



North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

NAAJA Cultural Competency Framework

A key differentiator of NAAJA in our service delivery model is the emphasis, value and priority we place on developing cultural competency. We take this work seriously because Aboriginal people across the Top End of the NT tell us how important this work is to them.

We understand that, as an organisation, if we are to say we are culturally appropriate then we must make a meaningful commitment to developing cultural competency. We must integrate this across our practice, and be accountable. We set ourselves a high standard in our commitment to developing cultural competency and put ourselves forward as a unique and distinct service working with Aboriginal people in this context. We aspire to be a leader in this field and serve as an example to other government and non-government services where Aboriginal peoples feature prominently.

We are a culturally appropriate organisation because we make a meaningful commitment to developing cultural competency, and because:

1. We are managed and led by an Aboriginal board
2. Aboriginal people serve senior roles across our practice and key roles across our workforce
3. We provide a quality education and professional development program for staff
4. We integrate learnings in cultural competency across our practice
5. We are culturally responsive and adapt to local and regional contexts
6. We are accountable in this work

The 'Cultural Competency Framework 2017 – 2020' outlines NAAJA's approach to developing and integrating best practice cultural competency across our services for Aboriginal people in the Top End of the Northern Territory.

Guiding principles

The following principles guide our work in aspiring to be cultural competent:

- We value the importance of being genuine and authentic in this space, and have mechanisms across our practice to be accountable.
- The cultural landscape in the NT is rich and diverse and we value this diversity.
- We seek to be trauma-informed and embed these practices across our work.
- We recognise cultural competency as a continual process and from an individual, organisational and systems perspective.
- We are an Aboriginal organisation and must ensure every facet of our service delivery is culturally responsive and adequately meets the needs of the community we are funded to serve.
- What we learn and experience at NAAJA will stay with us after we leave. Questioning why we work at NAAJA involves a long-term commitment to developing cultural competency and being meaningful in this work.

The guiding principles provide a foundation to inform how NAAJA values the work of our commitment to cultural competency.



North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

1. We are managed and led by an Aboriginal board

Strategies for 2017-2020

- NAAJA is governed by an Aboriginal Board.
- NAAJA Directors adhere to the principles of transparent corporate governance and recognise the need for the highest standard of corporate behaviour and accountability.
- NAAJA Board has 4 Directors from each of the Katherine, Darwin and Miwatj regions, appointed by members of each region. Maintaining strong regional representation is an important aspect to NAAJA's structure.

2. Aboriginal people serve senior roles across our practice and key roles across our workforce

Strategies for 2017-2020

- Implementation of NAAJA's Aboriginal Employment Policy as best practice policy in this area.
- Commitment to ensure that Aboriginal people constitute a minimum of 60% of overall staffing numbers by 2018.
- Aboriginal people serving senior roles including Chief Executive Officer, Principal Legal Officer and senior positions across the organisation.
- Build a network of relationships with local Aboriginal communities and community partners to encourage Aboriginal people to apply for jobs at NAAJA and to promote NAAJA as a desirable employer for Aboriginal people.
- Encourage NAAJA staff who are leaving to promote NAAJA as a preferred employer and continue to support NAAJA through Pro Bono support.

3. We provide a quality education and professional development program for staff

Strategies for 2017-2020

- A NAAJA Education and Professional Development Program delivering educational sessions and activities involving staff and external providers as co-facilitators and legal educators. The core focus of this program is developing cultural competency.
- Expansion of the NAAJA Law Cadetship.
- Expansion of the NAAJA Social Work Cadetship (Chilpy).
- Provide career development options for existing and newly recruited staff. All staff have a professional development plan.
- An instrumental role establishing the Bilata Legal Pathways Program as a partnership approach across the legal system to encourage greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access and participation in law.
- Promotion of Winkiku Rumbangi NT Indigenous Lawyers Aboriginal Corporation.



North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

4. We integrate learnings in cultural competency across our practice

Strategies for 2017-2020

- A NAAJA Certificate in Cultural Competency program requiring all staff to outline their participation in education and professional development sessions with a core focus in cultural competency and how they integrate their learnings in their practice. This program will increase cultural sensitivity, promote effective work communication and enhance relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. This program also includes the delivery of a wide range of sessions facilitated by NAAJA staff and external inputs.
- All staff receive a Welcome To Country from the Traditional Owners
- Ensure all employment programs offered provide a level of flexibility and menu of employment options to meet different work, study and family situations.
- Inclusion in the Professional Development Plan process of questions relating to observations of cultural competency and how learnings are integrated in the individual's practice.
- Inclusion in NAAJA Collective agreement cultural leave and language allowance
- Delivery of culturally appropriate trauma-informed training by Aboriginal Medical Services Association NT for NAAJA staff to understand how trauma effects our communities and people in the context of the specific circumstances and characteristics of Aboriginal identity and history in the NT.
- Develop and contribute to an understanding of how trauma-informed practices are used (or not used) in the broader justice system, and advocate for reform.
- Programs that actively engage Cultural Brokers, Mentors and Advisers.

5. We are culturally responsive and adapt to local and regional contexts

Strategies for 2017-2020

- All new NAAJA offices have a smoking ceremony.
- All Staff engage in a thorough and comprehensive induction process with a particular focus on developing cultural competency.
This induction includes:
 - A Welcome To Country by a Larrakia Traditional Owner in Darwin, a Jawoyn Traditional Owner in Katherine and a Yolngu Traditional Owner in Nhulunbuy;
 - In-house cross-cultural induction delivered by NAAJA Community Legal Education;
 - A cross cultural workshop with a local Aboriginal Cultural Mentor;
 - An induction pack and specific cross-cultural materials; and Development of Community Profiles for each major Aboriginal community or region.
- All NAAJA staff are to introduce themselves to Aboriginal Elders on their first visit to an Aboriginal community
- Work with Law and Justice groups including;
 - Lajamanu: Kurdiji
 - Maningrida: Burnawarra



North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

- Ramingining: Mala Leaders
 - Galiwinku: Makarr Dhuni
 - Ngukurr: Yugul Mangi
 - Wurrumiyanga: Ponki Mediators
- Management to invite all key government officials to an Aboriginal community
- Expansion of Client Service Officers (CSOs). CSOs are people with a deep understanding of Aboriginal culture and community – generally Aboriginal themselves or with significant connections to Aboriginal societies. CSOs assist clients to access legal services and with issues related to their legal problems.
- A NAAJA Aboriginal Interpreter Service Policy.
- NAAJA staff to use a plain English and Yolngu Matha legal dictionary
- A NAAJA Appropriate Dress Policy

6. We are accountable in this work

Strategies for 2017-2020

- Law & Justice Manager to report to Board every quarter on the Framework
- A 'Cultural Competency Committee' comprising senior leaders of NAAJA and other respected community persons as a senior oversight mechanism for this Framework. This Committee will ensure the policy and framework is monitored, reviewed and evaluated and with a view of continual improvement.
- An extensive review of the policy will be undertaken every 12 months commencing 1st October 2017.
- The review will include an evaluation of:
 - Progress towards achieving 60% of Aboriginal employees by 2018;
 - Adequacy of reporting to NAAJA Board meetings;
 - Evidence of consultation with the local Aboriginal community and community partners;
 - Implementation of the actions of the Framework.

Supporting documents

1. NAAJA Board Profile
2. NAAJA Aboriginal Interpreter Service Policy
3. NAAJA Aboriginal Employment Policy
4. NAAJA Education and Professional Development Program
5. NAAJA Communications Policy
6. Bilata Legal Pathways Program
7. NAAJA Cadetship and Graduate Program
8. NAAJA Collective Agreement
9. NAAJA Appropriate Dress Policy