



Koori Cultural Respect Framework

2017

VICTORIA
State
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Justice
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The information outlined in this Koori Cultural Respect Framework will assist with making decisions to strengthen the content and structure for the objectives and strategies with the department.

We would like to acknowledge and thank all participants for their time, their frankness and their ideas which have contributed to the development of a strong, robust Koori Cultural Respect Framework for the Department of Justice and Regulation.

The Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land. The department also acknowledges and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

The Aboriginal Justice Forum, and the department, have agreed with the Koori Caucus that for consistency, the term Koori (Koories for plural) is the preferred term for use in the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement and all related reports, policies, programs and initiatives. In this document, Victorian Traditional Owner groups (and their representative organisations) are included in the term "Koori community".

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'Ngali Yanhagirri (We will go together)' copyright Michael Bogie.

Introduction

This defining framework is a significant commitment by the department to consciously build upon our cultural awareness and inclusiveness of Victoria's diverse Koori communities and their cultures.

When we forged our relationship with the Koori community under the original Aboriginal Justice Agreement in 2000, we took our first steps towards building a new partnership between community and government for the benefit of Koori people in contact with the justice system.

This framework takes that commitment one step further by creating detailed actions to build cultural respect across the organisation, and to make our workplace one in which Koori people feel accepted and welcomed, both as staff and as clients.

This framework operates jointly with the department's other Koori strategies; the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement; the Koori Inclusion Action Plan and the Koori Employment and Career Strategy. We will strengthen our collaboration with the Koori community.

I am proud to present this unique framework, which not only sets out actions to increase the inclusiveness and understanding of the Koori community, but also embraces Koori culture in the way we do everyday business.

Carolyn Gale
Deputy Secretary
Service Strategy Reform

Purpose

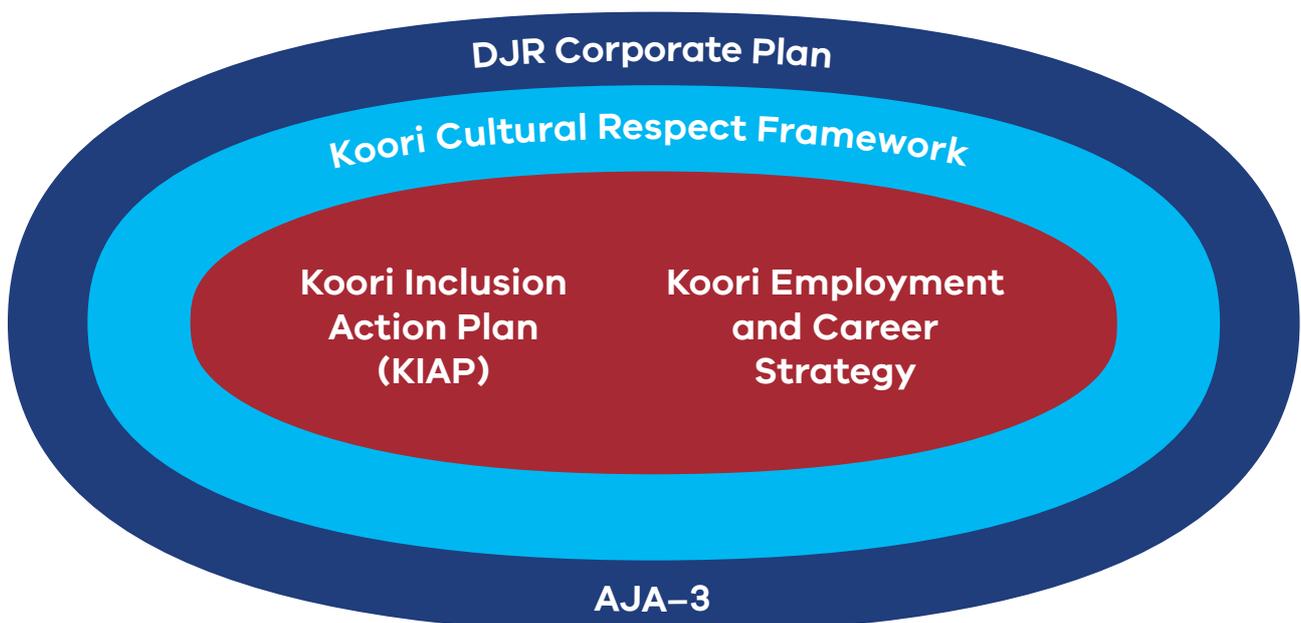
Why have a Koori Cultural Respect Framework?

This framework has been established in response to the Koori community's calls to build upon our current approaches to cultural recognition and respect within the Department of Justice and Regulation.

Koori community and government stakeholders consulted during the development of this framework strongly supported the need for implementing an effective Koori Cultural Respect Framework, which works alongside both the revised Koori Inclusion Action Plan (KIAP) 'Yarrwul Loitjba Yapaneyepuk - Walk the Talk Together and the Koori Employment and Career Strategy.

This framework will guide us to achieve fundamental changes to our practices, planning and policies, so that our services are responsive to the cultural needs of Koori people; our staff have the knowledge and skills to deliver services in culturally capable ways; and ensure that our work environments are at all times culturally respectful and supportive for our Koori community.

From the outset, the department recognises the importance of this framework to align our efforts towards cultural inclusion under the department's overarching Aboriginal Justice Agreement.



Vision

We empower our workforce to value and respect the cultural rights and practices of Koori people through understanding, collaboration and celebration.

Outcomes and benefits

The framework will create and maintain a valuable reference point for all employees in our approach to improving the cultural capabilities of frontline service delivery; governance; policy development; planning and quality improvement by:

- Developing the foundations to improve the cultural capability of the department.
- Guiding the provision of culturally responsive justice services.
- Assisting in identifying cultural capability gaps across the department.
- Providing consistency of approach across the department, that is aligned to the Koori Inclusion Action Plan (KIAP) and the Koori Employment and Career Strategy.

Principles

1. Respect and recognition

We will strive to strengthen our knowledge, skills, behaviours and systems to incorporate cultural respect and recognition into the department's core business.

2. Communication

A collaborative approach with our stakeholders will ensure we respect, acknowledge, actively listen and respond to the needs of Koori people and communities in a culturally appropriate manner.

3. Authenticity

We will commit to continue cultivating our relationships with authenticity and honesty. This includes listening closely and responding appropriately, discovering common ground and embracing our differences in a truthful manner.

4. Relationships and partnerships

Working together means valuing the knowledge, experience and understanding we all bring to our work, and respectfully and openly engaging with each other.

Four focus areas

The following four focus areas underpin culturally accessible, responsive and safe justice service delivery.

Focus Area 1 – Cultural capabilities

Focus Area 2 – Culturally inclusive behaviours

Focus Area 3 – Leadership

Focus Area 4 – Workforce development

We acknowledge the key role that the department plays in providing leadership and embracing cultural recognition and respect, both internally in relation to our workforce, and externally in relation to our programs and in the way we interact with diverse Koori communities.

These four focus areas will establish the department's priority areas and formally embed cultural respect practices across the department.

Actions in the context of these focus areas are not linear and should be undertaken concurrently and with reference to each other, as well as other departmental initiatives such as the Aboriginal Justice Agreement, the Koori Inclusion Action Plan and the Koori Employment and Career Strategy.

Koori Cultural Respect Framework

Department of Justice and Regulation

VISION

We empower our workforce to value and respect the cultural rights and practices of Koori people through understanding, collaboration and celebration.

PURPOSE

To ensure strengthened practice of the department's cultural capabilities both as an employer of choice and as a provider of justice services to the Koori community

PRINCIPLES

Respect and recognition

Communication

Authenticity

Relationships and partnerships

FOCUS AREAS

Cultural capabilities

Culturally inclusive behaviours

Leadership

Workforce development

Focus area 1:

Cultural capabilities

- Provide the tools and resources to build non-Koori staff awareness of Koori culture, beliefs and perspectives.
- Advocate for the relevance and importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, heritage, values and protocols.
- Collaborate with and actively share feedback from Koori communities in ways which are meaningful to service delivery and improvement.

Cultural capability is the integration of knowledge about Koori individuals, groups and communities into specific standards, policies, practices and attitudes to produce better outcomes for Koori people.

This includes a process of continuous learning; demonstrating authentic respect for culture in all interactions; being aware of personal values and biases and their impact on others, and having integrity and cultural sensitivity in decision-making.

SUCCESS MEASURES:

- A renewed cultural awareness training program that reflects current Koori issues and policies.
- Regional Koori organisations and individuals contribute to the local content in the Koori cultural awareness training (KCAT).
- Increased use of ceremonial and NAIDOC leave entitlements by Koori staff.
- Koori clients and communities are satisfied with departmental policies, programs and service delivery.
- Informed data that identifies Koori staff work life experiences through the annual Koori Cultural Inclusion Survey.



Focus area 2:

Culturally inclusive behaviours

- Collaboration in the design of culturally safe and inclusive environments for both Koori clients and staff.
- The department provides improved culturally appropriate support for Koori staff in the workplace.
- The department acknowledges, celebrates and promotes significant Koori calendar dates and events throughout the year.
- Ensuring a workplace culture which does not tolerate racism, or other discriminatory behaviour.

Cultural safety is when Koori people feel safe, supported and confident to express and practice their connection to community, culture, identity, spirituality, land and waters.

SUCCESS MEASURES:

- Significant Koori dates and events are promoted across the department to encourage a shared pride in Koori culture and inclusion.
- Local Koori artwork and flags are on display in department foyers and other appropriate regional locations.
- A culturally inclusive Employee Assistance Program (EAP) accessible to Koori employees.
- Staff are empowered to take action to prevent and reduce racism and to seek redress when it occurs.
- Greater Koori membership and participation on justice-related boards, committees and tribunals to better inform decisions impacting the Koori community.

Focus area 3:

Leadership

- Demonstrate culturally inclusive workplace behaviours by listening to, engaging and understanding our Koori employees and responding to their individual needs.
- Conduct culturally inclusive engagement of Koori communities to deliver the department's priorities, while supporting Aboriginal self-determination.
- The department enables its leaders to embrace and become champions for Koori cultural respect and inclusion as part of their core business, promoting the development of cultural capability in the workforce.

A commitment to strong and effective cultural leadership ensures a concerted, systematic effort by the department to understand and appreciate Koori culture, and to alter policies and practices to meet the needs of Koori communities.

This approach will address and support the needs of Koori people and their culture and value their unique contribution.

SUCCESS MEASURES:

- Leadership is committed to increasing participation in KCAT.
- A strengthened People and Culture Koori Reference Group (KRG) that actively engages in meaningful consultation with the Koori community to ensure employment programs are culturally appropriate and relevant.
- High level commitment to culturally inclusive practices are embedded in all division business plans.
- The performance development planning process across the department is culturally inclusive.
- Raised internal and external awareness of the department's Koori policies.
- Koori staff and their profiles are celebrated and acknowledged across the department.



Focus area 4:

Workforce development

- Developing an organisational culture that is committed to building a Koori workforce which provides opportunities for individuals to reach their full potential.
- The department is a recognised leader in Koori staff recruitment, attraction, retention and employment, creating a measurable, positive impact for Koori staff, managers and colleagues.
- Community and cultural knowledge of Koori staff is utilised throughout Koori recruitment and cultural awareness development activities.

The contribution Koori people can make, and has made, to the department is significant. It is important that we continue to attract Koori people and support the workforce to establish and grow their careers.

We strive to attract, recruit and develop Koori people and work with staff at all levels to build mutual awareness and appreciation of the expertise and cultural contribution Koori employees bring to the department.

SUCCESS MEASURES:

- Strengthened collaboration with tertiary and vocational education and training providers to promote employment pathways into the department.
- A robust career development program that includes structured mentoring, capability development and tailored career development plans for Koori staff.
- A renewed state-wide Koori recruitment and attraction campaign with a determined focus on how we increase employment opportunities and support Koori candidates.
- Recruitment panels for designated or identified roles include Koori panel members.
- Flexible best practice solutions to regional employment opportunities.

About the artist



Michael Bogie

Michael is a proud Wiradjuri man and is an emerging Aboriginal artist. Michael grew up in the rural town of Corowa and currently resides in Wodonga with his wife and four children.

By exploring his own Aboriginal heritage, Michael has developed a community around him through stories, music, dance and art. Through his learnings he has been able to pass on his knowledge and skills to his children. Michael enjoys painting as he finds it very therapeutic.

Michael joined the department in 2012 and was an original participant in the department's Koori Mentoring Program. Michael currently works as a Prison Officer at the Beechworth Correctional Centre.

Ngali Yanhagirri (We will go together)

This painting is about people coming together from all different backgrounds to work towards a shared goal. This is represented by the different human/ animal symbols travelling along their own path.

"I was able to draw inspiration from community events that my family and I have attended in my region. Even though we as individuals are different, we should continue to work together, no matter who you are or where you come from. I believe and hope that if we as a community focus on a goal, we could achieve."



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