Kingsford Legal Centre acknowledges the Gadigal and Bidjigal Clans, the traditional custodians of the Sydney Coast. We pay respect to those Elders, past and present and thank them for allowing us to work and study on their lands.
Working with Aboriginal clients at Kingsford Legal Centre
Kingsford Legal Centre is a community legal centre providing free legal advice and casework to people who live, work or study in the Randwick and Botany local government areas. We specialise in discrimination law and provide advice NSW wide on discrimination problems. To find out more about our services or to make an appointment, our contact details are:

T 02 9385 9566
E legal@unsw.edu.au
W www.klc.unsw.edu.au
PA Kingsford Legal Centre, F8-003, UNSW 2052
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Introduction

Kingsford Legal Centre acknowledges the unique place and contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Australian nation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the descendants of the oldest, surviving continuous cultures in the world. They are the original and traditional custodians of the lands which the rest of the Australian nation now also occupies. Their languages, cultures and experiences hold a special place in Australian history and within the contemporary Australian national identity.

Kingsford Legal Centre firmly believes in, and is committed to, establishing and maintaining genuine partnerships with local Aboriginal communities to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are provided with a service that is based on mutual respect, equal opportunity and access to justice.

Why this manual?

This manual has been produced to help staff, students and volunteers of Kingsford Legal Centre (KLC) to build strong, culturally appropriate relationships with Aboriginal clients and communities.

KLC recognises that different client groups have different service delivery requirements and needs and KLC hopes that this manual will help to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively and respectfully with local Aboriginal clients and communities. If history has taught us anything, it is that treating our most vulnerable members like we treat everybody else can be the very source of their disadvantage. The pursuit of equality often requires that we treat people differently because it is by attending
to the specific needs and histories of diverse populations that they gain the ability to participate in society on a par with everybody else.

*It is important to note that the information contained in this manual is localised and is particular to the Randwick and Botany Local Government areas and communities. Those working in other areas should always endeavour to ensure the services they deliver are locally appropriate.*

## Acknowledgments

KLC would like to acknowledge Melinda Brown for coming up with the concept for the production of the original document. Secondly a big thank you to Kara Kirkwood from the Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre for developing a summarised version of the original document. KLC would also like to thank the members of its Aboriginal Advisory Group, and our students and colleagues for ensuring this version of the document was more suitable for people working in the Randwick and Botany Local Government catchment area.

Thanks also to KLC’s funding bodies, including UNSW Law Faculty, Federal Attorney General’s Department and the NSW Attorney General’s Department, as well as Randwick City Council.

A special thanks must go to KLC’s Aboriginal Access Workers Keith Ball, Ron Timbery and Kaleesha Morris, all of whom have made generous and vital contributions to the establishment of the KLC Aboriginal Access Program as well as contributing significantly to this document.

Thanks also to ex-KLC student Clancy King and editor, Lynne Spender, for their assistance in helping to edit this manual.

The photos in this manual were taken by Kaleesha Morris, (except for the two photos of Yarra Bay House and the Community Health Centre). Thank you to Kaleesha for her permission to reproduce them here.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are descended from the original inhabitants of Australia. There is no single overarching definition of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person. To determine eligibility to obtain certain services and benefits the Federal Government requires an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person fulfil all three of the desired criteria:

That the person:

• is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
• identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person
• is accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person by the community in which he or she lives.¹

General Indigenous population estimates

The Australian Bureau of Statistics recorded from their 2011 Census²:

• 548,370 people identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin and counted in the Census (2.5% of the total population).

• 31.5% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in NSW. There were 172,624 Aboriginal and Torres Strait


². 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics no. 4705.0.
Islanders in NSW and 54,746 persons in Greater Sydney.

- More than one in three (35.9%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders was aged less than 15 years while just 3.8% of the population were aged 65 years and over.

- The median age of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is very young being 21 years, that is 16 years less than the national median age of 37.

**Randwick and Botany LGA Indigenous population statistics**

Below are the Indigenous statistics for the Randwick and Botany Local Government Areas from the 2011 census.

**Randwick LGA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indigenous(a)</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>90</td>
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<td>10-14 years</td>
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<td>167</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-19 years</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>170</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-24 years</td>
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<td>91</td>
<td>185</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-29 years</td>
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<td>30-34 years</td>
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<td>50-54 years</td>
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<td>60-64 years</td>
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<td>41</td>
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<td>65 years and over</td>
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<td><strong>901</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,843</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Persons</td>
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<td>0-4 years</td>
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<td>60-64 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>294</strong></td>
<td><strong>319</strong></td>
<td><strong>613</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Aboriginal flag was designed by Harold Thomas in 1971. The black on the flag represents the Aboriginal people, the yellow represents the sun - the giver of life and the red represents the land and the blood of the Aboriginal people.

The Torres Strait Islander flag was designed by Bernard Namok in 1992. The Green represents the land, the black represents the Indigenous people and the blue represents the sea. The head-piece (called the ‘Dhari’) is representative of Torres Strait Islander people and culture and the five-pointed star represents of the five major Island groups - designed in white as a sign of peace.
Languages

• It has been estimated that during the pre-European contact period there were around 250 distinct languages not including countless dialects. Today, only around 145 Aboriginal languages remain spoken, of which it has been said, 110 of them are critically endangered.\(^3\) There has also been an emergence of Aboriginal Creole (broken English) and Aboriginal.

Various terms often used by individuals to identify Aboriginality

It is important to be aware that there are many different terms used by Indigenous people to identify themselves. Different Indigenous people prefer different descriptions such as Aboriginal or Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander and it’s important to respect their choice about how they would like to be identified.

Smaller variations also fall under the broader terms of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or Indigenous, for example, the common use of regional names. Some (not including all) regional Aboriginal identities are:

• **Goori** - Northern NSW coastal region
• **Koori** - Bottom half of NSW and Victoria
• **Murri** - North West NSW and Queensland
• **Nunga** - SA
• **Yolngu** - Northern Territory

\(^3\) The National Indigenous Languages Survey (NILS) Report 2005)
Remember: Despite this knowledge, do not make any assumptions about an Aboriginal client’s identity, rather, enable the client to identify as he or she wishes.

- **Noongar** - Western Australia
- **Wongi** - Goldfield regions of Central Western Australia
- **Yamajti** - North and North Western Regions of Western Australia
- **Anangu** - Central Australia
- **Palawa** - Tasmania
Understanding Aboriginal connection to Country

‘It is a mark of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people to welcome visitors to their land... These gestures of respect acknowledge Indigenous ownership and custodianship of the land, their traditions and their ancestors’.

(The little Red Yellow Black Book, p.1).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ relationship to their traditional lands and waters are especially unique. This relationship, often referred to in the family sense (i.e. the land is my mother) carries with it a range of responsibilities including the custodianship of the spiritual and environmental safety of country. These responsibilities are defined through traditional law and include acknowledging and paying respects to the spirit ancestors who created the land and the ancestors and elders who have gone before and returned to the land as custodians.

(Understanding Country is adapted from the ACTU Indigenous Committee Report to ACTU Congress 2006)

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

First and foremost it is important to recognise that a traditional Welcome to Country is different to an Acknowledgment of Country.

Welcome to Country

Welcoming people to Country is an embodiment of the special, spiritual relationship Aboriginal people have to the land. A Welcome to Country is also a representation of Aboriginal sovereignty and a ceremonial characterisation of the fact that
Aboriginal peoples of Australia have never ceded their rights to, or responsibilities over, their country.

A *Welcome to Country* should always be conducted by an elder traditionally linked to the land on which the meeting or event takes place.

A good starting point for finding a Traditional Custodian for the *Welcome* is to contact your Local Aboriginal Land Council, your local Aboriginal community corporation or an Aboriginal Access Worker. This will ensure that the most appropriate Aboriginal representative is invited to conduct the ceremony. It is very important that the Aboriginal representative has been involved in organising the *Welcome* and is comfortable with the arrangements.

**Acknowledgement of Country**

The purpose of an *Acknowledgement* is to pay respects to the Traditional Owners of the land and to give gratitude for being on the land. An *Acknowledgment of Country* may take place when Traditional Owners are not available to conduct a *Welcome to Country* ceremony or if the meeting is small-scale.

Below is an example of how to conduct an *Acknowledgment of Country*. It is important to be genuine and sincere when acknowledging country. Simply reading the script may be heard as insincere or tokenistic.

*I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are gathered upon. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders, past and present and extend that respect to other Aboriginal Australians who are here today.*
Smoking ceremonies

Smoking ceremonies are conducted by Aboriginal people with specialised cultural knowledge. The ceremony aims to cleanse the space in which the ceremony takes place. It should only be conducted where, and by whom, the local community feel is appropriate.

Fee for service

At major or relevant meetings (e.g. state conferences, Aboriginal cultural awareness training etc) you should invite the Traditional Custodians of the land to conduct a Welcome to Country. They should be a senior representative of the local Aboriginal community who is accepted by the community to be in a position to perform a Welcome. In providing cultural services such as a Welcome, artistic performances and ceremonies, Aboriginal people are using their intellectual property and performing cultural protocols. Providers of these services should be appropriately remunerated.
Closing the gap: The need to act

There are clear disparities which currently exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians across many social indicators. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience unacceptable standards of living; with severe disparities within health, education, employment and gross over-representation within the criminal justice system. In an attempt to address this disadvantage Australian Governments (COAG) have made formal commitments to work to ‘Close the Gap’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous living standards.

These facts illustrate disparities in the ‘Close the Gap’ target areas (not inclusive of the ‘justice’ section).

Health

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates for 2009 show life expectancy for Indigenous Australians to be lower than the non-Indigenous population by approximately 11.5 years for males and 9.7 years for females.

- In the period 2002-06 Indigenous children under five died at around three times the rate of non-Indigenous children.

Education

- In 2008, just over two in ten (21%) Indigenous people aged 15-64 years had completed Year 12, in comparison to more than five in ten (54%) non-Indigenous people.
Employment

- The unemployment rate for Indigenous people was more than three times the unemployment rate of the civilian population (16.6% and 5.0% respectively).4

Justice

- Indigenous people constitute just 2.5 per cent of the total Australian population but make up 25 per cent of the Australian prison population.5

- 83 per cent of the prison population in the Northern Territory is Indigenous.

- An Aboriginal person is 14 times more likely to be locked up than non-Aboriginal Australians.

- Indigenous juveniles are 28 more likely than non-Indigenous juveniles to be in detention.6

Aboriginal experiences of the legal and welfare systems

Since colonisation, enforced laws and policies have had long lasting and negative effects on Aboriginal people and their communities. Aboriginal experiences of the legal system have included being forced off traditional lands and onto missions and reserves, the forcible removal of children (known as the Stolen Generations) and having their rights to freedom of movement and interaction severely restrained and managed. Law and policy has rarely worked for Aboriginal people and often worked against

them. Aboriginal people continue to be over-policed and are significantly over-represented in the criminal justice system.

It is important to recognise that it is not just the legal system that has treated Aboriginal people poorly, but also the welfare system. Past and current welfare policies have often been and are often experienced in a negative way by Aboriginal communities.

These experiences have meant Aboriginal people in Australia have suffered severe social and economic disadvantage at structural and individual levels. For many Aboriginal people, this has meant low self-esteem, depression and mental health difficulties. Aboriginal people often experience physical, emotional and sexual abuse at a higher rate than the broader Australian community.

As a result, many Aboriginal people have a strong mistrust of the legal and welfare systems. Overcoming this is certainly not impossible but it doesn’t happen overnight. Developing a good and trusting relationship with Aboriginal people takes time. Being aware of both past and ongoing injustices is important as the two are closely linked and are often at the forefront of Aboriginal peoples minds.
Getting to know KLC’s local Aboriginal communities

The Eora and Gadigal Nations and surrounding Nations

Sydney is located on the traditional lands of the Eora, Dharawal, Darug and the Bidjigal peoples. The Sydney metropolitan area has a number of large Aboriginal communities, including the La Perouse, Redfern, Mt Druitt and Campbelltown Aboriginal communities. There are acute social and cultural differences between and within each of these communities. Some Aboriginal residents may be descended from the local traditional Sydney Nations whilst others may have relocated to Sydney from around New South Wales and wider Australia. The traditional Aboriginal custodians of KLC’s catchment area are the people of the Eora Nation.

History of La Perouse

In order to provide a culturally appropriate service, local histories play a very important role in understanding the importance of why these services are necessary for effective service provision.

Before the arrival of Europeans to the region, the area known as La Perouse was traditionally known to local Aboriginal people as Guriwal, a name that is often still used today. The name La Perouse was derived from the French explorer Jean-Francois La Perouse who spent six weeks at Botany Bay in 1788, arriving just a few days after the British. After being an Aboriginal fishing camp for many years, due to colonial expansion La Perouse was established as an Aboriginal reserve in the early 1880s under the Aborigines Protection Board. In 1895 La Perouse was granted official status as an Aboriginal reserve. The reserve bore the characteristics that
most Aboriginal reserves did around that time, with its residents' freedoms being restricted in many aspects.

La Perouse was the first Indigenous community to win freehold title to part of its own lands under State land rights legislation.

**Yarra Bay, La Perouse**

Yarra Bay is a main hub for the La Perouse Aboriginal community and a central portal of service provision to the local Aboriginal community. The house was built in 1903 as an addition to the Cable Station at La Perouse. It was to house the Superintendent and workers of the telegraph cable station after a second cable was laid in 1890. After 1917 when the Cable Station became obsolete the house was home to various government departments including the Director of Public Instruction (later the Education Department) and the Department of Youth and Community Services. Yarra Bay House also became a Boy’s Home after World War I.

In 1931 the foreshore section of the original reserve was revoked by the State Government for the creation of parkland and a public recreation area. Aboriginal people, particularly relatives of those living on the reserve continued to camp there regardless, in an area they called Frog Hollow. Decades of struggle followed against the attempts of the Randwick City Council to move residents off this land.

La Perouse was subdivided for housing development in the 1920s but it was not until the post-war boom in the 1950s that Aboriginal families found that they were being built out by non-Aboriginal residential development. Racial tensions ensued, with the white residents successfully petitioning the Randwick council to change
the name of the street on the southern border of the reserve from ‘Aborigines Avenue’ to ‘Endeavour Avenue’.

In 1984 the Aboriginal community of La Perouse had a historic victory when title to land under the reserve as well as Yarra Bay House was transferred to the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act.\(^7\)

**Local Aboriginal experiences and effects of The Aborigines Protection Board and the Stolen Generations**

The Aborigines Protection Board was appointed by the New South Wales Government in 1883 but it was not until 1909 that its powers were enacted in legislation.

One of the Board’s first actions was to take over administration of reserves where Aboriginal people were living. The Board also established new reserves. Under the new legislation the reserves were government controlled, segregated areas where Aboriginal people were to be ‘protected’ from the white community. At this time Aboriginal people were not entitled to receive unemployment benefits, just rations. They were effectively forced onto the reserves as these were the only places where rations were distributed. During the 1930s Great Depression rations were drastically cut.

Life under the Protection Act was tough. The Act dictated that a person could not leave or enter an Aboriginal reserve without the permission of the manager, although plenty defied these rules. The La Perouse reserve was run by a manager from the 1940s onwards. He had the right to evict anyone from the mission, and to

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\(^7\) *Aboriginal Sydney- A guide to important places of the past and present*, Melinda Hinkson, 2001
enter any house on the reserve as he chose.

‘My husband’s mother, she was married to a white man and they wouldn’t let him live on the mission with her. He lived at Botany and she lived on the mission and they had kids and he’d come out to see her and he’d have to stand outside that fence. He wasn’t even allowed to come in that house.’


The removal of Aboriginal children from their families was a central plank in the Board’s long-term vision to solve the ‘Aboriginal problem’. Authorities believed that the Aboriginal population was destined to die out, and eventually there would be no people left who claimed to be of Aboriginal descent. Across Australia, ‘half-caste’ children were removed from their families to help facilitate this process.

By 1918 the NSW Board was granted the power to remove all children under the age of 18 from its reserves without the consent of their parents if the Board felt that removal was in the best interests of the child.

It has been estimated that between 1909 and 1938 some 2000 children in NSW were removed from their families under the direction of the Aborigines Protection Board. Most of these were girls between 10 and 14 years old. Many of them never returned to their families again. The victims of government policies of child removal throughout Australia have come to be known as members of the Stolen Generations.8

8. Aboriginal Sydney- A guide to important places of the past and present’, Melinda Hinkson, 2001
Kingsford Legal Centre and service provision to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

Kingsford Legal Centre (or KLC) is a community legal centre on the ground floor of the Law Building at the University of NSW (UNSW) campus at Kensington. KLC is committed to helping people in our community who are facing economic, social or cultural disadvantage.

KLC offers free legal advice and casework to people who live, work or study in the Randwick and Botany Local Government areas. Some of the areas of law that KLC gives advice in are employment, fines and penalties, credit and debt, motor vehicle accidents, enduring guardianship and power of attorney and victims compensation. In the area of discrimination law KLC provides a state-wide service.

KLC has a long history of working with the area’s local Aboriginal communities. It has also provided case advocacy in the area of the Stolen Generations and has made a number of submissions into parliamentary and government inquiries aimed at attaining social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In 2009 KLC gained funding for a part time Aboriginal Access Worker. Since the creation of this position, the percentage of Aboriginal clients accessing the service has doubled.

In addition to this, KLC has tailored a flexible service delivery model specifically for working with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander clients which provides priority service to them. If a client calls or attends the centre and identifies as Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander they are given the option of speaking to the KLC’s Aboriginal Access Worker (if they are in the office at the time), or are put through to a solicitor immediately. If a solicitor is not available at the time, we take contact details and let them know that one of our solicitors will be in touch with them as soon as possible.

KLC also runs community legal education seminars which are tailored to community issues, needs and requests.

KLC recognises the importance of Aboriginal specific legal services such as the Aboriginal Legal Service and Wirringa Baiya and where appropriate KLC will refer clients to these organisations. Our service is restricted to those areas of law not covered by these services.

**Aboriginal access to KLC in 2012:**
- 4.6% of KLC Advice clients identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander.
- 83 advices were given to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients.
- 31 cases were opened for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients.
- Discrimination was the largest area of law for advice with 23 advices, followed by employment with 14 and tenancy with 13.
- 69% of clients live in the KLC catchment.
- 71% of clients reported low or no income.
- 55% female.
- 46% boarded, lived in DOH or were homeless.
- 21% had a disability.
- 27% had dependent children.
UNSW Statement of Reconciliation

The University of New South Wales, at its Kensington campus, stands within sight of three locations of significance for Indigenous Australians: Captain Cooks landing place at Kurnell, the site of the first English settlement at Port Jackson, and the modern location of the La Perouse local Aboriginal community.

The University acknowledges the Aboriginal peoples as the traditional owners of the land where its campuses are located. The University will acknowledge the traditional owners at its principal gateways, and will make similar acknowledgement at appropriate public events.

The University recognises and regrets the history of the dispossession of the Aboriginal people, the other negative effect on Aboriginal people and their cultures from the impact of colonization and legacy of profound social and economic disadvantage which continues to affect many Indigenous Australians today.
The University commits itself to continue and to strengthen its policy of facilitating the admission of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders to its academic programs and to provide academic, social and cultural support to assist such students to complete their studies successfully.

The University is proud of the achievement of its distinguished Indigenous students, graduates and staff and will continue to strengthen efforts to attract Indigenous Australians to its community.

The University will encourage through its academic and public processes the incorporation of material relating to Indigenous Australians, and material that reflects Indigenous perspectives as appropriate in its academic programs.

The University acknowledges the importance of Australia achieving a genuine reconciliation between Indigenous and other Australians. The University recognises the need for close consultation with Indigenous people and organisations within and beyond the University to help achieve this. The University commits itself in support of reconciliation.
Practical tips and information for service provision

The main features for service to Aboriginal clients are:

1. People first!
2. Make an effort every day to try to understand and adjust your workplace to improve your service delivery.

General points:

• Use plain English as much as possible.
• Use appropriate language.
• No two people are the same including Aboriginal people.
• Remember that clients should be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect for their rights and dignity.
• Some terms such as 'Abo', 'ATSI', 'half caste', 'quarter caste' etc are considered derogatory.

Cultural safety

Cultural Safety means to provide an environment that is safe for people - where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening. It is very important to provide cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.
According to Ramsden, cultural sensitivity is achieved in three stages:

1. Cultural awareness: the understanding of the social, economic and political context in which people exist.

2. Cultural sensitivity: legitimising this difference: a process of self-exploration that enables us to see how our own life experience impact upon others.

3. Cultural safety: to provide an environment that is safe for people

Connecting and working with community

- Find out who the traditional custodians of the local area are. You can contact local Aboriginal community based organisations (such as the local Aboriginal Land Council) to obtain the correct information.

- In the early stages of developing a relationship of trust with the Aboriginal community, it is important to follow up on actions you’ve committed to.

- Always keep your community contacts updated with what you’ve been doing. This approach will go a long way towards building a mutually respectful relationship with the community.

Respect local protocols

- Protocols are appropriate ways of behaving, communicating and showing respect for community’s diversity, history and culture. It is essential for non-Aboriginal people to be aware of local protocols when establishing closer and more effective relationships with Aboriginal communities. If you are presenting to the community, remember to do an Acknowledgement of Country to demonstrate your respect for Aboriginal culture and the community.

- Don’t be afraid to ask about local protocols. It is better to ask these questions first rather than ‘learn as you go’ and make mistakes. Understanding local protocols and not being afraid of asking questions will help workers get better access into communities.

- A common informal protocol often practiced upon first meetings
is community members enquiring about where you are from and who your family is. Although that information may seem too personal to divulge to some, this is an important way in which connection is established.

- Ensure your organisational policies reflect a flexible approach to service delivery and engagement of Aboriginal clients. Policies that prioritise Aboriginal clients help to create trustful impressions and relationships and show that your organisation is genuine about helping them and the broader Aboriginal community.

**Take your time**

- Don't imagine or expect that you will get all of the information you want straight away. It can and usually does take time for some Aboriginal people to build a trusting relationship with you and/or your organisation.

- When invited, sit down have a “cuppa” (cup of tea/coffee) and a “yarn” (chat, getting to know each other) with community members and organisations. Try to create a relaxed atmosphere. Don’t rush through the meeting. You will often have to spend more time than you initially planned.

- Attend local Aboriginal social and sporting functions whenever possible and have a stall at community events e.g. Sydney Yabun Festival, NAIDOC Week, Footy knockouts, Family Fun Days.

**Listen to the Community**

- Don’t make assumptions about the issues or concerns you may hear from members of the community. Be sensitive and don’t take sides where conflicts have - or may have occurred.
• Never assume you know what is best for the local community. Where possible, establish an Aboriginal Advisory Group or a relationship with a local leading Aboriginal community member/s for advice and guidance with the work you do within the Aboriginal community.

**Establish genuine partnerships**

• The key to achieving successful partnerships and results is to allow for community members involvement in all planning, decision-making and implementation processes.

• When working with the community give them flexibility to decide on what they want, when and how they want it, and to determine who should be involved.

**Utilise the local Aboriginal interagency network**

• Make networks with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services in your area; your best referrals will come from the community grapevine.

• Attend local Aboriginal interagency meetings. These meetings will provide valuable insight into what the primary issues.

**Family dynamics**

• If an Aboriginal client states that a particular person is family, it should not be challenged and shouldn’t need to be justified. Family can, and often does, includes a large range of people and is not limited to blood relatives.

• More often than not, all senior members of the community are often called ‘aunty’ or ‘uncle’ by Aboriginal people out of general respect.
Shame
Shame can inhibit Aboriginal people from wanting to seek assistance, even to their own detriment, so it is important to think about the best ways to engage with the client effectively.

Shame:

• is about being singled out and given attention whether negative or positive in nature

• can bring about embarrassment.

• is an emotive feeling. It is a feeling of fear that gives a sense of being powerless and ineffectual.

• is often used as a form of social control in communities.

Funerals in the community
When a death in the Aboriginal community occurs, general business may immediately cease. Attending funeral services and supporting the family members of the deceased person take priority over all business that is being done in the community at the time of the death. The community processes of dealing with such events can sometimes be known as 'Sorry Business'.

Working with Aboriginal clients at Kingsford Legal Centre
Connecting and working with clients

Work environment

Reception

Ensure the person at reception has undergone cultural awareness training. First impressions really count when Aboriginal people access a service. Most important is the way the client is received and greeted when they first make contact with your organisation. As the person at reception is often the first person the client meets or talks to it is important that that person has at least a basic knowledge of how to conduct themselves in a culturally appropriate manner.

Aboriginal images

Display Aboriginal images in the office that reflect the work your service does.

Support people

Aboriginal people may want to bring someone along for support during a legal interview or meeting with a service; make sure to ask if it’s OK to talk in front of this person.

Before an interview ensure the client is given the option of bringing someone along.

Privacy and confidentiality

Make sure you have told clients of the privacy and confidentiality policies of your service.
Aboriginal language barriers

Many Aboriginal people have their own version of the English language and/or frequently use Aboriginal slang. Use standard English - speak in a manner that can be easily understood, keep technical terms or workplace jargon to a minimum or explain them fully.
Client interviews

Before an interview/ setting up

• Think about setting aside more time than you would normally reserve for appointments.

• Prepare for the interview by considering Aboriginal perspectives, cultures and history, which will sometimes include a general distrust of the legal or welfare systems. Conduct the interview with care and consideration of any cultural issues and the personal history of the client.

• Be aware that it may be necessary to “go the extra mile” for Aboriginal clients. This means sometimes undertaking tasks which will ultimately and holistically aid your client.

• Create an environment that is comfortable for both you and the client. This will facilitate the interview process, helping to bridge any cross-cultural barriers.

• Make sure that you and the client are sitting at the same height position.

• Make sure that the interview is not disturbed by telephone calls or requests from other staff.

• Maintain a high level of privacy and confidentiality. You should be conscious of the inter-connectedness of the community. The fear of gossip in extended families and related feeling of shame may prevent Aboriginal clients from using services or opening up to you.
The first steps

- Always ask the client “Do you identify as an Aboriginal person?” You cannot tell whether someone is Aboriginal simply by a person’s appearance so you should not make any assumptions.

- Often there are underlying issues which have brought the client to your service. Be aware that you may need to go beyond the ground that your service would normally cover in order to become acquainted with the client’s background.

- To fully understand the problem, you should give the client time and space to talk about the issues that are relevant to them.

- Be a good listener and show empathy with the client, this will demonstrate to the client that you are there for them and that you are genuine in offering your assistance.

During the interview

- Let the interview pass through several phases- begin with general conversation, then let the client tell their story in their own words, and then address the issues your service can help with.

- Use open-ended questions: e.g. “What do you remember happening next?”

- Think about using indirect or sideways questioning

- Avoid asking complex questions and using formal jargon.

Concluding the interview

- If a service cannot be provided to an Aboriginal client note that denial of a service on legitimate grounds may be seen as a denial of a service based on race. Make an extra effort to
ensure that the client clearly understands why the service is not available and suggest other places to try.

- If appropriate and if the client requests it, offer to help the client by referring them to other services such as casework support, housing and accommodation services, alcohol and other drug treatment.
Local Aboriginal interagency service provision

Yarra Bay, La Perouse

Yarra Bay is something of a main hub and central portal of service provision for the La Perouse Aboriginal community and is a central portal of service provision to them.
Various organisations and services provided via Yarra Bay House:

La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)

Service description: Submits land claims, promotes enterprise for the local Aboriginal community and gives information to local communities about Aboriginal issues. LALC manage several of the houses and act in accordance with the rules and regulations of the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NSW) 1983.

Guriwal Aboriginal Corporation

Service description: Provides a Community Transport Program to people who cannot access the public transport system. It also provides social access to community groups and functions in-home respite care to people who would like a short break from their caring role, and vehicle hire. Guriwal offers cultural education through guided walks along the Bush Tucker Trail. Visitors have the opportunity to appreciate natural bushland and Aboriginal cultural landscape right in the heart of Sydney. Aboriginal guides tell the history and stories of the area, and discuss the traditional use of plants for food and medicine.

La Perouse Youth Haven

Service description: Aka the “La Pa Bummers” was created by a group of local volunteers in La Perouse. The Youth Haven conducts a range of activities for young people and is focused on improving the education and health standards of local Aboriginal children and young people. It includes outreach, the study centre, drop-in, health and well-being camps, school holiday programs and a school certificate course.
The La Pa Deadlys

Service description: A leadership group for young Aboriginal people aged 18 and over from the La Perouse Aboriginal community.

The La Perouse Aboriginal Men’s Group

Service description: The La Perouse Aboriginal Men’s Group meets on the weekends to discuss programs and ideas that will be beneficial to Aboriginal children and youth and build better relationships with families and communities in the area.

Eastern Zone Gujaga Aboriginal Corporation

Service description: Trading as Gujaga Multifunctional Aboriginal Children’s Service (MACS) was incorporated in 1986. 'Gujaga' provides:

- Long day care for babies and infants from nine months to five years old;
- Access to specialist medical, dental and health services including speech therapy;
- Quality educational programs based on the Early Years Learning Framework
- Incorporation of Aboriginal language (Dharawal) into the children’s daily routines.

In the Dharawal language “gujaga” means child. Gujaga is the only Aboriginal centre of its kind in the Sydney eastern suburbs.
La Perouse Aboriginal Community Health Centre

Service description: A community health centre providing holistic care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The centre is located on the grounds of Yarra Bay House. The centre provides culturally appropriate referral and drop-in medical and health services for Aboriginal and Islander people ranging in age from newborns to the elderly.

Kingsford Legal Centre Outreach

Service description: On a fortnightly basis, from 10.00am to 12.00pm (except during the school holiday period and over the Christmas and New Year period) KLC provides an outreach service to the local Aboriginal community in La Perouse. The outreach service is conducted at the La Perouse Community Health Centre (see above).
Randwick City Council

Service description: Randwick City Council (RCC) Community Programs and Partnerships Unit has two Community Projects Officers who work (four days per week) from Yarra Bay House. RCC’s Aboriginal Community Project Officer: Aboriginal Services works from Yarra Bay House on a regular basis (mainly Thursdays and Fridays) to provide the link between the Aboriginal community and RCC, improving service provision and co-ordination and ensuring that the Aboriginal community has input into Council’s social planning and community development activities. RCC’s Community Project Officer: La Perouse and Surrounding Suburbs provides a specialised service to children/youth/ family and referrals services (Monday and Tuesdays) to the whole community of RCC’s southern precinct.
Other service providers

**NSW Aboriginal Land Council State Office**

Service Description: *Aims to protect the interests and further the aspirations of its members and the broader Aboriginal community.*

33 Argyle Street, Parramatta NSW 2150  
Ph: 02 9689 4444  
Web: www.alc.org.au

**Killara Women’s Refuge and Outreach Program**

Service Description: *Short term crisis accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence. The outreach program provides women and children with support and information on a range of issues such as domestic violence, housing options, the legal system, financial assistance, child-care and relationship issues.*

Ph: 02 9398 9057  
Email: killararefuge1@bigpond.com

**Mac Silva Centre Aboriginal Corporation**

Service Description: *Hostel for Aboriginal men who are homeless or have alcohol problems.*

49B Wellington St, Waterloo NSW 2017  
Ph: 02 9310 1912

**Ngura Aboriginal Corporation**

Service Description: *Provides shelter for women and children.*  
Ph: 02 9799 8466

**NSW Aboriginal Housing Office**
Service Description: The AHO plans, administers and expands the policies, programs and asset base for Aboriginal housing in NSW.

33 Argyle St, Parramatta NSW 2124
Ph: 02 8836 9444
Email: ahoenquiries@aho.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.aho.nsw.gov.au

Streetbeat
Service Description: Transport and outreach service to take young people home or to another safe place.

South Sydney PCYC, 638 Elizabeth St, Redfern NSW 2016
Ph: 02 9310 4996
Email: alex@weave.org.au

Tony Mundine Hostel
Service Description: Hostel accommodation for Aborigines, both men and women.

203 Catherine St, Leichhardt NSW 2040
Ph: 02 9550 0178
Email: t.mundine@ahl.gov.au

Nura Gili Resource Centre
Service Description: Provides support and information for potential and existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at UNSW.

Ph: 02 9385 3805
Email: nuragili@unsw.edu.au
Web: www.nuragili.unsw.edu.au
Gujaga Multifunction Aboriginal Children’s Services
Service Description: Long day care centre for Aboriginal children.
1 Elaroo Ave, Phillip Bay NSW 2036
Ph: 02 9661 6097
Email: gujagamacs@bigpond.com

NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)
Service Description: The NSW AECG is the recognised peak body representing Aboriginal communities on issues relating to Aboriginal education and training in NSW. The AECG also has local branches.
37 Cavendish St Stanmore NSW 2048
Ph: 02 9550 5666
Email: info@aecg.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.aecg.nsw.edu.au

Women’s Legal Services NSW/ Indigenous Women’s Legal Contact Line
Service description: The Women’s Legal Contact Line provides free confidential legal information and referrals for women in NSW with a focus on family law, domestic violence, sexual assault and discrimination. Advice may be given by appointment.
Ph: 02 8745 6977/ 1800 639 784
Email: Womens_NSW@clc.net.au
Aboriginal Children’s Service

Service description: *Aboriginal Children’s Service in Redfern provides foster care placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in NSW in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle. It also provides resources and counselling to children and families going through fostering, adoption or shared family care.*

Ph: 02 9699 9835

Aboriginal Hospital Liaison

Service Description: *Provides liaison service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families admitted to Prince of Wales/Prince Henry Hospitals.*

Level 3, Parkes Building, Prince of Wales Hospital, High St, Randwick NSW 2031
Ph: 02 9383 2372

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Ltd

Service Description: *The ALS (NSW/ACT) is the recognised peak body for Aboriginal communities on justice issues in NSW and the ACT. The ALS (NSW/ACT) strives to address injustice through the provision of legal services, programs and advocacy for Aboriginal people and their families.*

Ground Floor, 619 Elizabeth St, Redfern NSW 2016
Ph: 02 8303 6699
Web: www.alsnswact.org.au
Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women’s Legal Centre
Service Description: Wirringa Baiya works specifically with Aboriginal women and youth. It specialises in domestic violence, sexual assault and victim’s compensation.

Corner Marrickville Road and Livingstone Road Marrickville NSW 2204
Ph: 02 9569 3847
Web: www.wirringabaiya.org.au

NSW Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (also known as AbSec)
Service Description: AbSec is the peak Aboriginal body providing child protection and out-of-home care policy advice to the government and non-government sectors.

21 Carrington Rd, Marrickville NSW 2204
Ph: 02 9559 5299
Email: admin@absec.org.au
Web: www.absec.org.au

Sydney Women’s Domestic Violence Advocacy Scheme - Redfern Legal Centre
Service Description: SWDVCAS advocates for and can assist women with information about ADVO’s and provides court support, assistance and advocacy during the application of an ADVO process.

Ph: 02 9698 7277
Email: info@rlc.org.au
Link-Up NSW

Service Description: *Link-Up is the recognised peak body for Aboriginal people and communities who have been removed or separated from their families as a result of government policies (Stolen Generations).*

Ph: 02 4759 1911

Email: linkup@nsw.link-up.org.au

Web: www.linkupnsw.org.au