

Australian Capital Territory  
**COURTS AND TRIBUNAL**

**Access to Courts for  
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the ACT**

**2017/18 Action Plan**

The ACT Courts Cultural Diversity Committee held a consultation workshop on 9 May 2017 with representatives from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, key agencies and NGO's to consider ways to improve access to courts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. The Workshop Report (attached) made a number of recommendations which have been translated into the following key themes and action plan below.

Key Theme	Task	Action
<b>Wholistic approach to service delivery</b>	Establishing an Indigenous Services Hub to deliver information, support and referral services to Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander people accessing the courts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The ACT Courts and Tribunal (ACTCT) to develop a report on establishing and maintaining an Indigenous Services Hub.</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	Building the cultural competency of our Judiciary, Registrars and Frontline staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The ACTCT will organise cultural competency development sessions for the judiciary and registrars. The first session was held on 18 October 2017 with Professor Sherwood from Sydney University.</li> <li>➤ Staff currently participate in a 1 day Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross cultural training program through the JACS Directorate.</li> <li>➤ The ACT ACTCT will consider ways to provide additional tailored seminars for our staff including Conferencing Officers, Sheriff Officers and Counter Staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	The employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the ACTCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The ACTCT will explore opportunities with the JACS Directorate and the ACT Government to fund two Aboriginal Liaison Officers.</li> <li>➤ The ACTCT will consider ways to recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into its workforce as part of the ACT Government Indigenous Employment Strategy.</li> <li>➤ The ACTCT will implement a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the profession and universities whereby Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law students undertake internships at the Courts. This will complement the existing Aboriginal and</li> </ul>

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		<p>Torres Strait Islander Student Mentoring Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The ACTCT will encourage suitably qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law graduates to seek positions as judicial associates.</li> <li>➤ The ACTCT will explore opportunities to create and deliver a concierge service to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending court.</li> </ul>
<b>Improving Processes</b>	Examining opportunities to improve court processes that deliver better long term outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and families in contact with the courts and tribunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The ACTCT will support the development and implementation of a Drug and Alcohol Court and other Therapeutic Justice approaches that could deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and families in the ACT.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship Building and Consultation</b>	Maintaining relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to ensure ongoing consultation relating to matters affecting their access to ACT courts and tribunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Drug and Alcohol Working Group to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and to ensure that any DAC proposal addresses the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants (including any need for specialist residential rehabilitation placement and the possible inclusion of a permanent Indigenous representative on any DAC team).</li> <li>➤ The ACTCT will organise an annual program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and Judicial Officers to share ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>Safe spaces</b>	The provision of culturally safe spaces within the new court building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The ACTCT will consider the creation of safe spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the new Courts building which will be operational in 2018/19.</li> <li>➤ In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, the ACTCT will endeavour to ensure that, the new Courts facilities acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including, if appropriate, by the display of artwork and the provision of physical spaces that improve Indigenous peoples' experience of the Courts.</li> </ul>
<b>Improved Information</b>	Improving information for the community and judiciary on key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The ACTCT will work with other services to improve the information available to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on Protection Orders.</li> <li>➤ The ACTCT will collect and disseminate</li> </ul>

Key Theme	Task	Action
		information on local services and models of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.
<b>Better Data</b>	Better case tracking and data collection by the Courts to identify issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander court users.	➤ The ACTCT will implement a new case management system with the capacity to capture identifiers such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.