



Reconciliation Action Plan

Newsletter 2018

Development of the RAP

Three successful years of having implemented the measurable targets of our first RAP inspired us to create another overarching plan to continue our professional and social engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Caxton's RAP working group developed new and exciting targets to build more and meaningful relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, to improve Caxton's staff awareness of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and achievements, and to foster opportunities to achieve these targets.

The RAP 2018–20 is again championed by our dedicated internal team and supported by all staff who strive to accomplish our set targets. Reconciliation Australia provided pertinent information and guidance throughout the development phase and endorsed our new plan in February 2018.

Introduction

Caxton Legal Centre proudly continued its pledge to working in unity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to achieve social justice. Our second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) clearly outlines the goals and various actions to honour this commitment.

RAP Launch

In March 2018, we were honoured to have Mr Mick Gooda, former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, present as a guest speaker for the launch of our Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–20. Local Elder Uncle Sam Watson also attended the launch, and Straddie Indigenous Delights treated us to a feast of delicious Aboriginal bush tucker. The RAP launch created a welcomed opportunity for Caxton to strengthen its relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and agencies, and to demonstrate our leadership in engaging in the RAP process within the legal services sector.

Justice in Focus

Caxton partnered with Sisters Inside to present *System Failure: The Overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women in Prison*. A panel of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women discussed the historical, social and systemic drivers that have resulted in the vast overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison. The panel discussed the increasing use of cross-orders for DV protection orders and the general lack of solutions targeted to address the issue of overrepresentation. The panel also contemplated various avenues for change. The forum triggered a lot of positive feedback and has strengthened the relationship between Caxton and Sisters Inside.

RACISM. IT STOPS WITH ME Campaign

Caxton Legal Centre proudly joined forces with some of Australia's leading businesses, sporting bodies and NGOs to support the Racism. It Stops With Me campaign. We have committed to preventing racism by pledging to take action in support of the campaign led by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Staff have included the campaign banner in their email signatures and distributed campaign material throughout the centre.

Human Resources at Caxton Legal Centre

Our RAP 2018–20 clearly outlines actions to ensure our existing employees gain a greater awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture to be better equipped to contribute to reconciliation. We also pledged to provide opportunities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation amongst our staff and reviewed our recruitment and human resources procedures to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees participating in our workplace. In July 2018, we recruited an Aboriginal lawyer who is a descendant of the Kamilaroi people, to work in our Family Law, Domestic Violence and Elder Law Practice. He provides the first triage point for all Aboriginal clients of this practice, is actively involved in the Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer Service and coordinates our family law student clinic. He won the Queensland Law Society's 2018 Community Legal Centre Member of the Year award and the Equity Advocate award for his service to the community.

Another Aboriginal lawyer from the same practice was granted leave from the centre to take up the exciting invitation to work with the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor.

NAIDOC Week

In recognition of NAIDOC week and the celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and accomplishments, Caxton participated in the Family Fun Day at Musgrave Park on 13 July 2018. Under the theme *Because of her, we can!* we acknowledged the strong and significant roles Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women play as pillars of our society within communities at local, state and national levels. Caxton held a stall in partnership with Legal Aid Queensland, where both organisations promoted their services and provided free legal self-help resources. Our face painter was a great hit with the children and they happily entertained themselves at a craft table creating rainbow serpents. Caxton staff seized the opportunity and spoke to many members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and other service providers about our services, and built key connections and important referral pathways.

Cultural Awareness Training

In August 2017, Caxton Legal Centre staff, including senior staff, took an overnight immersion trip to Minjerribah, or North Stradbroke Island, as part of Caxton's cultural awareness training commitment. We learned about the Quandamooka people's cultural practices and use of artefacts, and walked along the

Goompi Trail. We were also able to attend and celebrate the Quandamooka Festival, which offered a unique opportunity for us to experience first-hand the continuing culture of the Nughi, Nunukul and Goenpul clans of Quandamooka.

Staff also attended cultural awareness training on 20 September hosted by the Asian Australian Lawyers Association Queensland and the Indigenous Lawyers Association of Queensland Inc. The interactive event was hosted by Avelina Tarrago and Cassie Lang, two experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal practitioners. The evening began with a discussion on how one can connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, before Avelina and Cassie deliberated insightful topics such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in the criminal justice system, the meaning of silence and importance of trust, and common misconceptions surrounding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The presenters did a wonderful job at providing clear and practical answers to the attendees, who could then use that knowledge in their future dealings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and pass it on to other staff who could not attend the training.

Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Services

Staff collaborated with the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and provided community legal education about elder abuse for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies and people in the Logan and Beenleigh areas, in Zillmere and Morayfield. Staff also met with the Inala Indigenous Health Service to share information and promote referrals. On 14 November 2017, a social worker and lawyer from our Seniors Legal and Support Service headed to Cherbourg in response to an invitation to talk to the community at the Ration Shed Museum. We appreciated the hospitality and support from the Cherbourg community to help connect with older people in the community. Our educational talk about preventing and responding to elder abuse was rewarded with subsequent referrals of Aboriginal clients from Cherbourg.

Other Progress with the Centre's RAP

Caxton progressed a number of other action items outlined in the RAP. We:

- appointed an internal RAP champion who is the Chair of the RAP implementation group
- continuously encourage staff to attend functions and community events hosted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations
- promote our RAP to all Caxton employees to ensure that they gain a greater understanding of how they can contribute to reconciliation
- include a copy of the RAP and the RAP snapshot in the staff induction processes
- supported our Aboriginal law clerk to transition into legal practice via supervision at her new community legal centre placement.