

Strategic Plan to Facilitate Access to the Court for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the ACT

Purpose of the Plan

1. The Court wishes to give effect to its strategic purpose of ensuring transparent, easy and cost-effective access to the Court for all.
2. The Court recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise a significant group of Court users and are often disadvantaged in achieving effective access to the Court.
3. The Court has adopted the Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity's National Framework to Improve Accessibility to Australian courts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and others and wishes to implement the Framework.
4. This Strategic Plan identifies the actions that the Court intends to take for the purpose of improving access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Actions for 2017/2018

1. Implement the memorandum of understanding between the Courts, the profession and universities whereby Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law students undertake internships at the Court.
2. Encourage suitably qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law graduates to seek positions as judicial associates.
3. Explore opportunities to encourage talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students to pursue a legal career.
4. Organise a cultural competency development session for judges and registrars.
5. Promote engagement with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and services, including Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service. As part of this engagement, organise an annual program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and judges to share ideas.
6. Explore the possibility of employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officers to support Indigenous litigants, witnesses (including victims of crime) and their families who attend the Court/s.
7. Improve data collection for the purpose of informing the development of evidence based policy by the Courts and external bodies.
8. In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, endeavour to ensure that, the new Supreme Court building and/or the new shared Courts facilities acknowledge Indigenous peoples including, if appropriate, by the display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork and the provision of physical spaces that improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experience of the Court/s.
9. Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Supreme Court Drug and Alcohol (DAC) Working Group and ask the Group to ensure that any DAC proposal addresses the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander DAC participants (including any need for specialist residential rehabilitation placement and the possible inclusion of a permanent Indigenous representative on any DAC team).
10. Inform judges of the activities of the Judicial Council for Cultural Diversity and the Courts Cultural Diversity Committee and consider implementing any recommendations for action that are made by the Council or the Committee.
11. Review these actions annually.