

Justice Support®
Centre | Serving South West
Sydney since 1986






Reconciliation Action Plan

October 2024 – February 2026

jsc.org.au

Reconciliation Australia

Statement from the CEO of Reconciliation Australia



Relationships Respect Opportunities Governance

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Justice Support Centre to the Reconciliation Action Plan (**RAP**) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Justice Support Centre joins a network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program’s potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways.

This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program’s strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories,

knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Justice Support Centre to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia’s reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Justice Support Centre, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Introduction

A note from our CEO



At Justice Support Centre, our work is grounded in a clear belief: everyone deserves access to justice; everyone deserves to be safe.

We were established in 1986 on the lands of the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation, to deliver free legal services to the Liverpool community. We were strengthened by and grew from that community. Today, we work across South West Sydney in communities connected by the Georges River, the Inner West, the City and the East, on the land of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, supporting people with legal problems and women and children affected by domestic and family violence.

Our vision is for a future where there is equality of access to justice and women and children are free from domestic and family violence. We know that we cannot achieve this vision without earning trust and building respectful partnership with – and accountability to – our First Nations community and leaders.

I am thrilled to begin this new stage for Justice Support Centre, by launching our first Reconciliation Action Plan.

In this RAP, we commit ourselves to:

- building mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations partners, with a focus on co-design and earning trust
- improving our staff's capacity to deliver culturally appropriate services to First Nations clients
- ensuring our organisational policies, employment processes and procurement processes are delivering opportunities to First Nations individuals and businesses.

I am proud to lead Justice Support Centre into this new chapter in our history, with a commitment to respect, accountability, co-design and honesty. This always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Melanie Noden

Chief Executive Officer
Justice Support Centre

Who we are

Justice Support Centre is a community organisation that provides free domestic violence and legal services to people in Sydney. We support thousands of people each year, in South West Sydney (SWS) and local courts in the City of Sydney, Waverley and the Inner West.

Justice Support Centre was established as a not-for-profit legal centre in Liverpool in 1986, to ensure local people could access justice.

Until 2022, we operated under the name South West Sydney Legal Centre, which reflected our role as a community legal centre. Over the years, we have evolved to also serve the safety needs of women and children affected by domestic and family violence (DFV). We are now one of the larger frontline providers of DFV services in NSW.

Our services support many thousands of clients every year and demand continues to increase.

- Our legal service supports communities in Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool to understand their legal rights and responsibilities and access free advice and support when they face a legal issue.
- Our domestic and family violence services collaborate with women and their children to make safety plans, navigate the legal system, connect them with the support services they need and plan their recovery from violence and abuse.

Our vision

A future in which there is equality of access to justice and women and children are free from domestic and family violence.

We understand that to achieve this vision, we must contribute to addressing systematic issues for First Nations communities. We must continually improve the way we provide culturally appropriate services and promote First Nations voices.

Our dual purpose



To support women and children to break cycles of DFV.



To provide equitable and accessible legal services to our community.

We provide people the guidance, support services and strength they need to claim their rights, know their options, and choose their next step.

Our structure

As of December 2023, we are staffed by 80 dedicated workers and three First Nations staff members. Our staff bring together their diverse areas of expertise to provide a wrap-around experience for our clients.

Specialist services

We operate multiple specialist services:

Our specialist services	Purpose of each service
Justice Support Centre Free Legal Services	We offer free legal support to people who may not be able to access Legal Aid or afford private representation. Through our legal education program, we empower community members and build the capabilities of local practitioners.
Justice Support Centre South West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (SWS WDV CAS) Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool local courts	We support women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence to navigate the criminal justice system and gain protection through the courts.
Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (SYD WDV CAS) Downing Centre, Newtown and Waverley local courts	
Bankstown Domestic Violence Service (BDVS)	Our case workers provide needs-based support to women and their children affected by domestic and family violence. We can talk with women about safety plans, speak to police and other services on their behalf, and connect them with services to meet their needs.
Staying Home Leaving Violence Service (SHLV)- Liverpool, Fairfield, Canterbury-Bankstown & Burwood	
Financial Counselling Service for women affected by domestic and family violence	We support women who have experienced domestic and family violence to manage a budget on their own, manage unfair debts stemming from the abuse and plan for their financial goals.

As of January 2023, we relocated our offices into one central hub in Bankstown. We continue to have other satellite offices in the Sydney CBD and in South West Sydney.

Joining the national reconciliation movement

Justice Support Centre believes that participating in the national reconciliation movement improves our capacity to serve our First Nations clients and achieve our organisational vision.

Supporting our clients requires us to:

- understand the systematic injustices that affect First Nations communities and our First Nations clients
- continually improve the way we deliver culturally appropriate services to reflect the needs and experience of our First Nations clients
- support the decision making of First Nations communities and service providers on issues that affect them, through respectful collaboration with community-controlled organisations, appropriate referral processes and promoting First Nations voices in the sector.

Through this and future Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs), we aim to pursue these goals and contribute to the national reconciliation movement in a structured and accountable way.

In this Reflect RAP, we commit to scoping and developing relationships with First Nations stakeholders, deciding on our vision for reconciliation and exploring our sphere of influence.

Establishing the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group (WG)

Our RAP Working Group (RAP WG) was established in 2022 to oversee the design and delivery of our Reconciliation Action Plan. Members have contributed from across our diverse teams.

- RAP Champion: Marc Haynes, Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Current RAP WG members:

- Human Resources (HR) Manager
- Caseworker - DFV
- Assistant Administration Officer, Operations
- Assistant Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS) Manager, DFV Services
- Communications Manager
- Financial Counsellor
- Senior HR & Administration Officer.

Since forming, our RAP WG has been proud to participate in and educate other staff about events that celebrate First Nations cultures and further the national reconciliation movement, including National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week.



Our partnerships and current activities

Our work to deliver culturally appropriate services

Providing culturally appropriate services strengthens our service provision. Our partnerships with First Nations-led providers are critical to providing holistic support to our client base. This is a key part of our delivery model, embedded in our practice manual.

Providing services that are culturally appropriate for First Nations clients is particularly important to delivering on the vision of our centre: a future in which there is equality of access to justice and women and children are free from domestic and family violence. This requires us to grapple with the systemic injustices that have caused First Nations peoples to be over-represented in the criminal justice system and as victim-survivors of domestic and family violence.

All of our programs recognise intersectional determinants of need and give priority service to clients who:

- are First Nations peoples
- are affected by socio-economic disadvantage
- are from multicultural backgrounds
- are affected by social exclusion
- have a disability
- are caring for a child with a disability.

We have sought to provide culturally appropriate services through multiple partnerships and activities:

- We recognise the critical role of community-controlled organisations in delivering a culturally appropriate service. We rely on our partnerships with local First Nations-led service providers to ensure that we can connect First Nations clients to the support they need, including referrals to specialist First Nations services
- We prioritise First Nations clients. We recognise that systemic and institutionalised racism, and intergenerational trauma from colonial violence, has led to First Nations people being incarcerated in the criminal justice system and experiencing domestic and family violence at higher rates. For this reason, we prioritise service provision to First Nations clients, among other priority groups. This means that our limited resources can be directed to those clients who most need our support
- We have employed First Nations Specialist Workers to help us provide culturally appropriate services to clients. We endeavour to ensure First Nations clients can choose to be supported by a First Nations Specialist Worker on our Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service teams (WDVCAS). Between 2022-2023, approximately 6% of our clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People
- We plan and resource cultural competency training for our staff. In our Practice Manual for domestic and family violence workers, Aboriginal Cultural Competency Training is identified as a key training need for staff. During the period of this Reflect RAP, we aim to expand this training program.

Culturally appropriate services (Continued)

- We have implemented and updated internal policies so that they provide First Nations People as well as staff the opportunity and time to attend and/or participate in First Nations cultural events
- We benefit enormously from our connections with First Nations interagencies in the sector. Our Financial Counsellor maintained connections with First Nations service providers throughout 2022 and 2023 by regularly attending First Nations interagencies, including South West Sydney Koori Interagency and the First Nations Yarning Circle (Financial Counselling Association of NSW) and the First Nations Network (Financial Counselling Association of NSW).

Our 2022 rebrand, evolving from South West Sydney Legal Centre to Justice Support Centre, has been a valuable opportunity to rethink the way we communicate with the community and how we can make our services more inclusive and accessible. As part of this, we have developed a Writing Style Guide for our staff. It includes guidance on inclusive language, including language that demonstrates respect for First Nations communities and is inclusive of LGBTQIA+ First Nations people, Sistergirls, Brotherboy and trans mob.



In 2024, Justice Support Centre was proud to host a meaningful National Reconciliation Week Lunch and Learn internally for staff. The event fostered unity, teamwork, awareness and dialogue within our team around Cultural protocols, and explained the difference between a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement of Country. Thank you to Uncle John for providing a Welcome to Country and for his Historical Fact Sharing and to Auntie Liz for the bush tea, scones and jam. A wonderful team collage of our handprints was also created during the event.

In 2024, Justice Support Centre was also grateful to take part in the KARI Aboriginal Women's Wellbeing Conference, which celebrated the contribution of Aboriginal women in our sector.

Running an information stall was a valuable opportunity to establish new and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations-led service providers, to support better referrals and integrated service delivery for our First Nations clients.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Relationship

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	1.1 Identify First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify internal stakeholders who have existing relationships with First Nations-led organisations and create a central resource mapping these relationships. Identify First Nations specialist services in our sphere of influence and opportunities to increase collaboration to meet mutual goals. Identify and share with staff resources available from First Nations specialist services to improve referral processes and support First Nations clients. 	October 2024	Lead: WDVCAS DFV Specialist Worker Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resources (HR) Manager DFV Caseworker
	1.2 Consult with key First Nations stakeholder groups, including referral partners providing First Nations specialist services, to better understand their goals and how we could contribute to those goals, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council Wirringa Baiya KARI Foundation and KARI Limited Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation Bonnie Support Services Green Valley Liverpool Domestic Violence Service 	October 2024	Lead: Justice Support Centre First Nations Workers Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SYD WDVCAS Manager Leadership Team
	1.3 Increase respectful communication and collaboration between our organisation's domestic and family violence services and First Nations specialist services to facilitate improved referral processes and identify opportunities for mutually beneficial projects.	October 2024	Lead: WDVCAS Managers Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Manager
	1.4 Research and establish a set of resources for staff on best practice and principles that support partnerships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	October 2024	Lead: HR Manager Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP WG
	1.5 Implement staff training on these best practice principles.	October 2024	HR Manager
	1.6 Annually, identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks and interagency groups our organisation should participate in.	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice Support Centre First Nations Workers
	1.7 Develop a staff resourcing plan to send representatives to these networks and interagency groups.	October 2024	Lead: Justice Support Centre First Nations Workers Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Manager

Relationship (Continued)

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	2.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2025	Lead: Communications Manager Support: • HR Manager • Chief Operating Officer (COO)
	2.2 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external National Reconciliation Week event.	May 2025	HR Manager
	2.3 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.	May 2025	Chief Operating Officer (COO)
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	3.1 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	November 2024	HR Manager Communications Manager
	3.2 Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2024	Lead: COO Support: • Leadership Team
	3.3 Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2024	Justice Support Centre WDV CAS and DFV Managers
	3.4 Monitor progress on social media channels when relevant on an annual basis around promotion of the work of our First Nations partner agencies.	November 2024	Communications Manager
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	4.1 Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	November 2024	HR Manager
	4.2 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	November 2024	HR Manager
	4.3 Conduct a survey and consultation with First Nations staff (and potentially past staff) of their experience in the organisation.	November 2024 November 2025	Lead: HR Manager Support: • RAP WG
	4.4 Investigate opportunities to strengthen our internal policies in line with the values and employment goals of Community Legal Centres NSW's <i>Our Voices, our employment: First Nations employment goals</i> .	November 2024 November 2025	Lead: HR Manager Support: • RAP WG

Respect

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	5.1 Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	October 2024	Lead: COO Support: • HR Manager • RAP WG
	5.2 Identify appropriate cultural awareness training opportunities.	April 2025	Lead: HR Manager • Support: RAP WG Lead: HR Manager Support: • RAP WG
	5.3 Establish the regular participation of all staff in cultural awareness and competency training; in particular, focused training on skills and knowledge for staff working with First Nation clients.	October 2024	HR Manager
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by observing cultural protocols.	6.1 Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	October 2024	Justice Support Centre First Nations Workers
	6.2 Research respectful language practices and update the organisation's Writing Style Guide to assist staff to use respectful language when communicating to and about First Nations stakeholders. (This should include language that clearly communicates that our domestic and family violence services are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Sistergirls, Brotherboy and trans mob.)	August 2025	Lead: Communications Manager Support: • RAP WG • HR Manager
	6.3 Run a yearly internal communications campaign to increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols and dates of significance such as NRW Week and NAIDOC Week.	June 2025	Lead: Communications Manager HR Manager Support: • RAP WG
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	7.1 Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2025	Communications Manager
	7.2 Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July 2025	Communications Manager
	7.3 Allocate 1-2 hours to each staff member to attend NAIDOC Week events during work hours.	April 2025	Leadership Team, Managers
	7.4 RAP WG to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2025	HR Manager

Opportunities

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	8.1 Confirm our business case for First Nations employment within our organisation.	November 2024	COO
	8.2 Use understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	November 2024	Lead: HR Manager Support: Leadership Team
	8.3 Explore the continued participation in the NSW's First Nations cadetship program for 2025.	April 2025	Legal Practice Manager Communications Manager
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	9.1 Develop a business case for procurement from First Nations owned businesses.	December 2024	Lead: Financial Controller Support: • COO
	9.2 Assess the suitability of a First Nations led business to meet our regular supply needs e.g. office supply, cleaning etc.	December 2024	Lead: Financial Controller Support: • COO
	9.3 Investigate Supply Nation membership.	December 2024	Lead: Financial Controller Support: • COO

Governance

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RAP WG) to drive governance of the RAP.	10.1 Maintain a RAP WG to govern RAP implementation.	December 2024	Lead: COO Support: • Communications Manager • HR Manager
	10.2 Review and update a Terms of Reference for the RAP WG.	December 2024	Communications Manager HR Manager
	10.3 Maintain First Nations representation on the RAP WG.	December 2024	COO HR Manager
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	11.1 Define resource needs for RAP implementation in regular consultation with Financial Controller to identify financial resources required, strategic goals and implications for financial reporting.	December 2024 December 2025	Lead: COO Support: • Financial Controller • RAP WG
	11.2 Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	January 2025 January 2026	COO
	11.3 Maintain a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	December 2024	CEO
		December 2025	COO
11.4 Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	October 2024	Senior HR & Admin Officer	
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	12.1 Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	September 2025	Communications Manager
	12.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	August 2025	Communications Manager
	12.3 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2025	Communications Manager
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	13.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	September 2025	Communications Manager

Acknowledgement of Country

Justice Support Centre proudly acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate, the Cabrogal Peoples of the Darug nation, the Gadigal Peoples of the Eora Nation, as well as the Tharawal and Gandangara Nations. We acknowledge their continuing connection to the land, waters and community and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

As an organisation grounded in community, and a commitment to justice, fairness and equality, we are grateful to the First Nations Peoples, Elders and organisations who provide leadership and strength in the communities in which we work. We are committed to earning trust and building strong, mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations partners, to exploring shared goals and finding opportunities for respectful partnerships.



Note from the artist – Working as One in Unity

My name is Jillian Scahill and I am a Budawang woman of the Yuin Nation. I have been working in the Sydney and South West Sydney (SWS) community for over 10 years and it was a great pleasure to be able to paint the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) artwork for Justice Support Centre.

The artwork title, “Working as one in Unity” represents the workplace and the connection it has with the area. The Georges River runs through the area that Justice Support Centre works within, the meeting areas represent where the organisation meets and works with clients, and they are all connected to show how all the services work together.

The handprints represent the different nationalities working in the Justice Support Centre and the different nationalities that the workplace services. They are also a symbolisation that we have unity and all work as one.



Artwork by Jillian Scahill, Budawang woman of the Yuin Nation.



Contact:

Marc Haynes
Chief Operating Officer

Phone: 02 7255 0437
Email: marc.haynes@jsc.org.au

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