

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN INNOVATE

JUNE 2017 – JUNE 2019



AASW
Australian Association
of Social Workers



**RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN**

INNOVATE

Our vision for reconciliation

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is the lead national association for Australian professional social workers. We are committed to advocating on matters of social inclusion, social justice and human rights. Through our RAP we look to progress in our efforts to demonstrate a commitment to our core values and objectives as an association as they apply to addressing past and continuing disadvantages imposed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This includes a particular focus on building meaningful relationships and working together for a more just Australia.

Our business

The AASW has corporate responsibility for promoting and regulating the social work profession in Australia. The AASW represents social workers by ensuring the sustainable development of the profession, the maintenance of accountability and compliance with the benchmark standards, and the promotion of professional identity. Membership offers social workers the opportunity to work collectively to contribute to Australian society, its communities and institutions, in a way that is dedicated to improving social inclusion and social wellbeing.

To assist in achieving our vision and mission, the AASW employs approximately 32 staff nationally across its national office and nine branch offices combined. These staff members are based across the country, with the National Office located in Melbourne and a branch office located in each capital city, as well as a regional branch in North Queensland. The AASW staff group represents many cultural and ethnic backgrounds, however to date we do not have paid staff who self-identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The AASW welcomes the opportunity to change this and identifies strategies in relation to this within the RAP.

Our RAP

Our RAP will involve the AASW working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to test and trial approaches that build relationships, show respect and improve opportunities. Our RAP will enable us to continue to build the right foundations for long-term outcomes.

The purpose of the AASW's RAP is to:

- describe the strategy of the Board to achieve reconciliation and promote understanding
- recognise the special place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians
- demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing through incorporation into social work theory and practice
- facilitate social workers becoming better informed about working with First Australians to achieve the provision of culturally competent, safe and sensitive practice.

The National RAP will be complemented by branch-based reconciliation activities to further the achievement of these goals. The National RAP will continue to be led and monitored by the RAP Working Group, which will be a Committee of the Board. The RAP Working Group was formed in March 2016 and began meeting to develop the new plan. Members of the group included AASW members AJ Williams-Tchen (Wiradjuri/Wotjobulak), David Michie, Donna Broadhurst, Jennie Charlton, Pamela Trotman and representatives from the AASW, including Karen Healy (AASW National President), Josephine Lee (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Director – AASW Board), Cindy Smith (AASW – Acting CEO) and Sebastian Cordoba (Policy and Advocacy Officer).

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Our reconciliation journey

The Australian Association of Social Workers' vision for reconciliation is one of increased understanding and appreciation across the Australian social work profession about the histories and cultures of the First Australians. We envisage the development of meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as colleagues, community members and people who use our services founded on recognition and respect. Through this RAP we move forward together in the spirit of reconciliation and solidarity, for a more just Australia.

So far, on our reconciliation journey we have:

- created a designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Director position on the AASW Board
- adopted a formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander acknowledgement in key documents, such as our Code of Ethics 2010
- included specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content requirements for all AASW accredited social work education programs in the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS)
- developed the AASW statement of apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- prepared and published position statements on Indigenous health, education and employment, as can be found on our website

- engaged in a range of social policy issues to promote reconciliation, respect and understanding
- instituted the previous Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2013–2015
- developed new continuing professional development programs in relation to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that build skills and respect
- recruited ambassadors to progress the RAP.

The AASW's first RAP has ensured that the *Code of Ethics 2010* includes formal acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. *The Code of Ethics* now states:

- social workers acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities
- social workers commit to acknowledge and understand the historical and contemporary disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the implications of this for social work practice
- social workers are responsible for ensuring that their practice is culturally competent, safe and sensitive.

The new RAP, reflecting and going forward

Critical reflection is a core element in social work practice and it is appropriate at this stage of our reconciliation journey to develop this RAP to deepen our commitment to reconciliation.

This RAP continues to build on work from our first RAP. It has an increasing emphasis on building partnerships and working together to achieve real change in the areas of health and wellbeing, education, employment and child placement. Most importantly, it continues to promote the social work principles of recognition, respect, dignity and inclusion.

We also seek to build upon the key learnings and challenges of our previous RAP, including greater monitoring of the implementation of the actions and accountability in relation to meeting the deliverables.

The AASW RAP will be complemented by branch-based reconciliation activities to further the achievement of these goals.

AASW RAP goals 2017–2019

- Goal 1: Developing meaningful relationships built on trust
- Goal 2: Engendering respect and enhancing skills among social workers
- Goal 3: Creating opportunities
- Goal 4: Tracking our progress and reporting

AASW RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2017–2019

Relationships



This goal embodies the commitment to establishing and sustaining mutually respectful, inclusive, and robust connections with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, clients and organisations so we can work collectively to address the challenges of overcoming the legacy of past injustices; and to shape a future society that upholds the richness of our diversity of thought, knowledge and beliefs.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIME LINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RWG oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on the RWG Establish Terms of Reference for the RWG 	July 2017 July 2017 July 2017	Chief Executive Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RWG to meet every three months beginning from July 2017 to monitor and report on RAP implementation 	July, October 2017; January, April, July, October 2018; January, April, July, October 2019	Senior Manager – Social Policy & Communications
2. Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the branches to organise internal events for NRW each year Register all NRW events via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website RWG members and AASW staff to attend and support an external NRW event, through our communications channels 	April–June 2017, 2018 and 2019 April–June 2017, 2018 and 2019 April–June 2017, 2018 and 2019	Media & Marketing Manager

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIME LINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3. Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an engagement strategy to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members and community stakeholders Scope and identify peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations for the AASW to develop relationships at a national and branch level, in coordination with branches Meet with peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement Build stronger relationships with peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bodies and groups identified previously for partnership and collaboration on issues and projects 	<p>December 2017</p> <p>December 2017</p> <p>April 2018</p> <p>July 2018</p>	Senior Manager – Social Policy & Communications
4. Commit to raising internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders Promote the RAP on the AASW website, in newsletters and other communication mediums Develop and implement a plan to embed RAP action items in internal media and communications processes 	<p>August 2017</p> <p>August 2017</p> <p>August 2017</p>	Media & Marketing Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a plan to promote reconciliation at a National and Branch level through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders, external and internal 	Report August 2017, 2018, 2019	Senior Manager – Social Policy & Communications
5. Increase dialogue with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AASW members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander input to all relevant AASW documents Encourage Branch Management Committees to seek Indigenous members' participation in Branch meetings and activities Create opportunities to promote and hear Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices through our newsletters, website and social media. This will be done in in coordination with Media & Marketing Manager 	<p>Report July 2017, 2018, 2019</p> <p>Report July 2017, 2018, 2019</p> <p>Monthly from July 2017 onwards</p>	Chief Executive Officer
6. Promote the practice and work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an edition of <i>Social Work Focus</i> magazine dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work practice 	November 2017	Media & Marketing Manager

Respect



For the AASW to participate in shaping a just and inclusive society we need to demonstrate appreciation and respect for Indigenous ways of doing, being and believing as embodied in our First Nations' cultures, beliefs and relationship with the land. We recognise that we have much to learn from our First Nations' peoples and seek to join with them in shaping an Australian society that is truly just and inclusive.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIME LINE	RESPONSIBILITY
7. Engage employees in continuous cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements, focusing on the applicability of these learnings to the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training strategy for our staff that defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face-to-face workshops or cultural immersion) As part of the training, investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness and cultural competency training Provide opportunities for RWG members and other key AASW leadership staff at a Branch and National level to participate in cultural training 	<p>December 2017</p> <p>April 2018</p> <p>July 2018</p>	Senior Manager Professional Standards
8. Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and communicate an AASW cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country for staff Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships Invite a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country at significant events, including the 2017 and 2019 National Symposium and at the Annual General Meeting Include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all important internal and external meetings and encourage staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all meetings 	<p>August 2017</p> <p>August 2017</p> <p>November 2017, 2019</p> <p>November 2017, 2018, 2019</p>	Senior Manager Professional Standards

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIME LINE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>9. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week, and other key dates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week 	<p>Report July 2017, 2018</p> <p>Report July 2017, 2018</p>	<p>Human Resources Officer (with Chief Executive Officer support)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and participate in Branch NAIDOC Week events Develop a National and Branch media and communications strategy in line with the NAIDOC Week theme to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This will be done through our newsletters, website and social media 	<p>July 2017, 2018</p> <p>June 2017, 2018</p>	<p>Media & Marketing Manager</p>
<p>10. Support members to grow in respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through continuing professional development, with a greater focus on practical skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the National Continuing Professional Development curriculum and other online resources for members that focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific content Review current availability and content of Continuing Professional Development training nationally and ensure all AASW members have access to Continuing Professional Development on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, with a focus on critical reflection and practical skills Investigate and report to the Board on the possibility of ensuring that some level of Continuing Professional Development on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues is mandatory for accreditation 	<p>December 2017</p> <p>April 2018</p> <p>July 2018</p>	<p>Continuing Professional Development Program Officer (with support from Senior Manager – Social Policy & Communications)</p>

Opportunities



The RAP provides the AASW with an important opportunity to identify strategies that promote the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, businesses and organisations in our actions and initiatives as part of our core business. It is through the creation of such opportunities that we seek to build better relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and contribute to removing the structural barriers that have prevented Indigenous Australians from achieving equal outcomes.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIME LINE	RESPONSIBILITY
11. Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve our database and record information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and membership to inform future employment opportunities • Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and members to consult on employment strategies, including professional development • Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Retention strategy • Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media • Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace • Continue to ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Director position is promoted widely and recruited • Contract an AASW consultant on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, as required • All job advertisements for AASW positions to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply • Scope the possibility of employing an Indigenous training and liaison officer 	<p>December 2017</p> <p>April 2018</p> <p>June 2018</p> <p>June 2018</p> <p>June 2018</p> <p>December 2017</p> <p>April 2018</p> <p>June 2017</p> <p>June 2018</p>	Chief Executive Officer
12. Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update procurement policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers for procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses • Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services • Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned business • Investigate Supply Nation membership 	<p>December 2017</p> <p>June 2018</p> <p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2017</p>	Chief Executive Officer

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIME LINE	RESPONSIBILITY
13. Actively promote and support opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to take up leadership positions within the Association and/or the profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional mentoring network Develop a cultural mentoring network for existing staff and managers Develop a proposal to the Board for the establishment of an AASW scholarship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership within the Association by actively encouraging participation through our communications channels 	<p>March 2018 December 2017 July 2018 April 2018</p>	Chief Executive Officer



Governance, Tracking and Reporting

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIME LINE	RESPONSIBILITY
14. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually Investigate and report to the CEO the possibility of participating in the RAP Barometer 	30 September 2017, 2018, 2019 May 2018	Senior Manager – Social Policy & Communications
15. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings in a dedicated section of <i>Social Work Focus</i> magazine, and through our communications channels including e-bulletin, website and social media 	October 2017, 2018, 2019	Media & Marketing Manager
16. Review, refresh and update RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review and feedback Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement 	<p>December 2018 January 2019 May 2019</p>	Chief Executive Officer
17. Ensure accountability and transparency in relation to the RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RWG to report to the Board every three months on the progress of the RAP 	July, October 2017; January, April, July, October 2018; Jan, April, July 2019	Senior Manager – Social Policy & Communications



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