



Aboriginal Engagement Strategy

2022 - 2024



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Artwork Narrative

Our artwork story

Legal Services is represented as the centre meeting place connected to journey lines. The journey represents Legal Services journey as well as its staff and people who seek and need legal help.

The surrounding waterholes represent the many locations where Legal Services are accessed, where people have equal access to justice, wherever they may be.

The symbols (U) represent the people, the people who represent Legal Services as well as the people in the many diverse communities across South Australia.

Throughout this piece there are kangaroo prints that represent Legal Services mission to always move forward and never backwards, to keep growing and being a voice for the community.

Gabriel Stengle



The artwork displayed throughout this document reflects and is a representation of the Legal Services and our commitment to the South Australian community.

About the artist

Gabriel Stengle is an Aboriginal Contemporary Artist. She is a proud Ngarrindjeri, Narungga and Kurna Woman from South Australia who sources inspiration for her art from the Dreamtime and stories told to her by her elders as a young girl.



Acknowledgement of Country

Legal Services acknowledges Aboriginal people¹ as the first inhabitants, as Traditional Owners and ongoing occupants of the land and waters in South Australia.

We respect their spiritual, cultural and heritage beliefs. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community and pay our deep respect to Elders past and present.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people have endured past injustice and dispossession of their traditional lands and waters and the effects of such injustice and dispossession are still felt today.

We acknowledge the over-representation of Aboriginal people as victims and offenders in the criminal justice and child protection system today is unacceptable. We will continue to work with Aboriginal people to reduce disadvantage in law and justice and collaborate to foster healing and create a South Australia that is welcoming, secure, and equitable for everyone.

¹In this document, we use the term Aboriginal to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Chief Executive Officer Foreword

Legal Services has a long and proud history of working with Aboriginal clients and stakeholders in all areas of our service delivery.

Through our Aboriginal Engagement Strategy 2022 -2024, we will ensure we continue to provide a culturally safe and inclusive place for Aboriginal people to work and access our services. This will be evident in how we relate to and interact with Aboriginal people and celebrate and promote their culture.

Legal Services is passionate about ensuring justice is available to and accessible for all South Australians.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people have endured past injustices and respect the cultural diversity, values, and beliefs of our Aboriginal clients.

Our focus on client service and unwavering commitment to all people and all communities, will continue to be fundamental to everything we do.



Gabrielle Canny

Chief Executive Officer / Director
Legal Services Commission



Our work

Legal Services is one of South Australia's largest law practices. With more than 220 staff, we support some of South Australia's most vulnerable and disadvantaged, providing legal advice and representation to individuals and legal education to the community.

Legal Services is passionate about ensuring justice is available and accessible for all South Australians.

Working with over 500 external panel lawyers to deliver legal aid, we provide essential front-line justice solutions across our State and contribute to justice policy nationally.

Each year over 100,000 clients and members of the community benefit from our services, many who may otherwise have found it impossible to find their way through the legal system.



Our beliefs and values

We believe that every interaction with every client and community member can make a difference to that person. We will deliver our services to meet that aim.

We all adopt the values of service, professionalism, trust, respect, collaboration and engagement, honesty and integrity, courage and tenacity and sustainability.

Aboriginal Engagement Strategy

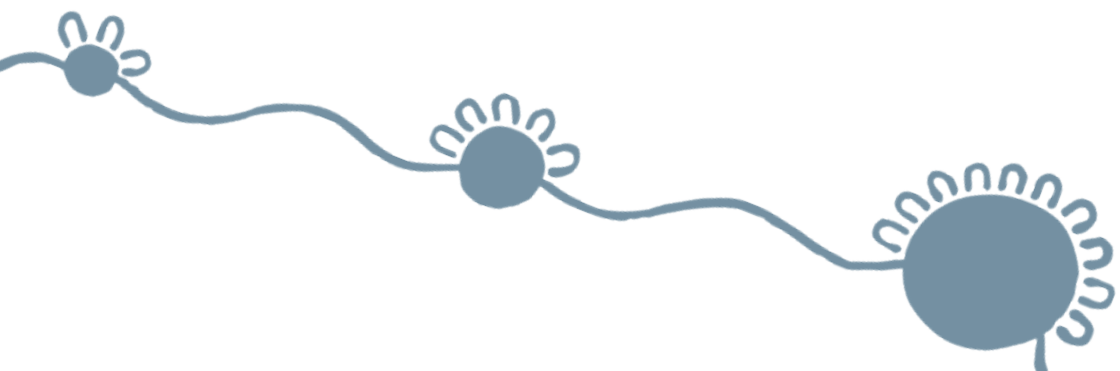
This strategy was developed to reflect our commitment to our relationships with Aboriginal clients and communities and to access to justice by all.

Establish and maintain an Aboriginal Engagement Working Group

Legal Services is committed to working together with Aboriginal people, and to strengthening our relationship with Aboriginal clients and community stakeholders on the basis of mutual understanding, respect, and trust.

To achieve this, we will:

	2022	2023	2024
Have an Aboriginal Engagement Working Group, with the support of Legal Services' leadership, meet regularly and be empowered to promote and implement this strategy.			
Define and enable the resource needs for the implementation of this strategy.			
Communicate achievements and review any challenges associated with implementation.			
Be informed by best practice in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.			



Be connected with and responsive to Aboriginal clients and communities

Legal Services has a long and proud history of working with Aboriginal clients and community stakeholders in all areas of our service delivery.

We remain committed to further strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal clients and community stakeholders to inform our work.

To achieve this, we will:

	2022	2023	2024
Explore possibilities for further relationship building and collaboration with Aboriginal stakeholders in our service areas.			
Communicate our commitment to these relationships to staff and stakeholders and publish this strategy on our website.			
Review and renew our Memorandum of Understanding with Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement.			
Bring awareness to our existing programs available to Aboriginal clients and community stakeholders.			
Consider new programs and partnerships that may better meet the needs of Aboriginal clients and community stakeholders.			
Advocate for law reform that increases access to justice for Aboriginal people.			

Be culturally appropriate and respectful

Legal Services is committed to providing culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal people and strengthening trust between Aboriginal people and the South Australian legal system.

To achieve this, we will:

	2022	2023	2024
Continually review the cultural learning needs of Legal Services staff and implement ongoing cultural awareness training.			
Identify and promote resources about appropriate and effective language use, and the use of interpreters, and include guidance for working with Aboriginal clients in Legal Services staff inductions.			
Promote staff awareness and understanding of the purpose and significance of cultural protocols and ensure they are equipped to appropriately observe them.			
Raise awareness and share information amongst staff about events such as Closing the Gap Day, National Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week and encourage staff participation.			



Be recognised by Aboriginal people as an employer of choice

Legal Services is committed to developing the next generation of Aboriginal leaders within the legal sector and law and justice policy.

To achieve this, we will:

	2022	2023	2024
Identify and address potential barriers to Aboriginal employment at Legal Services.			
Ensure recruitment policies and processes encourage Aboriginal applicants.			
Ensure retention policies support Aboriginal staff.			

