

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures hold a unique and important place in the Canberra community and Australian society. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people face systemic disadvantage, discrimination and continue to be affected by actions of the past, including colonisation and the Stolen Generations. There are clear disparities across all indicators of health and quality of life between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a median age of 20 years, which means that 50% of the population is aged below 20 years<sup>1</sup>. People who work with young people are well placed to address disadvantage and discrimination by working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their communities. This requires workers to have an understanding of an individual's personal and cultural history and a willingness to work flexibly and holistically.

In this section you will find:

- Some tips on engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People;
- Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services and programs; and
- Resources including more services, information and dates for your diary.

**Note:** All services in *The Big Red Book* are available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

The following sections also contain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources: Accommodation and Accommodation Support, Alcohol and Other Drug, Alternate Education, Art and Recreation, Disability, Employment and Training, Health and Sexual Health, Legal, Peak Body, Young Carers, Young Parents, Young People in Care, Youth Centres, Youth Development, Youth Support and Youth Support in Secondary Schools.

## Ways of Working

### Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People

This *Ways of Working* has been developed in collaboration with Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation and incorporates some of the findings presented by the Institute for Child Protection Studies at the 'Listening and Responding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People: Learning's from the Out of Home Care Forum'.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2004. *Australia's Young People 2003*.  
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/phe/ayp03/ayp03-c02.pdf>

The following tips and principles provide some first steps to assist you to make your practice and service more culturally appropriate and accessible to diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people:

- It's OK to ask someone if they're Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Young Aboriginal people in Canberra often come from all over the country, and will have a variety of beliefs and traditions. Young Torres Strait Islander people can also come from different areas in the Torres Strait Islands.
- Indigenous people, like non-Indigenous people, are not homogenous (the same).
- Be careful not to make assumptions or stereotype the young person. Different young people will be in touch with their culture in different ways – some may know a lot and some may know a little.
- Young people may choose to access a variety of services and they should be told about the choices that are available to them. Young people are individuals with individual needs. For example, one young person may want to access an Indigenous specific service whereas another may not. People who work with young people need to be understanding and supportive of individual young people's choices.
- All services should be accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. It's important not just to refer on. Remember, it's OK to call an Indigenous service for advice.
- Display and promote positive messages. You could put up posters, paintings and get a map of Aboriginal Australia in your service. You could also subscribe and read *Deadly Vibe* and the *Koori Mail*.
- Many Indigenous services in the ACT have a huge demand placed on them, so it may take time to build relationships with Indigenous services.
- Young people want to participate in regards to decisions about culture and the way they connect with their community. They want to be given a voice and to be able to talk about concerns. When you ask a young person for their opinion, make sure you follow it up afterwards and communicate it back to them.
- It must be understood and respected for the protocol that an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person cannot generally speak about or on behalf of another person's country, unless given permission by the custodians or traditional landowner to do so.

## Services

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Counselling, Support and Education Program

Provides free and confidential counselling, support and education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children who have been sexually abused.

<b>Phone</b>	Office (02) 6247 8071 24 Hour Crisis Support (02) 6247 2525
<b>Mailing Address</b>	PO Box 916, Dickson ACT 2602
<b>Email</b>	nguru@rapecrisis.org.au or betty@rapecrisis.org.au
<b>Website</b>	www.rapecrisis.org.au
<b>Location</b>	Confidential
<b>Parent Organisation</b>	Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC)

#### Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Females. Males up to 14 years
<i>Age</i>	Females of any age. Males over 14 years are referred to Service Assisting Male Survivors of Sexual Assault (SAMSSA).
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	Yes. In the event of a recent sexual assault while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (AOD), the young person is encouraged to contact as soon as possible. In terms of ongoing support, young people are encouraged to come to counselling free from the influence of AOD, however, each person's particular circumstances are considered on an individual basis.
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes

<b>How to Access</b>	By phone or email, 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday. Provides outreach support. Crisis line available 24 hours.
<b>Programs</b>	Provides one-on-one counselling, case management, support and advocacy. Support groups are run on a needs basis for survivors of sexual assault. Education includes information sessions, peer education programs for young women and professional development workshops for workers.
<b>Other</b>	Provide support to gay and lesbian young people within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community who are survivors of sexual assault.
<b>Families</b>	Works with families around the issues of sexual assault.

## The Connection, Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA)

A peer support service for young Indigenous and non-Indigenous drug users in and around the ACT.

<b>Phone</b>	(02) 6279 1670
<b>Mailing Address</b>	GPO Box 1552, Canberra ACT 2600
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.aivl.org.au">www.aivl.org.au</a>
<b>Location</b>	Level 1, Sydney Building, 112 – 116 Alinga St, Canberra City
<b>Parent Organisation</b>	Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)

### Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	Young people inclusive
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	Yes
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	No
<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes

**How to Access** By phone or visit, 10am – 4pm, Monday – Thursday.  
No referral necessary.

**Programs** Provides peer support for drug users and their families, information, phone calls and referrals and support with court and probation.

**Families** Family and support people can access some programs.

## Urayarra Indigenous Youth Skills and Education

Education and development program for homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

<b>Phone</b>	Urayarra (02) 6296 3410 mob: 0411 702 406 Galilee Main Office (02) 6290 2191
<b>Mailing Address</b>	PO Box 205, Mawson ACT 2607
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:galilee.inc@webone.com.au">galilee.inc@webone.com.au</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.galilee.org.au">www.galilee.org.au</a>
<b>Parent Organisation</b>	Galilee Inc.

### Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	12 – 16
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	Case by case basis
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	Case by case basis

**How to Access** By phone or email, 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday.

<b>Programs</b>	Provides information, advocacy, case management, peer education, counselling and referrals. Provides various groups and activities. Works in partnership with local high schools. Transport can be arranged to and from the services for participants, and also has a school holiday program. Computer and Internet is available.
<b>Families</b>	Can liaise with families.

**The following services also provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs:**

- ☐ Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation (Youth Centres)
- ☐ Junction Youth Health Service (Health and Sexual Health)
- ☐ Learning for Life Program (Youth Support)
- ☐ Open Family Australia (Youth Support)
- ☐ Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Services (Health and Sexual Health)
- ☐ Youth Law ACT (Legal)
- ☐ See also the Youth Centres section

## Resources

### More Services

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, ACT**

Conducts community consultations for the Chief Minister's Department concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

**Phone:** (02) 6207 5987

**Web:** [www.dhcs.act.gov.au/matsia/atsia/atsiccc](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/matsia/atsia/atsiccc)

**ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre**

Provides facilities for meetings, events, functions and cultural activities.

**Phone:** (02) 6251 0118

**Location:** Lady Denman Drive, Yarramundi Reach

**Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies**

Promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, maintains a library and audiovisual archives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander related materials, publishes and distributes books and a journal related to Australian Indigenous studies.

**Phone:** (02) 6246 1111

**Email:** [library@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:library@aiatsis.gov.au)

**Web:** [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

**Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR)**

A national network of mainly non-Indigenous organisations and individuals working in support of justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

**Email:** [antar@antar.org.au](mailto:antar@antar.org.au)

**Web:** [www.antar.org.au](http://www.antar.org.au)

**Canberra Journey of Healing Network**

Promotes understanding and healing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous

The Big Red Book: A Handbook and Directory for People who Work with Young People in the ACT  
Youth Coalition of the ACT

Version 5, 2009

[www.youthcoalition.net](http://www.youthcoalition.net)

Australians, regarding Stolen Generations issues.

**Phone:** (02) 6258 9102

**Email:** [secretary@johact.org.au](mailto:secretary@johact.org.au)

**Web:** [www.johact.org.au](http://www.johact.org.au)

### **National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group**

The only Indigenous youth leadership group at a national level, members are consulted directly by the Australian Government about their experiences and perspectives on issues important to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

**Phone:** 1800 624 309

**Email:** [niylg@thesource.gov.au](mailto:niylg@thesource.gov.au)

**Web:** [www.thesource.gov.au/involve/NIYLG](http://www.thesource.gov.au/involve/NIYLG)

### **Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Care (SNAICC)**

National non-government peak body in Australia representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

**Phone:** (03) 9489 8099

**Email:** [snaicc@vicnet.net.au](mailto:snaicc@vicnet.net.au)

**Web:** [www.snaicc.asn.au](http://www.snaicc.asn.au)

### **Stolen Generations Alliance**

Many people who have been active in the Journey of Healing have now launched the Stolen Aboriginal Generations Alliance, offering all Australians the opportunity to work for healing, truth and justice. The patrons are former Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Professor Lowitja O'Donoghue and former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser.

**Phone:** 0438 120 752

**Email:** [cking@atsisw.org](mailto:cking@atsisw.org)

**Web:** [www.sgalliance.org.au/](http://www.sgalliance.org.au/)

## **More Information**

### **A Social and Cultural Profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Canberra**

*ACT Government*

Provides a demographic profile and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People living in the ACT. Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Published 2004.

**Web:** [www.cmd.act.gov.au](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au)

### **Are We Bringing Them Home in 2007?**

*Canberra Journey of Healing Network*

The fourth progress report on how far the recommendations of the 1997 Bringing Them Home report have been implemented in the ACT. Published 2007.

**Web:** [www.johact.org.au](http://www.johact.org.au)

### **Bringing Them Home: Learning About the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families**

*Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission*

Includes resources for students and teachers. Published 2003.

**Web:** [www.hreoc.gov.au/bth](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/bth)

### **Challenging Some Myths**

*Managed by the Department of Education and Training on behalf of education systems nationally*

Examines some facts that address common myths and misconceptions and recognise the resulting racism, prejudice and discrimination. These issues should be handled sensitively as the associated myths may offend some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**Web:** [www.racismnoway.com.au](http://www.racismnoway.com.au)

### **How Indigenous Young People are Faring**

*Dusseldorf Skills Forum, Reconciliation Australia*

This report uses ABS Census data to examine and comment on changes in the education and labour force participation of young Indigenous people (15 to 19 year-olds, 20 to 24 year-olds and 25 to 29 year-olds). This paper is complemented by a second publication, **Keeping up**, which provides case studies and identifies improvements that can be made.

**Web:** <http://apo.org.au/node/14253>

### **Environment Act**

*Heritage Unit, ACT Government*

Provides advice on Aboriginal, historical and natural heritage places and objects.

**Phone:** (02) 6207 2160

**Email:** [heritage@act.gov.au](mailto:heritage@act.gov.au)

**Web:** [www.environment.act.gov.au/heritage](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/heritage)

### **Face The Facts**

*Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission*

Their most requested publication. Information provided includes laws, government policies, statistics and academic research. It brings all the major issues together and presents reliable information in an easy-to-read publication. Published 2005.

**Web:** [www.humanrights.gov.au/racial\\_discrimination/face\\_facts/](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/face_facts/)

### **Indigenous Traditions - Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders**

*Australian Broadcasting Corporation*

An overview of Indigenous Australian traditions. Published 2004.

**Web:** [www.abc.net.au/religion/stories/s790117.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/religion/stories/s790117.htm)

### **Social justice and human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**

*Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission*

Social justice is about making sure every Australian - Indigenous and non-Indigenous - has choices about how they live and the means to make those choices.

Social justice is grounded in the practical, day-to-day realities of life. Published 2004.

**Web:** [www.hreoc.gov.au/Social\\_Justice/info\\_sheet.html](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/Social_Justice/info_sheet.html)

### **Timeline of Indigenous history**

*Australia Museum*

Provides information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and histories, includes a timeline from pre-contact to 2000.

**Web:** [www.dreamtime.net.au/indigenous/index.cfm](http://www.dreamtime.net.au/indigenous/index.cfm)

### **'Welcome to Country' Register**

*Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS), ACT Government – Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA)*

Provides a brief overview of why 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies are important, and the contact to the register, which lists the Ngunnawal Elders who have nominated themselves to provide 'Welcome to Country' speeches at ACT events.

**Phone:** (02) 6207 1667

**Email:** [oatsia@act.gov.au](mailto:oatsia@act.gov.au).

**Web:** [http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/matsia/atsia/welcome\\_to\\_country](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/matsia/atsia/welcome_to_country)

## Dates for Your Diary

### **26 May National Sorry Day / National Day of Healing**

National Sorry Day commemorates and acknowledges the social and psychological impact of policies of forcible removal of Australian Aboriginal children from their loved ones.

**Web:** [www.johact.org.au](http://www.johact.org.au)

### **27 May - 3 June National Reconciliation Week**

Reconciliation Week is an opportunity for all Australians to focus on reconciliation and to learn about the history and culture of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. National Reconciliation Week is celebrated commencing on Sorry Day and concluding on Mabo Day each year.

**Web:** [www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au)

### **3 June Mabo Day**

Mabo Day is the anniversary of the High Court judgement in 1992 recognising Native Title. This judgement overturned the legal concept of Terra Nullius.

**Web:** [www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rn/2002-03/03rn04.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rn/2002-03/03rn04.pdf)

### **1 July 2009 Coming of the Light**

The 'Coming of the Light' is a day of particular significance for many Torres Strait Islander people. It marks the day the London Missionary Society first arrived in the Torres Strait, landing at Erub Island on 1 July 1871.

**Web:** [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)

### **5 – 12 July 2009 NAIDOC Week**

NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee) Week is dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to mark the communities' achievements and uniqueness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions and cultures. Note: The dates for NAIDOC Week can change each year.

**Web:** [www.naidoc.org.au](http://www.naidoc.org.au)

### **4 August National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Children's Day**

This day celebrates the importance of children to Indigenous communities.

**Web:** [www.snaicc.asn.au/children](http://www.snaicc.asn.au/children)