



# REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

September 2019 - December 2020



Seniors Rights  
Service



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Seniors Rights Service recognises and acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples. We pay our respects to Elders - past, present and emerging - and to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities on whose lands we work.

## ARTWORK

The artwork in our RAP was created by Donna Brown, a Gumbaynggirr woman from NSW whose work appears in collections of the National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Donna created this original artwork in 2017 for Seniors Rights Service to use in publications which have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus.

# MESSAGE FROM CEO RUSSELL WESTACOTT



**Seniors Rights Service recognises that our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is central to the culture of our organisation. This will drive our organisation into the future and ensure we deliver culturally safe and responsive services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and senior people living in NSW.**

We also commit to our workplace being one that thrives due to its inclusivity. Our RAP reflects the guidance given by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as service recipients, staff members, volunteers and our board. Final responsibility for implementing our RAP and to ensure its success rests with me as CEO as well as our board.

In 2016 Seniors Rights Service reflected on the development of our RAP document. Both staff and Board members had the opportunity to provide thoughts and feedback on our plan for reconciliation. It was clear that those at Seniors Rights Service intended to make our contribution to reconciliation a meaningful experience which would result in real outcomes and transformational change.

It is therefore essential for us to continue steps towards embedding culturally safe and responsive services into our daily operations. This RAP, supported by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member and board member, shows our commitment to this critical work. Further, the ongoing engagement of an Aboriginal cultural consultant will serve to increase our capacity for engagement with, support and

inclusiveness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elder and senior population in NSW. A significant pillar of our work is creating opportunities for education, training and professional development.

In February 2018, when Seniors Rights Service hosted the 5th National Elder Abuse Conference - Together Making Change - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates promoted the terminology 'the abuse of older people' rather than 'elder abuse'. This successful example of community engagement has led to this culturally appropriate language now being the defining marker of the Commonwealth's recently released action plan: *National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019 - 2023*.

Seniors Rights Service is committed to strengthening the collaborative relationships now existing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations, individuals, families and communities – relationships that are based on trust, respect and truth: where we have listened and acted to deliver the best results. This RAP is both a living document and a testament to our vision, purpose and responsibilities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Russell Westacott'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'R'.

**Russell Westacott**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Seniors Rights Service

# ABOUT US

**Senior Rights Service (SRS) is a leading community organisation that supports older people.**

It is an accredited community legal centre that delivers free and confidential legal services to advance the legal rights of older people in New South Wales. The organisation provides legal advice, aged care advocacy, social support for older people, and rights based education to older people and to the community.

SRS operates from a main office in Surry Hills, with regional aged care advocates based throughout NSW to assist people in central west, mid north coast, far north coast, south coast, and south west NSW. SRS currently has a staff of 30 with a mix of part time and full time employees. We also have legal and non-legal volunteers and students on placement.

SRS is a not-for-profit organisation with charitable status that has a volunteer board. One staff member identifies as Aboriginal. We also have one Aboriginal volunteer in Wagga Wagga. One Board member who also identified as Aboriginal, has recently stepped out of her role as Board Director and convenor of this RAP.



# OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

**When discussing and planning for our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) it was clear from staff and board feedback that the organisation wanted to create something meaningful.**

As a community organisation working for human rights we believe we have a good record of diversity and inclusion. However, we realised that a RAP can be so much more. Our RAP is not just about how we provide services and ensuring that we do that in culturally appropriate ways. Our RAP is also about talking to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities about what is important to them in the delivery of our services. We are also aiming to use First Nations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses so that they in turn can empower their communities.

Our Reflect RAP acknowledges that we are at the beginning of this journey. For our RAP to have the outcomes we want, we must first identify where we are now, and identify ways to move the organisation forward to reconciliation.

The staff of SRS began a process of reflection for the RAP in 2016 and into 2017. In 2017 the board of SRS endorsed the RAP as an important document and committed resources to the process of developing the RAP. Since that point in 2017, all board members and all

staff have been invited to attend every RAP meeting. In practice, some 10 people regularly attended each RAP meeting and they were happy to be identified as RAP Champions for those who wanted to discuss any matter in more detail.

In addition, and we believe very importantly, every staff member and every board member was sent a survey and asked to give their thoughts on a plan of Reconciliation for SRS. This Reflect plan is therefore truly a reflection from the whole of the organisation.

RAP meetings have been expertly convened by a board member, Maureen Walsh, who is a proud Aboriginal woman and who we believe brought to the whole of Seniors Rights Service, passion and networks within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We will miss Maureen's future involvement. We acknowledge the considerable work Tom Cowen, Principal Solicitor, who led the process of developing a RAP.

# OUR PARTNERSHIPS / CURRENT ACTIVITIES

**Currently SRS has no formal MOUs or agreements with any particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Developing those relationships is a priority of this Reconciliation Action Plan.**

As a part of our education activities we have had discussions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups using different formats to talk about the rights of older people. We have joined craft and yarning circles and sat with, listened to, and talked with communities.

SRS has appointed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultant to work with us to identify opportunities to join with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to advance rights and improve access to services for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have included the organisations that we intend to approach in the relationships section of this Reconciliation Action Plan.

**Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander project consultant has identified the following as potential connections and has started to build relationships and connect SRS:**

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies.
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council (Parramatta) - 120 Local Aboriginal Land Councils.
- Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW (Sydney) - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services located in metropolitan, regional and remote NSW.
- First Peoples Disability Network (Sydney) - national advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disability and their families.
- Indigenous Allied Health Australia (Canberra) - membership consists of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals who work with and care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and senior people.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community governed organisations - Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service (Kempsey); Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council (Maitland/Hunter Valley); Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Aged Care Facility (Kempsey); Dharrivaa Elders Group (Walgett); Hosts for Elders Olympics 2019 (Port Macquarie).
- Cowra Neighbourhood Aid.
- Maroubra Neighbourhood Centre - Barbara O'Neill.
- South West Sydney Elders - Fay Daniels.
- In January 2019, SRS had a stall at Yabun gathering for the first time. Exploring possibility of sponsoring the Elders Tent for Yabun 2020.
- SRS sponsored the Aboriginal Elders Olympics, held in April 2019 in Port Macquarie.



Proud sponsor  
ELDERS OLYMPICS IN PORT MACQUARIE, 2019



# RELATIONSHIPS

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish a RAP Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group (RWG) oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.</li> </ul>	November 2019	RWG Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet at least twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.</li> </ul>	September 2019	RWG Chair
2. Build internal and external relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence to work with to implement our RAP.</li> </ul>	November 2020	Manager Advocacy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to work with to implement our RAP.</li> </ul>	November 2020	Communications & Media Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with other community legal centres that have gone through the RAP process to learn lessons on what worked/didn't work and the best way to advance the RAP.</li> </ul>	May 2020	Manager Legal Services





## RELATIONSHIPS CONT.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3. Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and approve staff to attend National Reconciliation Week events held during working hours.</li> </ul>	May 2020	Education & Promotions Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</li> </ul>	May 2020	Education & Promotions Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.</li> </ul>	May 2020	Education & Promotions Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide details of National Reconciliation Week on our website and put up posters in our offices.</li> </ul>	May 2020	Communications & Media Manager
<b>4. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness amongst all staff across the organisation about our RAP commitments.</li> </ul>	November 2019	Manager Advocacy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a plan to engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP.</li> </ul>	November 2019	Manager Advocacy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise public awareness of our RAP through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adding RAP to our website</li> <li>Let members know of our RAP process at the AGM</li> <li>Publish an article in SRS newsletter about RAP process.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	November 2020	Communications & Media Manager



# RESPECT

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>5. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a plan for increasing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements within our organisation.</li> </ul>	May 2020	Assistant Principal Solicitor & Manager Advocacy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that part of the SRS training budget is dedicated to increasing knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.</li> </ul>	May 2020	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capture data and measure our staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements, now at the endorsement of the RAP, and in 12 months' time when renewing the RAP.</li> </ul>	September 2020	Manager Advocacy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of cultural awareness training needs within our organisation and report findings to the board.</li> </ul>	December 2019	Quality Improvement Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with NSW Legal Aid to ascertain training options available with that organisation.</li> </ul>	November 2019	Manager Legal Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite all staff to undertake Reconciliation Australia's <i>Share Our Pride</i> online learning tool.</li> </ul>	March 2020	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate and where appropriate participate in cultural immersion programs.</li> </ul>	November 2020	Quality Improvement Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise cultural competency training and make attendance mandatory for all staff and board members.</li> </ul>	November 2019	CEO, Manager Advocacy & Manager Legal Services



## RESPECT CONT.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>6. Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.</li> </ul>	July 2020	Manager Education & Promotions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local regions.</li> </ul>	July 2020	Manager Education & Promotions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure all members of the RAP Working Group participate in at least one external NAIDOC Week event.</li> </ul>	July 2020	Manager Education & Promotions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage a speaker during NAIDOC Week to talk to staff about NAIDOC Week and the Close The Gap initiative.</li> </ul>	July 2020	Manager Education & Promotions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage staff to attend a NAIDOC function during NAIDOC Week, to report back to staff on the experience.</li> </ul>	July 2020	Manager Education & Promotions
<b>7. Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols).</li> </ul>	September 2019	Manager Advocacy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Invite local Traditional Custodians into our office to explain Acknowledgement of Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols).</li> </ul>	December 2019 repeated February 2020	Manager Advocacy



## RESPECT CONT.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Create a calendar of significant dates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</li></ul>	September 2019	Manager Advocacy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Send out prior notice of significant dates to staff and board as they occur.</li></ul>	May 2020	Quality Improvement Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Update website with information of significant dates on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander calendar.</li></ul>	November 2019	Manager Communications



# OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>9. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment with a view to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and volunteers to inform future employment and development opportunities.</li> </ul>	September 2019	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and board members when developing strategies for staff development opportunities.</li> </ul>	November 2019	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make an increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within SRS a priority.</li> </ul>	November 2019	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run parallel Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander targeted recruitment alongside mainstream recruitment.</li> </ul>	March 2020	CEO & Business Services Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander targeted programs such as traineeship programs. Use Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Elsa Dixon program to recruit trainees.</li> </ul>	May 2020	CEO & Business Services Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.</li> </ul>	March 2020	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop protocols to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and promote opportunities for career advancement.</li> </ul>	May 2020	CEO & Business Services Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate school work experience arrangements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students - perhaps partner with local schools in Redfern.</li> </ul>	March 2020	Business Services Manager



## OPPORTUNITIES CONT.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>10. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned organisations for supply needs.</li></ul>	October 2019	Business Services Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Develop an Indigenous procurement policy.</li></ul>	March 2020	Quality Improvement Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.</li></ul>	December 2019	Manager Advocacy & Business Services Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.</li></ul>	December 2019	Business Services Manager & CEO



## GOVERNANCE AND TRACKING PROGRESS

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>11. Build support for the RAP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create an appropriate governance structure that ensures operational responsibility for the implementation of the RAP.</li> </ul>	May 2020	CEO & Board
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a RAP budget and delegated decision-making responsibility.</li> </ul>	May 2020	Financial Controller
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify resource needs for RAP development and implementation.</li> </ul>	May 2020	Business Services Manager & Financial Controller
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implement a system to track, measure and report on RAP activities.</li> </ul>	November 2019	Quality Improvement Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia.</li> </ul>	September 2019 and September 2020	Manager Advocacy
<b>12. Review and Refresh RAP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.</li> </ul>	June 2020	CEO

## TIMEFRAME

It is intended that the actions in this Reconciliation Action Plan will be achieved within 12 months from the date of endorsement of this plan by Reconciliation Australia.

# CONTACT

**Russell Westacott**

CEO, Seniors Rights Service

**P** 1800 424 079

**E** [rwestacott@seniorsrightsservice.org.au](mailto:rwestacott@seniorsrightsservice.org.au)



Level 4, 418A Elizabeth St, Surry Hills NSW 2010

**P** (02) 9281 3600 **P** 1800 424 079 **F** (02) 9281 3672

[info@seniorsrightsservice.org.au](mailto:info@seniorsrightsservice.org.au) [www.seniorsrightsservice.org.au](http://www.seniorsrightsservice.org.au)

Seniors Rights Service Incorporated | ABN 98 052 960 862