



Department for
Correctional Services (DCS)

Aboriginal Strategic Framework **Action Plan 2020-2021**



Government of South Australia
Department for Correctional Services





Acknowledgement of Country

This document was developed on Kurna land. The Department for Correctional Services (DCS) acknowledges the spiritual connection to country and recognises Kurna people as the custodians of the greater Adelaide region. DCS also acknowledges Traditional Owners across South Australia. We recognise the continuing importance of language, land, culture and spiritual beliefs to all Aboriginal people.

The Department pays respects to Aboriginal people from all other regions of Australia, particularly those who helped contribute to the development of this Action Plan and who will be involved in, or impacted by, the achievement of its actions.



The painting represents South Australia's desert country. The big circles around the centre are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities. The small circles in the centre of the image represent the Department for Correctional Services. The footsteps are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal communities working together, and the half circles represent our stakeholder Departments and non-Government agencies coming together. Working together we strive for excellence for our staff, prisoners and offenders and our communities.

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Vision

DCS will enhance rehabilitation outcomes for Aboriginal prisoners and offenders by recognising their diverse cultures and responding to their complex issues and the high levels of intergenerational trauma.

Principles

- Every contact matters
- Cultural diversity is acknowledged, respected and valued
- Cultural impact is considered in everything we do
- Collaborative, positive and meaningful engagement contributes to safer, supported and stronger communities.

Themes

- Ensure access to programs and services that are responsive to the unique cultural and gendered needs of Aboriginal offenders
- Build a culturally competent & responsive workforce
- Increase Aboriginal economic participation and strengthen partnerships with organisations, businesses and Aboriginal communities.

THEME 1

Ensure access to programs and services that are responsive to the unique cultural and gendered needs of Aboriginal offenders

DCS has implemented a range of strategies to address the needs of Aboriginal prisoners and offenders. We have increased responsiveness by providing services that are more sensitive to the beliefs, cultures and needs of Aboriginal people. However, there are still gaps in service provision and blockages affecting program participation and outcomes. To address this we will invest in programs that strengthen cultural identity, build resilience and promote positive emotional wellbeing.

Many Aboriginal prisoners struggle to maintain their cultural identity in prison, partly due to their loss of connection to community and country. DCS acknowledges the importance that prisoner placement has on maintaining cultural ties and will ensure this is a consideration when determining the placement of any Aboriginal prisoner. In an effort to strengthen family connections, we will explore alternative visiting options and strategies for Aboriginal parents to maintain ties with their children. All prisons will be required to establish safe places for Aboriginal prisoners to conduct cultural business and support their involvement in events of cultural significance. In addition, Community Corrections staff will be provided with support and guidance in relation to managing Aboriginal offenders in the community towards improved outcomes.

DCS will also increase Aboriginal participation in rehabilitation programs to reduce reoffending and increase community safety. By expanding our preparatory program, Our Way My Choice, to include a family component and by developing a version for Aboriginal women, we will support the wellbeing of Aboriginal prisoners and increase their engagement in rehabilitation programs. We will also introduce a new criminogenic program for traditional Aboriginal men from remote communities, as well as explore options to deliver gender focussed throughcare and reintegration programs. We will focus efforts on the small number of Aboriginal women in our prison system to maintain their wellbeing and better equip them with skills to enable them to thrive in the community.

Action	Responsible	Actioned by
Placement and connections to family		
Consider Aboriginal prisoners' proximity to country and access to family support when determining placement. Advice to be sought from ASU staff or an ALO.	Deputy Chief Executive	All
Explore options for a subsidised bus service to transport families of Aboriginal prisoners to MGP to attend visits.	Aboriginal Services Unit	Aboriginal Services Unit
Explore the possibility of expanding the existing Mother's Voice program to allow Aboriginal mothers and fathers the opportunity to record cultural stories, family histories, birthday and other important messages to send to their children.	Aboriginal Services Unit	Aboriginal Services Unit
Cultural programs and events		
Review the Community Corrections Practice Manual with a cultural lens to ensure it addresses cultural considerations relating to the supervision of Aboriginal offenders, including a process for leave pass applications.	Deputy Chief Executive	General Managers
Ensure all funeral escorts for Aboriginal prisoners are carried out in a culturally appropriate manner and are attended by an ALO or other Aboriginal staff member. Funeral escorts are only to be carried out by staff members whose Cultural Competency Training is up to date.	Deputy Chief Executive	General Managers
If Aboriginal prisoners are unable to attend funerals, the site must explore the option of virtual attendance.	Deputy Chief Executive	General Managers
Support the wellbeing of Aboriginal prisoners who are unable to attend funerals of loved ones by ensuring their cultural and spiritual needs are met.	Executive Director Community Corrections and Specialist Prisons	General Managers Managers of Offender Development
Ensure all prisons have a healing circle or other culturally safe space for Aboriginal for prisoners to conduct cultural business and healing.	Deputy Chief Executive	General Managers Managers of Offender Development
Review the format of Prevention of Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (PADIC) Forums.	Aboriginal Services Unit	Aboriginal Services Unit
Explore and support opportunities to increase the delivery of culturally appropriate wellbeing and life skills programs to Aboriginal prisoners.	Aboriginal Services Unit	Aboriginal Services Unit
Rehabilitation programs		
Pilot of Our Way My Choice to include family engagement.	Aboriginal Services Unit	Aboriginal Services Unit
Work with Aboriginal organisations to support their delivery of gender focussed throughcare and reintegration supports.	Aboriginal Services Unit	Aboriginal Services Unit
Aboriginal women		
Pilot and evaluate Our Way My Choice Aboriginal Women's Program.	Aboriginal Services Unit	Aboriginal Services Unit Principal Advisor Women Offenders
Explore opportunities for life and employment skills aimed at Aboriginal women prisoners.	Aboriginal Services Unit	Principal Advisor Women Offenders Managers of Offender Development
Explore opportunity for culturally appropriate programs for Anangu women close to country.	Executive Director Offender Development	Director Strategic Policy, Projects and Partnerships Aboriginal Services Unit
Ensure that allowances paid to Aboriginal women prisoners for attending programs is commensurate with the allowances paid to Aboriginal male prisoners.	Chief Executive	General Managers Managers of Offender Development
Facilitate wellbeing and resilience training targeting Aboriginal women prisoners.	Executive Director Offender Development	Aboriginal Services Unit
Planning, particularly release planning		
Ensure Aboriginal prisoners are released with identification and other documentation that will be required in the community.	Deputy Chief Executive	General Managers Managers of Offender Development
Explore options for Aboriginal offenders on Extended Supervision Orders to be included in the mandatory referral requirements for the Home Detention Integrated Support Services.	Executive Director Offender Development	Director Strategic Policy, Projects and Partnerships Aboriginal Services Unit

THEME 2

Build a culturally competent and responsive workforce

DCS recognises the importance of having a diverse workforce that better reflects the offenders it manages. With around 25% of prisoners identifying as Aboriginal, but only 4% of staff, DCS is focused on increasing the number of Aboriginal employees. It is also clear that not only do we need more Aboriginal staff, but we need them working across the Department, in different directorates and at different classification levels, as well as in professional streams and in leadership roles.

To attract Aboriginal employees, we will promote the positive impact DCS has on the lives of prisoners and offenders, as well as the interesting and rewarding roles that our staff play. We will develop recruitment resources and engage externally to promote career pathways to DCS, targeting young people and professionals. DCS will encourage all Aboriginal staff to reach their full potential and provide opportunities for those staff who aspire to leadership roles. A particularly exciting initiative will be the development of an Aboriginal Traineeship Program, which will see an annual intake of 10 trainees. Participants will be provided with training and support throughout the program, and line managers will also receive training on how to best support trainees.

Most importantly, DCS will continue to develop a culturally inclusive workforce in which all staff, but particularly Aboriginal staff, are respected and valued for their unique perspectives. Behaviours such as bullying, discrimination and racism will not be tolerated and will be called out. We will ensure that Aboriginal staff feel culturally safe in their workplace and confident that their experiences will be heard and valued comfortable to speak out and be heard. To achieve this, we will continue to deliver mandatory cultural competence training to all staff, increase information sharing and introduce additional mechanisms to support Aboriginal staff.

Increasing the number of Aboriginal employees and building the cultural competence of our staff will result in more culturally sensitive management of prisoners and offenders. Staff will be better equipped to recognise and respond to the cultural needs of Aboriginal offenders, to deliver responsive programs and services, and to improve capability and reduce reoffending.

Action	Responsible	Actioned by
Recruitment – become an employer of choice for Aboriginal people		
Explore opportunities to increase Aboriginal people's participation in employment across DCS.	Executive Director People and Business Services	Aboriginal Services Unit
Update the Department's process to advertise vacancies to include a requirement to check the Government Aboriginal Employment Register and advertise vacancies via Aboriginal organisations and networking systems, such as Turkindi.	Executive Director People and Business Services	Director Human Resources Aboriginal Services Unit
Develop an Aboriginal Employment, Retention and Professional Development Strategy that will include, at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved workforce data reporting mechanisms creation of an external Aboriginal communications strategy development of Aboriginal specific recruitment resources engagement with schools and universities to promote career pathways to DCS. 	Executive Director People and Business Services	Director Human Resources Aboriginal Services Unit
Develop a DCS Aboriginal Traineeship Program, which will include an annual intake of trainees and provide training and support to them and their line managers.	Executive Director People and Business Services	Director Human Resources Aboriginal Services Unit
Explore opportunities for prison based ALOs to provide cultural support to Community Correctional Centres.	Deputy Chief Executive	Aboriginal Services Unit Regional Directors
Development pathways – encourage Aboriginal staff to engage in professional development opportunities and support them to take on leadership roles		
Encourage Aboriginal staff to participate in DCS professional development opportunities, such as Tomorrow's Senior Managers Program and Correctional Officer Training Course – Advanced Skills.	Executive Director People and Business Services	All Executive Directors General Managers Regional Directors
Ensure all internal working groups, including Shaping Corrections Regional Working Groups, have Aboriginal representation to provide a cultural perspective.	Executive Director Offender Development	Shaping Corrections
Promote Employee Assistance Program services to Aboriginal staff to ensure they are aware of the supports available, particularly in rural locations.	Executive Director People and Business Services	All
Explore opportunities for Aboriginal staff needs meetings at each prison.	Deputy Chief Executive Executive Director Community Corrections and Specialist Prisons	Aboriginal Services Unit
Cultural competence – build a culture of respect throughout DCS by ensuring all staff have an understanding of Aboriginal culture		
Undertake an environmental scan on available cultural competency assessment.	Executive Director Offender Development	Director Strategic Policy, Projects and Partnerships Aboriginal Services Unit
ASU to continue to deliver cultural competency training in metropolitan and regional locations.	Executive Director Offender Development	Aboriginal Services Unit
Support Aboriginal staff by increasing awareness across DCS about the role of ASU and ALOs.	Deputy Chief Executive	Aboriginal Services Unit General Managers
DCS to promote Aboriginal cultural events, such as NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events, and to encourage Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal staff attendance at such events.	Chief Executive	All staff
ASU to develop online cultural competency tools.	Executive Director People and Business Services	Aboriginal Services Unit Learning Academy

THEME 3

Increase Aboriginal economic participation and strengthen partnerships with organisations, businesses and Aboriginal communities

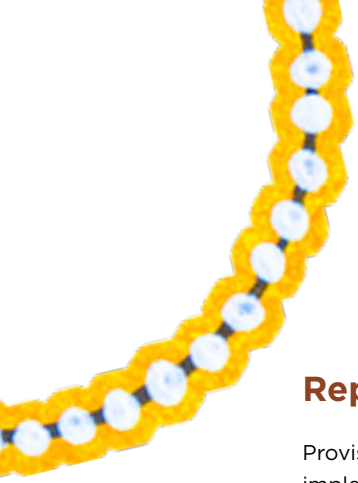
The overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in correctional services is a complex problem that DCS cannot solve alone. As such, we are committed to working with our partners and stakeholders to address the challenges we face in achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal prisoners and offenders.

We will expand our partnerships and harness the expertise of external organisations to deliver culturally appropriate services and programs to Aboriginal prisoners and offenders. We will also develop relationships with Aboriginal communities to assist us to provide programs and services that are culturally sensitive and improve outcomes for their people. By better equipping prisoners and offenders to live an offence free lifestyle there will be ongoing benefits for Aboriginal communities and the wider South Australian community.

DCS is in a unique position to increase Aboriginal economic participation due to its purchasing power and by improving the employability of prisoners and offenders. By introducing a number of Aboriginal focussed procurement processes, DCS will increase the purchase of goods and services from Aboriginal businesses and businesses with high levels of Aboriginal employment. We will also continue to employ Aboriginal prisoners in prison industries and ensure they have skills and supports to assist with job readiness.

Action	Responsible	Actioned by
Increase Aboriginal economic participation		
Update DCS procurement procedures to ensure that goods and services are sourced from the Aboriginal Businesses Connect Register where possible for all procurements up to \$220,000.	Executive Director People and Business Services	All Executive Directors
Explore opportunities to develop cultural creative industries for women, post release employment opportunities and prison industries.	Executive Director Offender Development	General Mangers Aboriginal Services Unit
All prisons and Community Corrections Centres to develop a register of local Aboriginal businesses that they can engage to procure goods and services.	Deputy Chief Executive	General Managers Regional Directors
Develop relationships with Aboriginal businesses through attendance at Aboriginal industry forums.	Executive Director People and Business Services	Executive Director People and Business Services
All contractors and businesses engaged for major infrastructure works or procurements must be able to demonstrate that at least 2% of their employees are Aboriginal.	Executive Director People and Business Services	Executive Director People and Business Services
Strengthen partnerships with NGOs and relevant government agencies		
Explore opportunities to formalise relationships with key Aboriginal organisations and support the delivery of culturally appropriate programs and services to prisoners and offenders.	Executive Director Offender Development	Aboriginal Services Unit
Engage with Time To Work Employment Service providers to increase referrals.	Executive Director Offender Development	Aboriginal Services Unit
Explore the possibility of working with other justice agencies to run a preventative forum aimed at Aboriginal youth.	Executive Director Offender Development	Aboriginal Services Unit
Strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal communities		
Review the Aboriginal Elders Visiting Program with a view to expanding it to include community leaders and emerging leaders.	Executive Director Offender Development	Aboriginal Services Unit
Engage with local Aboriginal communities in relation to current and future programs or projects in their local areas.	Executive Director Offender Development	Aboriginal Services Unit
Regional sites to develop relationships with their local Aboriginal communities and contribute to community events to break down barriers and negative perceptions about DCS.	Deputy Chief Executive	General Managers Regional Directors





Reporting/accountability/measurable

Provision of appropriate support/resourcing for effective implementation of ASF

Build accountability and transparency through reporting on achievements, challenges and learnings from implementation of the ASF – the Action Plan will provide a mechanism to report biennially on progress of the ASF

DCS Executive visibility

Quarterly updates to DCS Executive

Documents available on DCS intranet and internet with quarterly achievement updates

Continue DCS commitment to ASF through building on progress of the 2020-21 Action Plan by developing 2022-23 Action Plan

Create feedback functionality on DCS intranet and internet to inform development of next Action Plan



For further information, please contact:

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