



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

HISTORICAL AWARENESS

- ☉ Respect that transgenerational trauma is a real issue within First Nations communities.
- ☉ Understand that the church has had varying influences on First Nations Peoples, both negative and positive.
- ☉ Be aware that perceptions of the church are still linked to the Missions and their 'role' in the Stolen Generations.
- ☉ If people seem hesitant then 'Be Patient'! They will let you know when they are ready to engage.



- ☉ You can break down people's perceptions through conversations and maintaining strong and meaningful relationships with community representatives and elders.
- ☉ Ensure you have completed the Society's Mandatory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion and Safety program.
- ☉ Learn more by undertaking the Society's Ganna Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness program.
- ☉ If you are unsure or have questions, contact First Nations employees or members within the community first for clarification or direction.

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

- ☉ What Aboriginal organisations are in your area?
- ☉ Are there any identified Aboriginal liaison officers within government departments or community organisations that you can connect with?
- ☉ Identify any local advisory groups and seek an invitation to attend... listen and learn i.e., interagency groups.
- ☉ Join in or establish your own local Reconciliation Committee and invite First Nations member/s to provide advice on current issues and ways of working cooperatively together.

- ☉ Understand the diversity within the community. People may come from different language groups and will have varying knowledge and understanding of their culture. Just because you identify as Aboriginal doesn't mean you are an expert on all aspects of Aboriginal history or culture. Remember that removal of children and denial of Aboriginal culture was part of Australia's earlier policies.
- ☉ Be aware of community differences and 'don't get dragged' into community 'politics'.
- ☉ Treat each person individually and don't apply stereotypes. Using 'they' or 'them' can come across as very offensive!

RESPECTING CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

- ☉ There are many terms used by Government to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or First Nations Peoples. Most communities in NSW prefer the term Aboriginal rather than Indigenous. Seek clarification from your local community on correct terminology to use. Refer to our Cultural Protocols document for information and guidance.
- ☉ When visiting community, be mindful of current events such as 'Sorry' business.
- ☉ Establish a strong rapport through continued contact to identify local community cultural protocols.
- ☉ Become familiar with culturally significant events and dates such as 'Sorry Day'.

- ☉ Participate in community events and seek permission to promote your services at events such as NAIDOC and Reconciliation weeks. Refer to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Significant Dates.
- ☉ When hosting functions or gatherings, be sure to invite an Elder or community representative to perform an 'Acknowledgment' or 'Welcome' to Country and be sure to also extend an invitation to key representatives within the local community.
- ☉ Be considerate by offering a gift or payment to community members who perform an 'Acknowledgement' or 'Welcome' as this is a service which is being provided.





BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Seek out and start a conversation with your local First Nations community members by introducing yourself and saying 'hello'.
- Make yourself available to attend community events held within First Nations communities. Refer to the Society's Community Engagement Plan.
- Introduce yourself first and not your programs. Establish a rapport before you start promoting your services.
- Listen to the needs of the community, let the people inform you!

- Build your confidence and understanding by asking questions... 'you won't know if you don't ask'.



- Relationships are 2 way – look closely at how you both can support each other; it can't be all one way.
- Don't assume to know what's best! Let the people advise and guide you on what their needs are.
- Build trust by maintaining contact.
- Consider engaging local First Nations businesses and contractors.

SERVICE DELIVERY

- Consult community to identify any barriers that may exist for First Nations Peoples engaging with your services and address where possible.
- Be clear on what you can and cannot do. Saying 'Yes' can be more damaging than saying 'No'. It's best to identify what you're able to provide before committing.
- Follow through with your actions, and in a timely manner.



- Build capacity within your area by employing more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Refer to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Recruitment and Retention Strategy to support.
- Identify and promote vacancies through community contacts encouraging First Nations People to apply.
- Don't let funding cycles dictate timeframes. Communities will not be governed by funding... community needs are what's important.
- Don't take funding opportunities away from Aboriginal based services. Best practice is to partner with the First Nations organisations or community Elders and/or representatives.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Be aware of the Social Justice issues reported in the media such as Black Lives Matter and the Uluru Statement from the Heart and their impacts within the local community.
- Don't assume that all First Nations Peoples have a 'knowledge' of these issues and understand the full story.
- Only discuss these issues if raised by the community.

- Learn how the Society is responding or if they have responded to these matters through the Social Justice Advocacy team or local engagement.
- Partner with concerned organisations to lobby on behalf of the community.
- Overall, be sensitive to all issues that are directly related to First Nations Peoples and communities.

