



# First Nations Strategic Plan

2018–22





# Purpose

LAQ recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first peoples. We recognise that as an integral part of the justice system in Queensland, we can take a leadership role in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's access to a fair justice system, which we believe will ultimately result in better social outcomes.

The under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the legal profession and the overrepresentation in the justice system are significant issues that underpin the disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are overrepresented in the criminal justice and child protection systems. Living in remote communities across Queensland increases their vulnerability. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 3% of the population in Queensland and 34%<sup>1</sup> of the prison population. Children are being removed from families at rates that exceed the peak of the Stolen Generation and are 45 times<sup>2</sup> more likely to experience domestic and family violence. There are more than 10,300 lawyers in Queensland, and only 66 identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.<sup>3</sup>

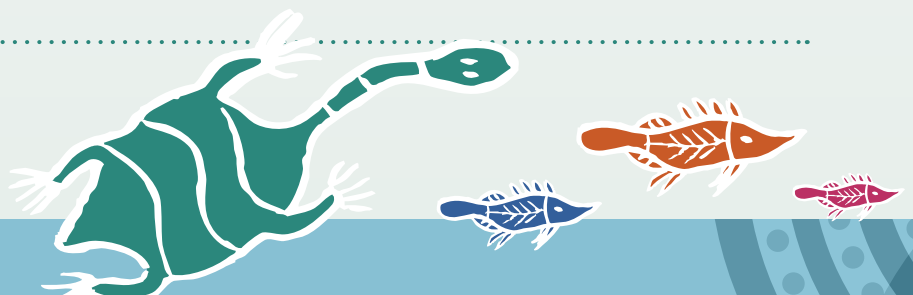
The First Nations Strategic Plan 2018–22 outlines our obligation to:

- ⦿ address the disproportionate disparity in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system, the child protection system and within the domestic and family violence courts
- ⦿ increase the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal professionals, developing a benchmark for external preferred suppliers, and ensuring our justice system is representative of the greater community.

# Objectives

1. LAQ will increase awareness and accessibility of legal aid services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
2. LAQ will be a centre of excellence for culturally capable legal services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
3. LAQ will be a significant employer within the legal profession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
4. LAQ will contribute to developing a more equitable justice system that addresses the disparity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the broader legal profession

1. Census Report 2018  
2. Not Now, Not Ever Report  
3. Queensland Law Society RAP





## Objective 1

### **LAQ will increase awareness and accessibility of legal aid services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

Expand our promotion of LAQ services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as set out in the CLE Strategy.

Adopt a legal health check for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients to help clients to communicate their legal problems and ensure we address all relevant legal issues.

Develop collaborative service delivery initiatives with dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal, advocacy and support service organisations.



## Objective 2

### **LAQ will be a centre of excellence for culturally capable legal services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

All LAQ staff to undertake cultural awareness training by 2020.

Introduce targeted training in 2019 for lawyers and client services staff to improve their capability to provide culturally appropriate services.

Implement minimum quality assurance standards for counsel representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.



## Objective 3

### **LAQ will be a significant employer within the legal profession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

Create an employment pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Increase the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to 9% of the workforce by 2022.

Ensure our staff includes a minimum of 12 full time positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lawyers.



## Objective 4

### **LAQ will contribute to developing a more equitable justice system that addresses the disparity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the broader legal profession**

Develop a program to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander barristers during the first 5 years of practice.

# Implementation



The First Nations Strategic Plan 2018–22 is a priority for the LAQ Board. In 2017, the LAQ Board created the First Nations Advisory Committee to provide direction and strategic advice to the LAQ Board on issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The plan's implementation will be managed by the Strategic Policy team within the Executive Services unit and supported by the chief executive officer and the Executive Management Team.

