organisation as being aligned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services in our local community, and are eager to continue to foster relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services in the future for better client outcomes.

Our RAP Champion is our Board Member who is of Aboriginal origin and is currently actively involved within the local Murri community and with other local services.

Our first RAP helped us to achieve:

- ❖ Local artwork displayed in our reception area of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and of the three totems of the Yagara peoples, the Traditional Owners and Caretakers of the local area - painted by youth local to the area.
- ❖ Ensuring an Acknowledgement of Country is provided at training events hosted by our organisation, and a Welcome to Country is given at our Annual General Meeting
- ❖ Further cultural awareness for staff with the involvement of staff in significant campaigns and events such as Close the Gap and National Reconciliation Week and attendance at local community NAIDOC week celebrations.
- ❖ Close the Gap t-shirts becoming part of the staff and volunteer uniforms, therefore demonstrating our support and assisting in raising staff and community awareness.
- ❖ Continuing our strong engagement with the local Murri Aboriginal Inter-agency network, including local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community.

We did face challenges through the implementation of our previous RAP in relation to achieving engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, engaging cultural awareness training and purchase of products and this is primarily due to our small staff base with limited positions/hours, staff member changes and financial constraints. Having identified our challenges we are committed to ensuring that we increase our organisations' cultural awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples further through accessing training opportunities during the Innovate RAP timeframe.

RAP Working Group:

Our Reconciliation Action Plan was developed in consultation with staff and Board Members. Due to changes in staff in the past year we have distributed a Self Reflection Tool and conducted a working group exercise with staff - the information was then collated to gain an understanding of the perspectives within the organisation. An initial draft of our Reconciliation Action Plan was then reviewed by staff and Board prior to public consultation. Contact was made with our local Murri Aboriginal Interagency Network to review our RAP and advice of any changes/additions that might be required. Members of the local Murri Aboriginal Interagency include workers from Government and non-Government services in our area such as Youth Justice and Legal services, education and employment, Qld Health and other health services, local Council, Family Support Services.

Our RAP working group consists of the Organisational RAP Champion/Board Member, Chairperson, Service Manager, two Family & Housing Support workers, and our Administrative Support Officer. Meetings are designed to be held regularly to review and monitor progress and to identify areas for improvement.

Relationships



Our organisation and its mission support the development of strong relationships, partnerships and collaborative work to achieve outcomes for our clients and our community. We are strong advocates of social justice and equity principles based on the work we are involved in, and we recognise that a core focus of our work is ensuring that all members in our community have the same opportunities. In order to achieve this we recognise that the gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians need to be acknowledged and strong relationships need to be built to achieve this goal.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverable
<p>1.1 IHSSI RAP Working Group actively monitors RAP development, including implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.</p>	<p>IHSSI Manager, Family & Housing Support workers, Administration Support Officer, Chairperson & RAP Champion</p>	<p>January 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP Working Group oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the IHSSI RAP. • Meet at least twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.
<p>1.2 Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and other employees to build relationships.</p>	<p>IHSSI Manager, Board members</p>	<p>27th May - 3rd June, 2015 and 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to attend at least one local National Reconciliation Week (NRW) celebration event each year, and/or IHSSI to organise at least one internal event each year. • Communicate and promote National Reconciliation Week to clients and amongst staff, volunteers and stakeholders through team meetings, display of posters and newsletter. • Register National Reconciliation Week (NRW) event on Reconciliation Australia's website.

1.3 Communicate IHSSI RAP and reconciliation Commitments to staff, volunteers and stakeholders	IHSSI Manager, Family & Housing Support workers, Administration Support Officer	April 2015 December 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include IHSSI RAP in all induction material for new employees and volunteers • Upload RAP onto IHSSI and Reconciliation Australia websites
1.4 Continue to support key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander national and state bodies, and local agencies in strong leveraging partnerships to provide stronger delivery of services	IHSSI Manager, Board Members	February 2015 March, July, & November 2015 March, July, & November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current involvement and investigate ways to expand on support • Contact key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander national and state bodies and meet with local agencies at minimum 3 times per year to discuss common issues and to identify ways to work collectively
1.5 Engage with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals in our sphere of influence to draw on the expertise to assist in creating better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients of IHSSI	IHSSI Manager & Family & Housing Support workers, Administration Support Officer	June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope, develop and implement a plan to actively seek engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals in order to continue to develop stronger relationships



Respect



Respect and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, land and histories is important to our organisation. We acknowledge and respect the life experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and valuable contribution to our community and Australia. We recognise the activities conducted by our organisation require consultation, input and feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in order to achieve social justice and equity for all Australians.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverables
<p>2.1 Engage IHSSI employees in cultural learning to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.</p>	<p>Board members, IHSSI Manager, Family & Housing Support workers, Administration Support Officer</p>	<p>September 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and pilot a cultural awareness training strategy for IHSSI. In particular, provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, RAP Champion, Manager and other key leadership to participate in training • Actively seek out cultural learning opportunities for Board members, staff & volunteers.
<p>2.2 Engage employees in understanding the protocols around Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies.</p>	<p>Board Members, RAP Champion, IHSSI Manager, Family & Housing Support workers, Administration Support Officer</p>	<p>May 2015 October 2015 October 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, communicate and implement the cultural protocol document for IHSSI • Whenever finances allow IHSSI will engage a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country at the IHSSI Annual General meeting each year.

<p>2.3 Provide opportunities for all IHSSI staff and volunteers to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities through NAIDOC Week events.</p>	<p>Board members & IHSSI Manager</p>	<p>1 Sunday – 2 Sunday July 2015 and 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update IHSSI Cultural Considerations policy and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC. • Provide opportunities for IHSSI employees and volunteers to participate in local NAIDOC Week events. • Communicate and promote NAIDOC Week to clients and amongst staff, volunteers and stakeholders through team meetings, display of posters and newsletter.
<p>2.4 Actively promote and showcase examples of respectful and emerging practice, projects and programs that enhance service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and/or promote reconciliation at a local level.</p>	<p>IHSSI Manager & Chair of RAP Working Group</p>	<p>September 2016 December 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff to seek information about practice, projects and programs that have enhanced service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and seek ways that this may be implemented into improving our own practices. • Encourage staff to share successes with the RAP Working Group.
<p>2.5 Create a work environment that is welcoming for IHSSI staff, volunteers, stakeholders and clients of IHSSI</p>	<p>IHSSI Manager, Family & Housing Support workers, Administration Support Officer</p>	<p>August 2015 June 2015 May 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners statement in the reception area of IHSSI office, develop a statement of recognition for our email signatures and website. • Continue to display artwork acknowledging the Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, art and imagery in our office. (Where possible artwork will acknowledge the artist and story of the artwork) • Provide access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander newspapers in staff common areas such as the Koori Mail and National Indigenous Times

Opportunities



We believe that having the opportunity of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples enriches our organisation and that these opportunities have positive impacts within our organisation and community, further contributing to equity, social justice and social inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverables
<p>3.1 Investigate opportunities within IHSSI to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Board Members & IHSSI Manager</p>	<p>May 2016</p> <p>February 2016</p> <p>January 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR procedures and policies to ensure barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are able to be addressed. Scope, develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy for IHSSI Advertise (within financial scope of IHSSI) all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media such as the Koori Mail and National Indigenous Times. Review and adapt recruitment and interviewing processes to ensure they attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants utilising Reconciliation Australia's Workplace Ready program toolkit for further guidance and information
<p>3.2 Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, employment and training services to explore volunteering arrangements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and/or agency visits for staff</p>	<p>IHSSI Manager</p>	<p>April 2015</p> <p>March, June, September 2015</p> <p>March, June, September 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, develop and communicate opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to engage in employment, training and volunteering arrangements with IHSSI. Organise and engage IHSSI staff in attending agency visits with key local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and invite staff from those services to engage in an IHSSI agency visit.
<p>3.3 Investigate opportunities to increase supplier diversity within IHSSI</p>	<p>Board members & IHSSI Manager</p>	<p>August 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request quotes from one or more Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander businesses on all major purchases. Continue to seek opportunities to purchase relevant products from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander businesses.

Tracking progress and reporting



Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Target
4.1 Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the RAP Impact Measurement Report.	IHSSI Manager	Submit by September 2014, 2015 and 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.
4.2 Report on the progress of IHSSI RAP and include in IHSSI Annual General Meeting Report.	IHSSI Manager	July – October 2015 and 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual RAP to be included in final Annual General Meeting Report document each year – progress to be included where relevant. Annual RAP and future reviewed RAPS available on Reconciliation Australia website
4.3 Review, refresh and update Ipswich Housing and Support Services Inc RAP	IHSSI Manager	July 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, refresh and update Ipswich Housing and Support Services Inc RAP based on learnings, achievements and challenges of previous RAPS

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