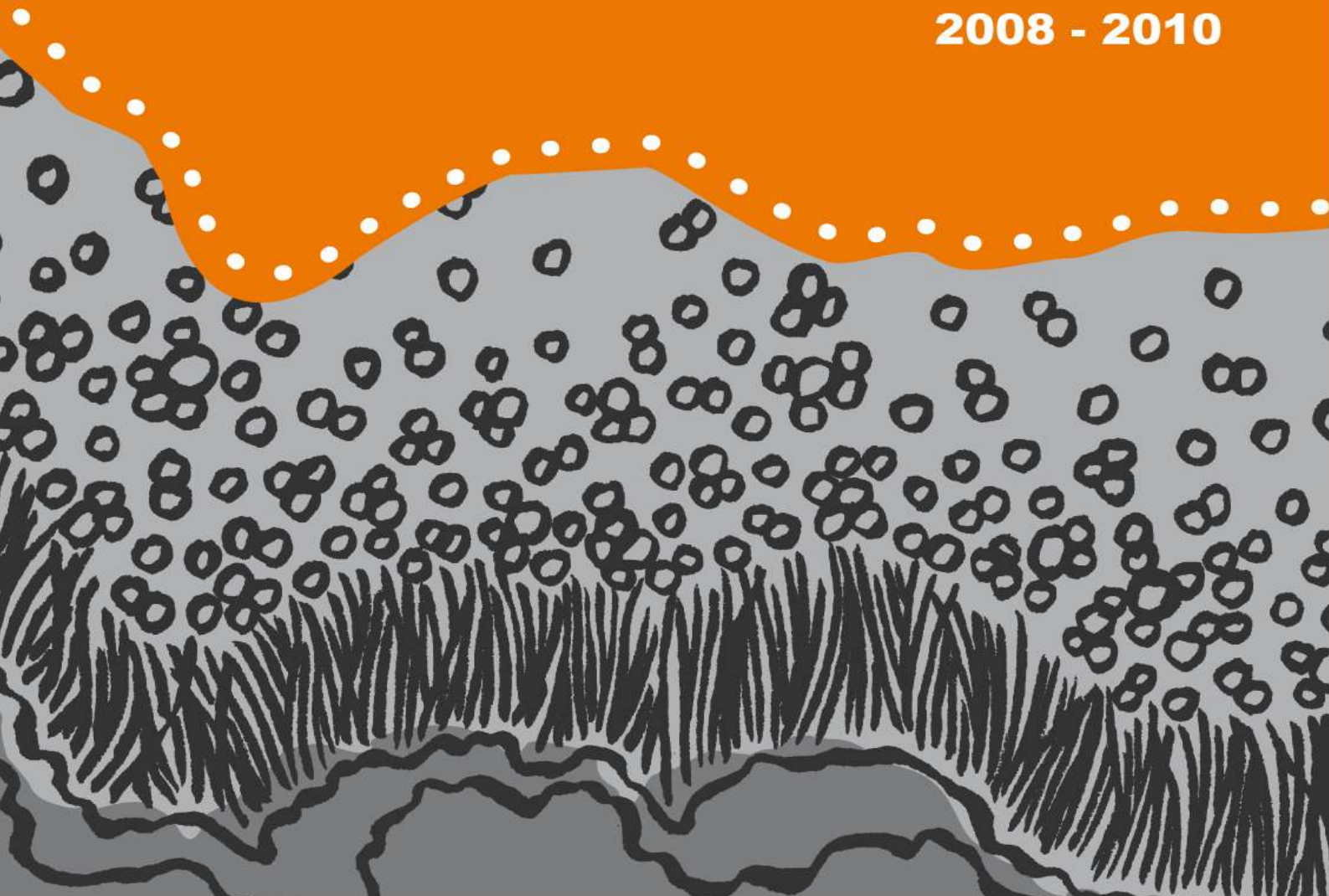




**Strong Spirit Strong Mind**

**Drug and Alcohol Office  
Reconciliation Action Plan**

**2008 - 2010**





**Front Cover Artwork by Barry McGuire (Mullark)**

“The two lines symbolize a river of water and the water is like information given to communities. The circles symbolise the major centres and the remote communities. The lines symbolise the direction the information is going to and coming from ...”

**NB:** The word *Indigenous* in this plan is used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’.

# The Drug and Alcohol Office

## Vision

Preventing and reducing drug and alcohol related harm and providing effective treatment.

## Values

### Respect

Respectful in our behaviour towards our clients, communities and our colleagues.

### Integrity

Honest and genuine in our actions and words.

### Open and accountable

Inclusive and excellence in our individual performance, programs and services.

### Quality and excellence

Quality and excellence in our individual performance, programs and services.

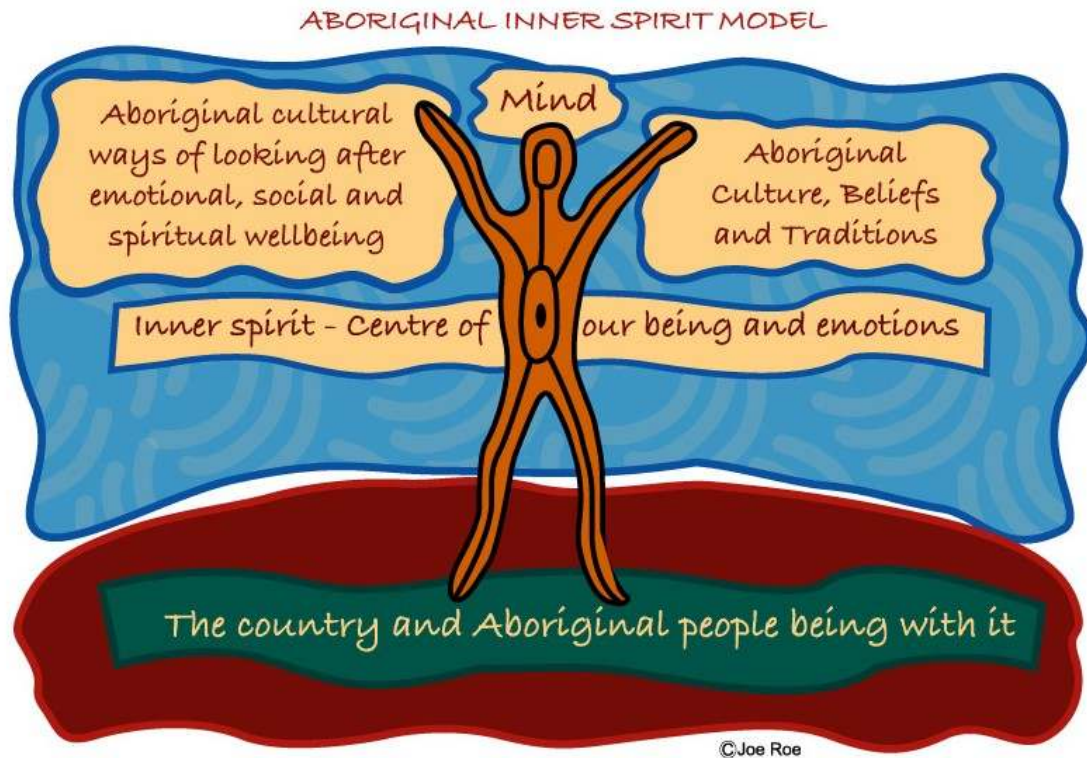
### Cultural security

Cultural security is integral to our values.

These values are inclusive of culturally secure ways of working. The words *Strong Spirit Strong Mind* are used to describe the Indigenous work done by the Drug and Alcohol Office. These words speak of the values held by the Drug and Alcohol Office and are explained on the following page.

## Strong Spirit Strong Mind

The importance of strengthening 'inner spirit' is based on the Aboriginal Inner Spirit (Ngarlu) Model by the late Joseph 'Nipper' Roe. The words *Strong Spirit Strong Mind* promote the value of our Indigenous culture, identity and our spiritual connections as strengths in managing alcohol and other drug use in the community.



*Our inner spirit is the centre of our being and emotions.  
When our spirit feels strong our mind feels strong.  
Strong inner spirit is what keeps our people health and connects them together.  
Strong inner spirit keeps the community strong and our country alive.  
Strengthening our inner spirit is a step towards a healed future.*

There is a word in many different language groups that describes inner spirit and many Indigenous people share this belief.

**Aboriginal Alcohol and other Drugs Program branch  
Drug and Alcohol Office**

## **Message from the Executive Director Drug and Alcohol Office**

The Drug and Alcohol Office (DAO) has prioritised development of Indigenous programs and services over a number of years. This development has focused on implementing changes within the whole of DAO as an organization as well as across the alcohol and other drug sector statewide.

Extensive consultation with regional, remote and metropolitan areas occurred in developing the *Strong Spirit Strong Mind Western Australian Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan 2005-2009*.

The name *Strong Spirit Strong Mind* evolved during the consultations. The words encompass the importance of strengthening 'inner spirit' and are based on the Aboriginal Inner Spirit (Ngarlu) Model by the late Joseph 'Nipper' Roe.

The words *Strong Spirit Strong Mind* promote the value of Indigenous culture, identity and spiritual connections as strengths in managing alcohol and other drug use in the community.

This is in keeping with the spirit of reconciliation: Through mutual respect, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people work in partnership towards a shared future that values Indigenous history, culture and spirituality in all of its diversity. *Strong Spirit Strong Mind* programs reflect these values which are being put into action in our services and within the alcohol and other drug sector.

There has been recent significant additional investment provided to improve alcohol and drug services for Indigenous people in Western Australia. We are proud of our achievements, but recognise there is so much more work to be done.

This Reconciliation Action Plan, a strong service network, DAO's implementation of the WA Health Aboriginal Cultural Respect Framework and the Strong Spirit Strong Mind Plan underpin DAO's continuing commitment to improving services for Aboriginal people.

**Eric Dillon**  
**A/Executive Director**

18 February 2008

## **Our Vision for Reconciliation**

Our vision for reconciliation is to work in partnership with Indigenous people to value and lead healthy and safe lifestyles with access to quality services and programs to prevent and reduce alcohol and other drug-related harm. This plan helps us understand that what we are already doing is part of the reconciliation process with Indigenous people, and that reconciliation, properly understood, is integral to the Drug and Alcohol Office's core business.

## **Our Business**

The Drug and Alcohol Office (DAO) is the government agency responsible for drug and alcohol strategies and services in Western Australia. The agency provides or contracts a state-wide network of treatment services, a range of prevention programs, professional education and training, and research activities.

## Our approach to developing the Reconciliation Action Plan

An internal working group was established, which included representatives of DAO directorates to guide the development of the document. This process was directed by the Aboriginal AOD Program branch of the Policy, Strategy and Information Directorate of DAO in collaboration with Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff. A survey of current and proposed activity was undertaken and current strategic plans reviewed including:

- Strong Spirit Strong Mind - WA Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan 2005-09
- DAO Annual Report 2007
- WA Health Aboriginal Cultural Respect Implementation Framework
- Managing a Diverse Workforce: The Office of Equal Employment Opportunity

The draft document was circulated to key stakeholders both Indigenous and non-Indigenous in order to feed back on proposed strategies and measurable targets.

The Reconciliation Action Plan focuses on DAO but also provides actions for the Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) sector through current contractual reporting requirements, participation in workforce development and partnership activities.

The DAO Senior Management Group is responsible for overseeing the Reconciliation Action Plan's implementation.

# 1. RELATIONSHIPS

## 1a. Service development and access

Support services to recognise the legitimate cultural rights, views, values and expectations of Indigenous people; and develop practices to ensure cultural respect is maintained

Strategies	Responsible Person	Timeline	Measurable Target
Establish a Working Group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff members representative of each directorate of DAO to monitor and report to the Senior Management Group on the progress of implementing the RAP	Senior Management Group	January 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working group established, meets four times per year</li> </ul>
Continuation of 'Partnership' between the DAO, Office of Aboriginal Health and the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health to work in a strategic and coordinated manner in reviewing, planning and funding drug and alcohol programs for Indigenous people in WA	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed annually and terms of reference renewed</li> </ul>
Partnerships with non-government Indigenous and mainstream community controlled AOD services for the specialised residential rehabilitation programs at Cyrenian House, Palmerston Farm and the Next Step Aboriginal Withdrawal Unit	Senior Management Group	June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue supports that maintain Indigenous staff employed and culturally secure programs implemented (see Workforce Development section 2b.)</li> <li>16 beds allocated across these services. Report on number of beds accessed annually</li> </ul>

# 1. RELATIONSHIPS

## 1b. Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Strategy

This strategy is aligned to the over-arching *Western Australia Drug and Alcohol Strategy (WADAS) 2005-2009*. It provides priorities that can be developed within existing resources, along with offering direction for the future as increased funding opportunities may present

Strategies	Responsible person	Timeline	Measurable Target
Maintain whole of government effort and commitment, in collaboration with government, community controlled services and non-government organisations, to implement, evaluate and continuously improve approaches to reduce drug related harm among Indigenous people	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	June 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the <i>Strong Spirit Strong Mind: The WA Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan 2005-2009</i></li> </ul>
		June 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of the <i>Strong Spirit Strong Mind: Implementation Framework for the WADAS 2009-2013</i></li> </ul>
Establish and maintain a database of Indigenous professionals and organisations within the AOD sector	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff to use and update the database regularly</li> </ul>
Achieve strong partnerships across government, WA Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies (WANADA) and community agencies whilst ensuring agencies are delivering contracted services	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Aboriginal AOD Worker Forum</li> <li>Strong Spirit Strong Mind Awards for outstanding work within the AOD sector</li> <li>DAO support the WANADA networking meetings for Aboriginal AOD workers</li> </ul>

## 2. RESPECT

### 2a. Service Development and Access

Supports services to recognise the legitimate cultural rights, views, values and expectations of Indigenous people; and develop practices to ensure cultural respect is maintained

Strategies	Responsible person	Timeline	Measurable Target
Implement the WA Health Aboriginal Cultural Respect Implementation Framework	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs  Director Client Services and Development	June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong Spirit Strong Mind training for all staff is core business. Report on the number of people attending annually</li> <li>100% of contracted agencies will have key requirement of the framework in their contracts, so will report regularly on how they implement cultural respect in their services</li> </ul>
Celebrate Indigenous days of cultural celebration, such as NAIDOC week, Sorry Day	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 cultural celebration days per year</li> </ul>

### 2b. Workforce Development

Building a culturally secure workforce through developing the cultural competence of non-Indigenous workers

Strategies	Responsible Person	Timeline	Measurable Target
Provision of training, Strong Spirit Strong Mind; Ways of Working with Aboriginal people, for government and non-government AOD sector	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Strong Spirit Strong Mind; Ways of Working with Aboriginal people training sessions per year</li> <li>Report on the number of people attending the training sessions annually</li> <li>Minimum 50% increase (moderate or above) in knowledge and understanding (performance indicators)</li> </ul>

## 2. RESPECT

### 2b. Workforce Development

Strategies	Responsible Person	Timeline	Measurable Target
Utilisation of local Indigenous elders to conduct welcome to country at sector events. This will enhance cultural awareness and respect within DAO and with stakeholders	Director Policy, Strategy and Information	June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of DAO protocol for welcome to country</li> <li>Welcome to country and acknowledgement of traditional elders conducted at all major DAO events, forums and training</li> </ul>
Support cross cultural competence in the AOD sector for managers and other staff	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual provision of the Clinical support worker training</li> <li>Report on number of senior staff attending per year</li> </ul>

## 3. OPPORTUNITIES

### 3a. Recruitment and Retention

Increase the number of Indigenous staff across the AOD sector and maintain existing Indigenous staff

Strategies	Responsible Person	Timeline	Measurable Target
Increase number of Indigenous staff employed by DAO	Senior Management Group	June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain 3.6% of Indigenous staff employed by DAO. <sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Maintain existing DAO Indigenous cadetships Evaluate each cadetship when completed	Director Corporate Services Senior Management Group	Dec 2009 Dec 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two cadetships offered for the length of their tertiary studies</li> <li>Review strategy to consider further cadetships</li> </ul>
Promote employment opportunities for Indigenous alcohol and other drugs workers in AOD services	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	January 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with AOD services to create Indigenous identified positions .</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Public Sector Workforce Participation Objective aims to achieve 3.2% Aboriginal representation in the workforce by 2009.

### 3. OPPORTUNITIES

#### 3a. Recruitment and Retention

Strategies	Responsible Person	Timeline	Measurable Target
Ensure workforce development strategies are implemented to support a strong pool of Indigenous people with the required skills to work in the AOD sector <sup>2</sup>	Director Corporate Services  Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and develop the job application process with Health Corporate Network (HCN) to be culturally secure for Indigenous applicants</li> <li>Minimum of 12 new places offered annually <sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
Indigenous staff supported to remain in employment through training and mentoring	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training courses and mentoring programs provided for all Indigenous staff</li> </ul>
Employment of Indigenous staff in diversion services, through Indigenous positions to improve service provision for Indigenous people	Manager WA Diversion Program	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention of current positions through workforce development strategies, currently 10 positions</li> </ul>
Continued operation of court diversion strategies specifically targeting Indigenous people	Manager WA Diversion Program	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention of regions operating the Indigenous Diversion Program, currently 6 regions</li> <li>Number of Indigenous Diversion Service Officers currently 10</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> See 3b. for the range of strategies

<sup>3</sup> CHC30802 Certificate III Community Services Work

### 3. OPPORTUNITIES

#### 3b. Workforce Development

Building a culturally secure workforce through developing the competence of Indigenous workers to deliver quality services

Strategy	Responsible Person	Timeline	Measurable Target
Delivery of Strong Spirit Strong Mind : Aboriginal Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) worker training program <sup>4</sup> delivered to Aboriginal AOD workers	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offered annually</li> <li>Minimum of 12 new places offered annually</li> </ul>
Provision of clinical support worker training program to managers and senior workers	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offered annually</li> </ul>
Distribution of culturally secure Indigenous AOD resources for working with Indigenous people to AOD sector and community	Manager Aboriginal AOD Programs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suite of resources developed and implemented</li> </ul>
Support opportunities for Indigenous staff to obtain and upgrade formal qualifications	Senior Management Group	June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Indigenous staff within DAO are provided with award information on studying toward higher qualifications</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> CHC30802 Certificate III Community Services Work

## 4. TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

### 4a. Monitoring and Evaluation

Policy and program development

Strategies	Responsible person	Timeline	Measurable Target
Establish a Working Group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff members to monitor and report to Senior Management Group on progress of implementing the RAP	Director Policy, Strategy and Information	June 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working Group established and meets four times a year</li> </ul>
Publish the DAO's RAP on our website and the Reconciliation Australia website. Provide regular updates on implementation process	Director Policy, Strategy and Information	June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP published and placed on the DAO and Reconciliation Australia website, reported on annually, and updated as actions completed</li> </ul>
Review and report on the current RAP and develop successive plans	Director Policy, Strategy and Information	June 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on the 2008 RAP in 2009</li> <li>The new RAP developed and endorsed by December 2009</li> </ul>

Should you require any further information please contact:

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