

The background of the top half of the page features a complex Indigenous dot pattern. It consists of numerous concentric circles and swirling lines formed by small dots in white, yellow, orange, red, purple, and pink, set against a dark navy blue background. The pattern is dense and covers the entire upper portion of the image.

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

January 2023 – December 2024



AASW
Australian Association
of Social Workers



**RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN
INNOVATE**

Message from the CEO



Our 2023-2024 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan is the Australian Association of Social Worker’s fourth RAP. It marks our decade long, formal commitment to reconciliation since we launched our first RAP in November 2013.

Development of this RAP provided me with the opportunity to reflect on the AASW commitment to reconciliation – which goes well beyond the last ten years – and to consider what has been achieved and progressed in the Association, across the social work profession, but also more broadly in the Australian community.

Eighteen years ago, the AASW issued a formal statement of apology to members for the social work profession’s involvement in executing racist policies as part of government initiatives which deeply harmed individuals, communities and dispossessed and disconnected people from their families, lands and cultures. At that time, we made a commitment to do better and to support the fulfilment of fundamental human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, including the right to self-determination; and, civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights. Our commitment to supporting the full realisation of these rights has continued since the time of this formal apology.

While it is fair to say that we don’t always get it right, and sometimes the way forward isn’t always clear, I can say that our commitment to reconciliation has not waned during this time. In fact, our commitment to reconciliation is empowered by the more we learn each day.

We know there is a significant role for the social work profession in advocating for and effecting systemic change to enshrine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ rights. We also have a role to play in shifting entrenched and counter-productive attitudes in the broader Australian community. To this end, our commitment to reconciliation goes beyond the 70 staff employed at the AASW. As a professional association, with almost 16,000 members and the responsibility of working with 32 Higher Education Providers to accredit social work programs across the country, with as many as 19,000 students enrolled at any one time, our reach is significant.

Over nearly two decades, we have committed to being educated about, and supporting the education of others on the impacts of colonisation, racism and the need to recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and cultures. We have developed principles and ethical considerations for our members and the students in social work courses to ensure this forms part of their practice, irrespective of their professional setting or stream of practice.

We believe that reconciliation is everybody’s business, and through our work at the AASW, we believe we are creating a current and future workforce that can work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, continuously challenge oppressive practices within our systems while supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in their right to self-determination and Constitutional recognition.

This RAP not only recommits us to this critical work but challenges us to innovate in how we, as the peak body for social workers, can do better.

While there is still so much that needs to be done, we are seeing national intent and action to make change, starting first with the commitment to implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

I pledge here in this RAP to committing the AASW to being an active and supportive ally for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for what will no doubt be a challenging and hopefully a monumental moment in time ahead. We know it is their voices which must lead the way, but the AASW can be a platform to support those voices being amplified and heard far and wide.

Cindy Smith, CEO

Contents

Message from the CEO	2
Our vision for reconciliation	4
A Message from Sue Green, the AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director and RAP Committee Chair	5
Message from Reconciliation Australia	6
About the artist and artwork	7
Our purpose, business, values and principles which inform our commitment to Reconciliation and self-determination	8
Our reconciliation journey	9
What we have achieved on our journey	10
RAP Governance	15
Relationships	16
Respect	18
Opportunities	20
Governance	22

Our vision for reconciliation

The Australian Association of Social Workers' vision for reconciliation is one where all Australians hear and learn the truth of our past, and act in the present to progress a just society which represents all of us.

To achieve this vision, the AASW commits to elevating and amplifying the voices, cultures and knowledges of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to foster a better, fairer society led by our values of caring for everyone.

At the same time our Association must remember past injustices and racist policies the profession of social work has been involved in, and continuously learn and grow from this history to foster meaningful relationships which embody respect, honesty, the right to self-determination, transparency and knowledge sharing with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

A message from Sue Green, the AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director and RAP Committee Chair



The AASW has worked tirelessly to address the social injustices that continue to face Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.

There is still much work to be done and the AASW has committed to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to achieve their aspirations and dreams, whilst recognising that there is not one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice or that one person or any particular group who can speak on behalf of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The AASW seeks to have a variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples involved in aspects of the AASW. To this end the AASW proudly has three Aboriginal social workers on the Board; Linda Ford as the Vice President, Sue Green as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Representative Board Director, and Jessica Russ-Smith, Board Director. There are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers invited in many other areas of the Association. There is an active commitment to seek even more involvement, in order to ensure that the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers and their views are represented within the Association.

Currently the world and in particular Australians, are being impacted by the effects of climate change, via droughts, fires, floods and extreme weather conditions as well as the pandemic. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities are affected more than any other group of people in Australia, especially Torres Strait Islander Peoples who are facing the loss of their lands by rising sea levels. These issues are compounding the other issues that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples face at a disproportionate level

to other Australians. Social workers are committed to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in addressing these issues and in ensuring social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. As we move forward into what are forecast to be interesting times, the AASW will continue to support social workers who work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers, Peoples and communities in addressing these issues and in ensuring social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.

The hard work of the AASW Board, staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, including those members who give their time to the Association have made the creation of this plan possible. It is a deep honour to have worked with you all and I look forward to our future work in achieving the goals of this plan.

Statement from the CEO of Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation Australia commends the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) on the formal endorsement of its fourth Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national Reconciliation movement. With close to three million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program’s potential for impact is greater than ever. The AASW continues to be part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and transformed it into action.

The four RAP types—Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate—allow RAP partners to continuously strengthen Reconciliation commitments and constantly strive to apply learnings in new ways.

An Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation’s Reconciliation journey. It is a time to build the strong foundations and relationships that ensure sustainable, thoughtful and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

An integral part of building these foundations is reflecting on, and cataloguing, the successes and challenges of previous RAPs. Learnings gained through effort and innovation are invaluable resources that the AASW will continuously draw upon to create RAP commitments rooted in experience and maturity.

These learnings extend to the AASW using the lens of Reconciliation to better understand its core business, sphere of influence, and diverse community of staff and stakeholders.

The RAP program’s emphasis on relationships, respect and opportunities gives organisations a framework from which to foster connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples rooted in mutual collaboration and trust.

This Innovate RAP is an opportunity for the AASW to strengthen these relationships, gain crucial experience and nurture connections that will become the lifeblood of its future RAP commitments. By enabling and empowering staff to contribute to this process the AASW will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long term.

Gaining experience and reflecting on pertinent learnings will ensure the sustainability of the AASW’s future RAPs and Reconciliation initiatives, providing meaningful impact towards Australia’s Reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Australian Association of Social Workers on your fourth Innovate RAP. I look forward to following your ongoing Reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

About the artist and artwork



Title: Raising our Voice

This beautiful piece was created especially for the AASW’s Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–2024. Australian Aboriginal art is the oldest living visual art practised in the world.

Adjunct Professor Wayne Quilliam



Aboriginal photographer, artist, filmmaker and drone pilot Adjunct Professor Wayne Quilliam continues to expand his cultural practice as one of Australia’s leading creative minds.

His award-winning career includes the coveted NAIDOC Aboriginal Artist of the Year, Human Rights Media Award, Walkley Award for photojournalism and being nominated as a Master of Photography by *National Geographic*.

He has created and curated over 300 exhibitions throughout the world and is the first photographer to hold four individual exhibitions at the UN in New York and Geneva for his work on Indigenous People’s rights.

Wayne works with Indigenous groups in Cuba, Mexico, Bolivia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia and Guam developing intercultural art and cultural exchanges.

In harmony with his photojournalistic work, he is recognised as one of the country’s top artists for his diverse art practices including the “Lowanna” series that infuses textures of earth onto the human form. The DJIWARR series explores connection to Country as seen through the latest drone technology and through his photographic exhibition of the “Apology”.

In 2020, Wayne released his first book titled *Culture is Life*. His series of works were shown on all four pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge for Vivid Sydney’s First Light ceremony that acknowledges First Nations culture. Wayne’s art has featured on the Mt Yengo wine labels and his 3D creations were shown at the World Expo in Dubai.

www.aboriginal.photography

Our purpose, business, values and principles which inform our commitment to reconciliation and self-determination

The Australian Association of Social Workers is the professional representative body of social workers in Australia, with more than 16,000 members.

The AASW's vision is *Wellbeing and Social Justice for All*. Our Purpose is *supporting social workers and empowering the profession to make a positive difference*. We are responsible for setting standards and for the self-regulation of the social work profession in Australia. This means we develop and enforce a *Code of Ethics*, set professional *Practice Standards* and develop and implement the *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards*.

We develop and deliver continuous professional development offerings to our members and non-members to ensure their practice remains current. We develop and deliver education and training packages to corporate customers such as government agencies and not-for-profits to support the skills, capability and capacity building of their workforce. We both deliver and host international, national, and state and territory events including symposiums and conferences to share knowledge and practice, as well as offer a national mentoring program to support the professional development and needs of our members. We undertake advocacy to all levels of government relating to systemic reforms required to better support the Australian community.

This includes significant and sustained advocacy around the right to self-determination and against discriminative and punitive policies which overwhelmingly impede the fundamental human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Our head office is located in Naarm, on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Boon Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation (North Melbourne, Victoria). We also have staff employed across Australia and member-based volunteer branches in each state and territory. Some branches convene specific volunteer sub-committees to support reconciliation in their jurisdiction. The national office, as well as the state and territory Branch Management Committees, deliver National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events each year.

Our organisational values are Responsiveness, Accountability, Collaboration, Respect and Integrity. All members are bound by the AASW *Code of Ethics* which acknowledges and recognises the impact of colonisation and the ongoing oppression and intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Our Values and our *Code of Ethics* commit us to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples while respecting and supporting their right for self-determination. This commitment includes valuing the knowledge and lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers as they share and strengthen their practice, and to be guided by them in this work.

The AASW *Practice Standards* apply to all members and form an integral part of the social work course curriculum across the accredited courses in Australia to approximately 19,000 social work students. The Practice Standards identify standards which are the minimum requirements of social workers in Australia considered acceptable by the AASW for effective, professional and accountable social work practice. Our 2013 Practice Standards include the need to respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their cultures and our revised 2023 Practice Standards explicitly directs social workers to 'practice in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the spirit of self-determination as agents of change, advancement and healing'.

In March 2022, our members voted to adopt a new Constitution which embeds reconciliation as both an objective and a primary activity of the Association. Since 2010, we have mandated an identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director position, who is also the Chair of our RAP Committee.

Our commitment to advance reconciliation is prominent in all aspects of the Association. We commit to updating this work with each and every iteration to ensure it is in line with contemporary practice and understanding. With each RAP, we develop new and innovative means to drive reconciliation, founded on the non-negotiable principle of self-determination.

Our reconciliation journey

Our reconciliation journey commenced at least 19 years ago when we issued a formal statement of apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for the social work profession's involvement in executing racist policies as part of government initiatives which deeply harmed individuals, communities and dispossessed and disconnected people from their families, lands and cultures.

Our first formal RAP was launched in November 2013 and our 2023-2024 Innovate RAP marks the fourth consecutive Innovate RAP for the Association. While the AASW has both a deep and firm commitment to reconciliation, our reconciliation journey has not been linear, and at times, has been challenging.

Our organisational structure, and the broader social, political, economic and environmental structures it operates within is derived from and continues to be deeply embedded within colonial structures. Challenging these structures and finding ways to decolonise or harmonise ways of being and doing is all part of our reconciliation journey. As we advance on this journey, we continue to bed down internal mechanisms to ensure the voices and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are informing and always present within our work and our organisation.

It is through listening to the voices of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members that we experience some of our greatest challenges, but which also leads to our largest periods of growth.

We have found that it is not always possible to implement feedback provided to us or to moderate or change existing structures quickly. This does not mean that we haven't heard what we have been told, but rather, we need to do more work before we can, as an organisation, consider some of the suggested changes. This at times has been perceived as not listening or inaction and it can be a challenging space to negotiate.

We want to ensure the operationalising of the RAP is sustainable and meaningful across the whole of operations of the Association, and not piecemeal or tokenistic. To this end, the challenges are twofold: we must lay the foundations to be able to implement sustainable change internally and across the social work profession, and to have evaluation frameworks in place to effectively measure this change; and to balance this in the context of the whole of operations of the Association, with competing demands and limited resources. This is a challenge across all operations of the Association and not specific to the RAP. The groundwork in developing this iteration of the RAP has hopefully begun addressing some of these operational challenges and in doing so, has laid the foundations for us to take our commitment to the next stage of our reconciliation journey by moving to a Stretch RAP at the end of this cycle.

As you will see in the timeline on the following pages, we have taken time to understand what it is that we have both delivered and have achieved over the past 19 years. This process has enabled us to evaluate our actions and deliverables and to acknowledge where there is fragmentation and a lack of consistency in maintaining activities and meeting deliverables. It also provided us with a better understanding of our strengths, weaknesses and where our opportunities are to effect change, both internally and systemically. In doing so, we have been able to consolidate some of the work to date into achievable actions in this current RAP. We hope this groundwork sets us up for a cohesive approach to reconciliation and all the activities we undertake.

Our reconciliation journey is an ongoing process, but within this process, we want to show our growth. In this RAP, we aim to strengthen our internal operational processes and reporting mechanisms and better evaluate individual activities and the RAP as a whole. This will allow us to better capture the great work the Association is undertaking, but more importantly, learn from what we have done – whether that be a successful or an unsuccessful initiative or activity. Ultimately, the learnings, whether positive or negative, will contribute to our growth.

What we have achieved on our journey

YEAR	ACTION
2003	<i>Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving Outcomes</i> launched and for the first time includes: ‘An understanding of society and how it has developed and is organised’ - ‘An understanding of the history of Indigenous Australians is an essential component of this knowledge of society under knowledge of practice.’
2004	Reconciliation and Indigenous Working Party, in consultation with the <i>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Work Association</i> draft and release AASW <i>Statement of Apology</i> .
2009	<i>Indigenous Allied Health Australia</i> (‘IAHA’) created and AASW member Jarwoyn woman Kylie Stothers appointed to IAHA Board. AASW members continue to be IAHA Board members to this day.
2010	AASW <i>Code of Ethics</i> (‘CoE’) front cover illustration features <i>Murr-roo-ma Mur-rook Boo-larng</i> ’ (To Make Good Together) artwork and for the first time includes a Preamble acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into the aims of the social work profession, practices, ethics and values.
10 November 2010	The 2010 Constitution of the Australian Association of Social Workers (‘the Constitution’) is the first AASW Constitution to mandate a designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director position on the AASW Board.
2011	<i>Australian Social Work</i> the AASW’s international journal which publishes current thinking and trends in social work practice, education and policy releases special issue edition over two parts (volume 64) on <i>Australian Indigenous Social Work</i> .
February 2011	<i>What Do We Know? The Experiences of Social Workers Working Alongside Aboriginal People</i> (Vol 64; issue 1) published in Australian Social Work and is currently (2022) the 14th most cited article from the journal.
2012	<i>Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards</i> (ASWEAS) includes the <i>Code of Ethics</i> , Preamble, mandates curriculum content must include practice with <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities</i> . Accreditation Review Panel Report includes specific questions to ensure compliance.
2013	AASW <i>Practice Standards 2013</i> includes acknowledgement and a subsection of a Standard to ‘respect, strive to understand and promote the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their cultures.’
March 2013	<i>The Intersection of Trauma, Racism, and Cultural Competency in Effective Work with Aboriginal People: Waiting for Trust</i> published in <i>Australian Social Work</i> and is currently (2022) the 2nd most cited article from the journal.
2013	Cultural Awareness training initially implemented around 2013, but sustainably implemented in 2016 where both basic and advanced training continues to be delivered to all new and existing staff.
Prior to 2013	Acknowledgement to Country and Welcome to Country Policy adopted and policy regularly reviewed to ensure contemporary language and cultural appropriateness. (Revised 2021)

YEAR	ACTION
NOVEMBER 2013 – JUNE 2015 1ST RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN	
2014	<i>Practice Standards for Mental Health Social Workers 2014</i> developed and Standard 3.2 indicates there is a requirement to ‘Understands the way mental illness and mental health are conceptualised in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ culture of origin.’
20 March 2014	National Close the Gap Day - Statement of Intent signed between IAHA and AHPA and AHPA affiliate organisations – AASW Board Member and CEO signed as an affiliate organisation of AHPA. The Statement of Intent sets out our commitment to work together to achieve equality in health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians by 2030.
March 2014	Special National Reconciliation Week Edition of News Bulletin where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AASW members were provided a space to share their social work practice histories, stories, knowledge and experience.
July 2014	2 x Scholarships provided to the <i>Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development</i> held in Melbourne.
2015	ASWEAS revised and maintains all mandated curriculum and graduate attributes relating to knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
2015	AASW is part of the ‘Recognise’ campaign and an active campaigner to get members to register their support with the campaign – the movement to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the Australian Constitution.
2015	A guide for internationally trained social workers is developed– <i>Preparing for Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Practice in Australia</i> .
May 2015	“ <i>Living where I like – and loving where I live</i> ” is delivered by Jarwoyn woman Kylie Stothers at the 13th National Rural Health Conference in Darwin.
17 September 2015	Sponsored the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Workers Association (NCATSISWA) <i>3rd International Indigenous Social Work Conference</i> in Darwin, NT, which brought together First Nations social workers from around the world to share knowledge, experiences and issues affecting First Nations peoples.
March 2016	Implementation of the RAP Taskforce/name changed to RAP Working Group in 2017 in line with RA requirements.
2016	Submission to <i>Royal Commission</i> into the <i>Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory</i> - the AASW calls for a significant increase in services that recognises the fundamental right that children and families to have respect, participation and culturally appropriate supports. The AASW also expresses deep concerns about the ongoing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection and youth detention system.
2016	AASW National President Professor Karen Healy AM and Dr Christine Fejo King from The National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Workers Association issue a joint letter to the Prime Minister in relation to Don Dale and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in detention. They and have called on the government to expand the terms of the Royal Commission, citing it needs to be broader in scope, independent and in consultation with Indigenous Australians.

YEAR	ACTION
JUNE 2017 – JUNE 2019 2ND RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN	
2017	Parliament of Victoria <i>Inquiry into Youth Justice Centres</i> submission. The AASW advocates for the rights of children and express significant concern regarding the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection and youth detention system.
2018	Submission to Council of Australian Governments <i>Closing the Gap Refresh</i> .
April 2018	Christine Craik, AASW President and Linda Ford, AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director write and publish ABC news article <i>Aboriginal children need loving, safe and culturally appropriate homes</i> .
August 2018	<i>International Day of the World's Indigenous peoples</i> - yarn with Josephine Lee, winner of the Northern Territory Mary Moylan Award for Excellence in Social Work, and former Board member and RAP Working Group member. Recording is available to members and the public. Josephine tells us to look to First Nations culture when seeking solutions to environmental problems.
Autumn 2018	First edition of <i>Social Work Focus</i> , the AASW's membership magazine, dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, cultures, knowledge and practice launched.
June 2019	National Reconciliation Week: the AASW releases a video - in conversation with <i>Linda Ford – AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director and Christine Craik – AASW National President</i> . State/Territories hold their own local NRW events, with support from National office.
August 2019	<i>International Day of the World's Indigenous peoples 2019</i> : celebrating Indigenous languages with Candice Butler - Queensland Branch Management Committee member celebrating IDOWIP and the UN-declared Year of Indigenous Languages - 2019.
August 2019	Breakfast Radio Interview: Linda Ford AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director chats to Greg Reid of Black Star Radio about Indigenous Languages on <i>International Day Of The World's Indigenous peoples</i> .
JULY 2020 – JUNE 2022 3RD RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN	
Spring/Summer 2019/2020	2nd edition of <i>Social Work Focus</i> dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, cultures, knowledge and practice.
July 2020	Online Truth-Telling session held with members and non-members.
2020	ASWEAS revised and builds on existing commitment, and required curriculum and now includes 'Constructions of social work purpose, place and practice - the complex history of social work, in Australia and internationally, with a particular focus on the historical and contemporary disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the implications of this for social work practice; The history and contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; and, Psychosocial health and wellbeing across the life cycle.'
August 2020	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Advisory Panel established to assist in informing policy responses.
2020	Joined the Raise the Age Campaign to raise the age of criminal responsibility in Australia from 10 to 14 and actively engage in this campaign.
June 2020	National Reconciliation Week event: <i>In This Together</i> video with Linda Ford – AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director and Christine Craik – AASW National President. Distributed to members and available to the public on the AASW website.
2020	Social Work Capability Framework for whole of profession developed including a capability dedicated to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.

YEAR	ACTION
JULY 2020 – JUNE 2022 3RD RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN	
November 2020	Delivered <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Work</i> Symposium - 425 delegates attended.
Spring 2020	3rd edition of <i>Social Work Focus</i> dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, cultures, knowledge and practice.
January 2021	Linda Ford, Board Director, and past Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Director and RAP Working Group Chair appointed to the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) Indigenous Commission.
January 2021	Community Hub group established for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples social workers.
July 2021	The Editorial Board of Australian <i>Social Work</i> journal develops and implements <i>Guidelines for Articles by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Authors and About Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues</i> which is publicly available on Taylor and Francis Online under instructions for author for the journal.
March 2021	<i>Social Work peoples</i> , the AASW's podcast series which explores the diverse world of social work and connects listeners to the people driving the change and providing advocacy on the issues that impact upon the quality of life of all Australians, features Dr. Lorraine Muller who discusses decolonising the human services system.
April 2021	Australian Government convenes <i>Indigenous Voice to Parliament</i> consultation and the AASW, through consultation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members and National Advisory Panel submit in support of the <i>Uluru Statement from the Heart</i> .
May 2021	<i>Social Work Peoples</i> episode for National Reconciliation Week features Pat Turner AM who discusses reconciliation.
June 2021	States and territories host their own National Reconciliation Week activities.
Feb 2021	Mentoring program launched with specific pairing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors and mentees.
April – June 2021	<i>Australian Social Work</i> top Journal article downloaded in the last 12 months is ' <i>Wayanha: A Decolonised Social Work</i> ' by Sue Green and Bindi Bennett.
June 2021	<i>National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children Successor Plan</i> submission to Department of Social Service's.
July 2021	NAIDOC Week celebrations hosted by state and territories.
September 2021	Equal Employment Opportunity & Discrimination Policy and Workplace Harassment & Bullying Policy adopted.
Spring 2021	4th edition of <i>Social Work Focus</i> dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, cultures, knowledge and practice launched.
October 2021	Corporate supplier contract negotiated with IAHA and cultural responsiveness eLearning purchased for a two year period made available to AASW members via our online catalogue.

YEAR	ACTION
JULY 2020 – JUNE 2022 3RD RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN	
November 2021	AASW hosts the <i>26th Asia-Pacific Regional Social Work Conference 2021 online</i> . Australian Welcome to Country provided to a global audience; International Federation of Social Work Indigenous Commission provides keynote panel discussion and includes Board Member Linda Ford; AASW Climate Statement launched which calls out the need to address the climate emergency by drawing on First Nations Knowledges; and, 5 x scholarships provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to attend the conference.
November 2021	AASW National Excellence Awards launches inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Member Social Worker of the Year.
26 Jan 2022	2021's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Worker of the Year, AJ Williams-Tchen interviewed about what 26th January means and indicates it is a day to reflect on our nation's true history. The video is distributed through all media communication channels including publicly accessible social media channels.
2022	Australian Social Work has special themed issues (volume 75) - <i>First Nations/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues in Social Work: Moving Forward</i> – this marks the second special themed issue dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
31 March 2022	A revised Constitution is accepted by the AASW members, which introduces both objectives and activities of the Association which relate to reconciliation initiatives.
June 2022	Two videos of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members discussing what reconciliation means to them developed and communicated across all communication channels.
June 2022	Review of cultural learning needs of staff and draft Cultural Learning Strategy developed.
June 2022	Draft Practice Standards 2022 developed and released for consultation with members. For the first time, the Practice Standards include a specific, standalone Standard: 'Social workers practice in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the spirit of self-determination as agents of change, advancement and healing.'
June 2022	Signed up to participate in the biennial Workplace RAP Barometer (WRB).



RAP Governance

The AASW has a unique governance structure for the RAP which incorporates our Constitutionally recognised and mandated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director position, a RAP Committee consisting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director(s) and members, a RAP working group and the RAP Champion.

A. Reconciliation Action Plan Committee (formerly named the RAP Working Group).

The RAP Committee provides the overarching governance of the RAP to ensure robust accountability in meeting deliverables. The Chair of the RAP Committee is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director, who reports to the full Board of the Association. The RAP Committee currently consists of:

NAME	ROLE
Professor Sue Green	A Galari woman of the Wiradjuri nation; Chair of RAP Committee; AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director.
Shirley Young	Nukunu woman, living on Kurna Country, Adelaide
Brenda McDermott	Palawa woman of the Manegin Community, Tarkine Nation, lutruwita living on Gunaikurnai Country; AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Worker of the Year 2022.
Patricia Hayward	Noongar women of the Wardandi Noongar Boodja, South West, Western Australia.

B. Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (formerly named the RAP Implementation Group)

The RAP Working Group is responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of the RAP and ensures the RAP actions and deliverables are progressed. Quarterly reporting is provided to the RAP Committee. The RAP Working Group consists of the senior leadership team, which currently includes:

TITLE	
Executive Assistant to the CEO	Manager, Education and Training
Manager, Human Resources	Chief Financial Officer
Manager, Professional Practice and Engagement	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy; RAP Champion
Deputy CEO	Manager, Brand Strategy and Communications

C. Reconciliation Action Plan Champion

The designated RAP Champion is the Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy and is attached to this specific role.



Relationships

We have a long-standing commitment to respectful and inclusive relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and Association members, and with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies and organisations. Our robust relationships bring people together to learn and collaborate, while amplifying the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples through all aspects of the Association, including through our advocacy,

events, training, communications, governance frameworks, and external partnerships. In doing so, we have a powerful platform on which to elevate principles of self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Focus area: AASW Strategic Pathway 2, 3 & 4: We will foster a well-trained and highly skilled social work profession; We will be a strong voice for social workers and social justice; and, We will deliver operational excellence.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1.1 Establish, maintain and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	1.1.1 Maintain consultative frameworks with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to ensure their voices are represented in the work we do.	Review June 2023; December 2023; June 2024; December 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	1.1.2 Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders including our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members and external organisations to develop guiding principles for ongoing engagement.	June 2023	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	1.1.3 Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2023	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
1.2 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	1.2.1 Continue to circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	1.2.2 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May-3 June 2023, 2024	CEO
	1.2.3 Continue to encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May-3 June 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	1.2.4 Organise at least one National NRW event each year and support branches and committees to deliver initiatives.	27 May-3 June 2023, 2024	Professional Practice and Engagement Manager
	1.2.5 Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website .	May 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	1.2.6 Engage, where appropriate, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers who are non-members to participate in NRW events hosted by the Association.	27 May-3 June 2023, 2024	Professional Practice and Engagement Manager
	1.2.7 Continue to communicate NRW through all of our channels leading up to, during and post NRW about NRW, the theme and initiatives being undertaken.	May 2023, 2024	Brand Strategy and Communications Manager

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1.3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	1.3.1 Continue to commit to reconciliation as an objective and activity in the Association's Constitution.	Review October 2023, 2024	CEO
	1.3.2 Update induction processes to include reference to reconciliation and the RAP in onboarding processes and maintained across our workforce.	June 2023	Manager, Human Resources
	1.3.3 Continuously improve our communications which embeds our commitment to reconciliation across all our channels.	Review June 2023, 2024	Brand Strategy and Communications Manager
	1.3.4 Continue to build relationships with influential stakeholders such as Parliamentarians and government agencies to support reconciliation outcomes.	Review June 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	1.3.5 Continue to promote reconciliation at our events including national conferences, symposiums and CPD offerings.	Review June 2023; December 2023; June 2024; December 2024	Professional Practice and Engagement Manager
	1.3.6 Continue to collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, RAP Organisations in the RAP network and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	Review June 2023; December 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	1.3.7 Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to understand the complexities of the different views regarding the Uluru Statement of the Heart.	June 2023	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	1.3.8 Investigate opportunities to deliver awareness raising and information sessions around the principles of the Uluru Statement of the Heart that honour the different perspectives on the Statement.	June 2023	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	1.3.9 Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to understand what a successful truth-telling mechanism would look like within our membership organisation.	June 2023	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
1.4 Promote positive cross-cultural relations by creating a culturally safe workplace	1.4.1 Ensure all relevant policies and procedures are reviewed with a lens of cultural safety and appropriateness, in line with best practices and emerging knowledges.	Review June 2023, 2024	Manager, Human Resources
	1.4.2 Continue to educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	Review June 2023, 2024	Manager, Human Resources
	1.4.3 Ensure the anti-discrimination policy is reviewed annually and in consultation with the RAP Committee.	June 2023, 2024	Manager, Human Resources
	1.4.4 Develop induction processes which embeds cultural learning and mandatory modules on racism, diversity and inclusion.	December 2023	Manager, Human Resources



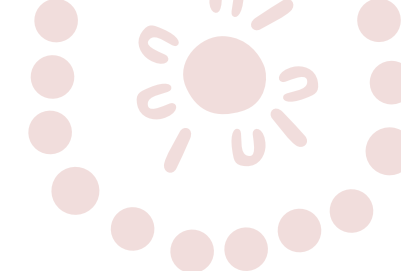
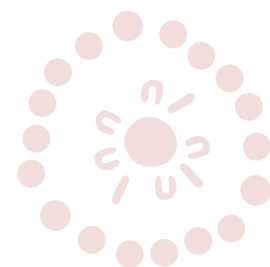
Respect

To be unified in the present to advance a fair and just society which represents all of us, not just some of us, we must learn from, respect and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples knowledges. The acknowledgment of past harms the profession imposed upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples signified a pivotal point in our journey to move forward in not only recognising the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples knowledges, but truly understanding how we, as an Association, with Association members working in all aspects of the broader community and society, can support the

structural changes needed to foster a future which meaningfully and respectfully implements positive change for an inclusive and just society. This work is at the core of the Association's vision of wellbeing and social justice for all.

Focus area: Strategic Pathway 2, 3 & 4: We will foster a well-trained and highly skilled social work profession; We will be a strong voice for social workers and social justice; and, We will deliver operational excellence.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
2.1 Continuously increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	2.1.1 Implement a cultural learning strategy and communicate the strategy to ensure active involvement from our staff.	February 2023	Manager, Education and Training
	2.1.2 Review the cultural learning strategy in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.	Review February 2024	Manager, Education and Training
	2.1.3 Provide opportunities for all staff, RAP Working Group members and Board members to participate in cultural learning.	Review June 2023, 2024	CEO
2.2 Build respect for and increase contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within and for the Association	2.2.1 Provide opportunities to increase contributions and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members across all publications.	Review June 2023, 2024	Brand Strategy and Communications Manager
	2.2.2 Continue to incorporate recognition and respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledges and rights in our Code of Ethics, Practice Standards and Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) and review and update this commitment with each iteration to ensure it is always culturally appropriate for the time.	Review June 2023, 2024	CEO
	2.2.3 Maintain an annual edition of SW Focus dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander topics and focus.	September 2023, 2024	Brand Strategy and Communications Manager
	2.2.4 Continue to increase representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offerings, including trainers and presenters and participants.	Review June 2023, 2024	Manager, Education and Training



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
2.3 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by continuing to observe cultural protocols.	2.3.1 Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement to Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Review June 2023, 2024	CEO
	2.3.2 Maintain and communicate to staff our Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol Policy, and review to ensure protocols are up to date and culturally appropriate.	August 2023, 2024	CEO
	2.3.3 Continue to invite a local Traditional Owners or Custodians to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant Association events at the state, territory, national and international level, as determined by Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol Policy.	Review December 2023, 2024	CEO
	2.3.4 Continue to include a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement to Country at the commencement of internal and external meetings as per the Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol Policy.	Review December 2023, 2024	CEO
2.4 Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	2.4.1 RAP Working Group to promote and be invited to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	2.4.2 Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff and maintain HR policies which embeds this.	First week in July 2023, 2024	CEO
	2.4.3 Organise at least one national NAIDOC Week event, or other activity for members and support states and territories to deliver initiatives.	First week in July, 2023, 2024	Professional Practice and Engagement Manager

Opportunities

Central to the operations of the Association, and by extension applicable to all Association members, is our Code of Ethics and Practice Standards which codify the social work profession’s commitment to working alongside and in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the spirit of self-determination. These principles flow through all our operations and into our extensive sphere of influence including to our members working directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the broader community via our core operations of education, training, continuous professional development, events, accrediting universities to deliver

social work courses, advocacy of and for the profession as well as with our partners and alliances, suppliers, and in all our internal and external communications. As existing opportunities become business as usual, we strive to uncover and drive new opportunities as agents of change, advancement, and healing.

Focus area: Strategic Pathway 2, 3 & 4: We will foster a well-trained and highly skilled social work profession; We will be a strong voice for social workers and social justice; and, We will deliver operational excellence.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3.1 Actively promote and support opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to take up leadership positions within the Association and the profession	3.1.1 Continue to maintain a recognised and mandated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified Board position within the AASW Constitution.	Review October 2023, 2024	CEO
	3.1.2 Encourage participation in the national mentoring program of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors and mentees.	April 2023, 2024	Professional Practice and Engagement Manager
3.2 Increase and actively support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to better engage with the Association	3.2.1 Conduct an analysis, using available data, and supported through consultative frameworks, on the professional needs of our members and non-members.	June 2023	Professional Practice and Engagement Manager
	3.2.2 Identify and develop relevant practice resources for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members.	December 2023	Professional Practice and Engagement Manager
	3.2.3 Continue to provide 4 scholarships per annum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to attend the annual symposium/conference.	Review June 2023, 2024	Professional Practice and Engagement Manager
	3.2.4 Explore the feasibility of developing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work credential.	June 2024	Manager, Education and Training

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3.3 Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	3.3.1 Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2023	Manager, Human Resources
	3.3.2 Where available engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2023	Manager, Human Resources
	3.3.3 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention strategy.	December 2023	Manager, Human Resources
	3.3.4 Continue to advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Review June 2023, 2024	Manager, Human Resources
	3.3.5 Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	June 2023, 2024	Manager, Human Resources
3.4 Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	3.4.1 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	February 2023	CFO
	3.4.2 Continue to explore procurement opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and businesses where possible.	Review June 2023, 2024	CFO
	3.4.3 Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.	February 2023, 2024	CFO
	3.4.4 Continue to engage in procurement practices which actively remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Review June 2023, 2024	CFO
	3.4.5 Where feasible, maintain a commercial relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Review June 2023, 2024	Manager, Education and Training
3.5 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	3.5.1 Explore the feasibility of increasing the content of the National Continuing Professional Development (CPD) curriculum and other online resources for members which focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific content.	June 2023, 2024	Manager, Education and Training
	3.5.2 Explore opportunities to engage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander facilitators in the CPD curriculum and other online resources for members.	June 2023, 2024	Manager, Education and Training



Governance

The Association remains deeply committed to the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in our governance structures of the Association and in the governance framework for the Reconciliation Action Plan. In doing so,

we aim to ensure our RAP remains a collaborative and inclusive framework to guide our reconciliation journey.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4.1 Maintain an effective RAP Committee to drive governance of the RAP	4.1.1 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP Committee.	Review January 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.1.2 Maintain the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director as Chair of the RAP Committee.	Review January 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.1.3 Maintain and regularly review the Terms of Reference for the RAP Committee.	Review January 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.1.4 Meet at least 4 times per year to ensure RAP deliverables are on track.	January, April, July, October 2023 January, April, July, October 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
4.2 Maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive development and implementation of the RAP.	4.2.1 Maintain Senior Leaders as representatives on the RWG.	Review January 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.2.2 Develop Terms of Reference and operational procedures for the RAP Working Group.	February 2023	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.2.3 Maintain and regularly review the RAP Working Group Terms of Reference.	February 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.2.4 Meet at least six times per year to drive implementation, progress and monitor RAP impact and outcomes.	January, March June, July, September, December 2023 January, March June, July, September, December 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.2.5 Produce quarterly progress and traffic light reports to be submitted to the RAP Committee.	January, April, July, October 2023 January, April, July, October 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
4.3 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	4.3.1 Define budget resources required for RAP implementation.	May 2023, 2024	CFO
	4.3.2 Engage our senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Review January 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.3.3 Maintain appropriate systems to track, measure, evaluate and report on RAP commitments.	Review December 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.3.4 Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	Review January 2023, 2024	CEO

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4.4 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	4.4.1 Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.4.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.4.3 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.4.4 Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	January, April, July, October 2023 January, April, July, October 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.4.5 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	November 2023, 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.4.6 Participate in the Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	April 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
4.5 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	4.5.1 If appropriate, submit an EOI for a Stretch RAP with a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia.	Januaryn 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.5.2 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	December 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
	4.5.3 Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	December 2024	Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy



AASW

Australian Association
of Social Workers

Contact for all enquiries

Cindy Smith, CEO

Phone: 03 9320 1000

Email: Cindy.Smith@aasw.asn.au