

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK

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WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that this edition contains the name of a deceased person. Caution is advised.

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The AASW has an online course titled **Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities**. This 1.5-hour online course is designed to support social workers and allied health professionals to provide culturally sensitive, respectful and inclusive services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

The online course is presented by an Aboriginal female psychologist and a non-Aboriginal male social worker. Both of these presenters are seasoned trainers.

The content of this online course aims to raise the confidence of non-Aboriginal staff to work with Aboriginal communities in a respectful way, all supported by referenced research.

The AASW online courses are available on-demand, which means that they're there when you need it, anytime, on any device.



Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities: Part One

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Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities: Part Two

written and presented by

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WHEN WORKING WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES**

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NEXT EDITION

Contributions for the Autumn 2020 issue will be accepted until 27 March. The theme is the **Asia Pacific**.

AASW members whose articles are published in *Social Work Focus* can claim time spent to research and prepare them towards CPD requirements, specifically Category 3. We accept up to five articles in line with each issue's social work theme.

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Review panel

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The AASW respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians, and pays its respects to Elders past and present.

Join us on social media:



Working through the process of decolonisation



CHRISTINE CRAIK
AASW National President

Welcome to this Spring edition of *Social Work Focus* - where the 'focus' is on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work in 2019, the UN International Year of Indigenous Languages. I know you will be inspired by the stories and articles in this edition, and none more so than the reflections of Tom Calma. Tom's his reminder to us all is of the critical importance of language and the role it plays in preserving and celebrating culture.

The deliberate eradication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and cultures was, and continues to be, a destructive instrument of colonialism. This devastating tactic was used in the colonisation of many countries however Australia is unique in that we are now the only colonised commonwealth country that does not have a treaty with the original owners of the land. Whiteness influences every level of society and how we understand everything.

As social workers, we need to confront and deconstruct this whiteness and the white dominant discourses and structures of all our systems, especially those systems that are our human services and human welfare systems. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, academics and practitioners are promoting 'decolonising practices' - a process through which white social workers deconstruct, interrogate, reflect, learn and critically engage in practice that is informed and respectful.

This goes beyond cultural awareness. Decolonising practices involve deep reflection for those of us who are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. It involves a critical challenge of the colonial narratives of history, with a firm acknowledgement that we hold settler-colonial privilege, regardless of how and/or when we came to these lands. We need to understand the ongoing impacts of colonisation and hold a mirror up to our own practices

and our participation in this. Those of us who work in these systems, work in systems that continue to oppress, 'other' and discriminate through ignorance and 'whiteness' that takes little to no account of family and kinship practices that fall outside the white 'nuclear' family fantasy.

Decolonisation is a process and a journey that requires work and requires white social workers (like me) to step outside of their comfort zone. What do you know about the traditional owners of the land on which you work and on which you live? Do you know the cultural norms, the kinship norms and responsibilities? Do you know who the elders are and are they part of the work that you do? Have you made those connections and if not, it's time to step up. Acknowledgment of traditional owners and custodians at the beginning of a meeting has been a step in the right direction, but it is no longer enough.

I am very excited about the growth of writing in the area of decolonising practices. Much of this has come from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, academics and practitioners alongside others in the Pacific region. Enjoy the work, thoughts and reflections of those who have contributed to this edition of *Focus*.

-

AASW Conference 2019 a huge success

Looking forward to hosting the IFSW Asia Pacific Conference in 2021



CINDY SMITH
Chief Executive Officer

It's hard to believe 2019 has drawn to a close and we are just about to embark on 2020. Over the last few months, we have achieved our biggest and best national event ever, AASW Conference 2019, in Adelaide, South Australia. It was an action-packed two days and we received terrific feedback from those who attended.

The highlights were the wonderful Indigenous content of the program, which celebrated this year as the International Year of Indigenous Languages; keynote speakers Natasha Stott Despoja AO, Professor Tom Calma AO, International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) UN Commissioner Priska Fleischlin; our celebratory dinner, which featured Debbie Kilroy OAM; and the session on social work registration, featuring the Hon Tammy Franks MLC, Natalie Cook MP and Lucy Sandford-Reed, Chief Executive of Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. We thank the Hon Rachel Sanderson MP, South Australia's Minister for Child Protection, for opening the conference.

Our other very big news is that in 2021, the AASW will host the IFSW Asia Pacific Conference, in Brisbane, Queensland. The AASW's successful bid was announced during this year's Asia Pacific conference in Bengaluru, India in September. It will be held in November 2021, alongside bid partners from eight Queensland-based universities and the Australian and New Zealand Social Work and Welfare Education and Research (ANZSWWER).

There is plenty to see and do in Brisbane, including Southbank's lively bars and restaurants, CityCat trips on the river, Kodak Beach, Kangaroo Point cliffs, the City Botanical Gardens and the Gallery of Modern Art. This is an unmatched opportunity to network and connect with social workers in the Asia Pacific in a gorgeous location. We are very excited about this and we especially expect to see

all our members located in south-east Queensland to be there and show everyone your beautiful part of the world.

As you know, the AASW is transforming the way we deliver services and information. Our research showed that more than 80 per cent of you, our members, had no interaction at all with a physical office in the last year. We plan to phase out the state and territory offices and replace them with flexible working spaces and more convenient meeting and event facilities. In addition, the resources currently used to maintain fixed offices will be redeployed to invest in our online infrastructure, where you can access information and services no matter where you live and work.

We conducted surveys in 2019 on member communications and the website, which you may remember participating in. You told us that you are accessing your emails, our website and social media on your phone – we need to invest to adapt to those changes in technology. We know that members are time-poor and want easy access to other forms of information, networking and communication, such as CPD delivered via webinars, online meetings, videos and podcasts. You want to be able to participate while you live a busy life both in your working and private time.

We also know that you still value high quality face-to-face networking and CPD – this new model will ensure that events such as the conferences I've spoken about earlier are world class,

engaging and an all-round terrific experience.

We are very excited about the changes as they start happening in early 2020. As I write this, we are scoping out potential vendors to carry this project to fruition. Next year will see us not only deliver this, but a Symposium, with details to be announced in 2020, a further expansion of the credentialing program, a newly developed profession-wide Capability Framework, progress on social work registration in South Australia, a new national CPD program, a revised Code of Ethics and a new Reconciliation Action Plan.

Having said all that, we are heading into the summer break. We know all our members work hard throughout the year, and many of you will also be working over the summer, with perhaps the exception of the public holidays. We know family violence tends to peak around this time, and it is also the time of the year where we are most prone to climate disasters, such as the current fires, floods and drought affecting most of the country. Many of you have been volunteering with the recovery effort, as NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian acknowledged recently. We thank all members who got in touch with us, asking how they could help.

I wish all members a happy and safe summer and holiday season and I look forward to 2020. We hope you enjoy this edition of *Social Work Focus*, which is a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work.

•

Prof Tom Calma AO

Celebrating 20 years of Reconciliation Australia in 2020

2019: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Professor Tom Calma AO was a Keynote Speaker at AASW Conference 2019. Just prior to his appearance at the conference, it was announced that he and 19 other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders had been selected by the Minister for Indigenous Affairs Ken Wyatt to shape the options for an Indigenous voice to government, as outlined in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

At the conference, Professor Calma presented on 'Working Together: Progressing Justice, Equity and Reconciliation in Australia', where he outlined the five dimensions of Reconciliation:

- Race relations
- Institutional integrity
- Historical acceptance
- Unity
- Equality and equality.

He pointed out that half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people believe that **Australia is a racist country**.

However, actions to Reconciliation is progressing:

- **Support** for Reconciliation continues to grow
- First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Australians alike think our relationship is **important**
- Australians **want to learn more** about cultures of our people
- More Australians want to learn about the **truth** of our history.

Professor Calma pointed out that social workers are at the forefront of changes and that evidence shows that programs **designed with** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people yield better results.

In 2020, it will be 20 years since the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation

(precursor to Reconciliation Australia) was established, beginning when 250,000 people marched ACROSS Sydney Harbour Bridge supporting Reconciliation. May 2020 will be the opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the achievements, set a Reconciliation agenda and engage more Australians.

Professor Calma is an Aboriginal Elder from the Kungarakana (Koong ara kun) tribal group and a member of the Iwaidja (Ee wad ja) tribal group whose traditional lands are south west of Darwin and on the Cobourg Peninsula in the Northern Territory of Australia, respectively. He is a social work and community development graduate from the South Australian Institute of Technology (now UniSA). He has been involved in Indigenous affairs at a local, community, state, national and international level and worked in the public sector for over 45 years and is currently on a number of boards and committees focusing on rural and remote Australia, health, education, justice reinvestment, research, leadership, reconciliation and economic development.

Professor Calma has since 2010 held the position of National Coordinator Tackling Indigenous Smoking and he was appointed a Professor at the University of Sydney Medical School on 1 January 2015 to perform the role of Chair and Patron of the Poche Indigenous Health Network. He is a



Social workers are at the forefront of changes

member of the Secretaries Equality and Diversity Council, Co-sponsors with the Australian Public Service Commissioner the Indigenous SES network and is Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia.

He has been on the University of Canberra Council since 2008 and as Chancellor from 2014 to December 2022. Professor Calma has also served on the National Council of the Defence Reserves Support Council since 1 March 2013 and will retire on 29 September 2020.

•

AASW Conference 2019

Our biggest ever

The AASW Conference 2019: *Challenging Inequality, Working Together for a Just Society* was a resounding success, with more than 500 delegates in attendance and 140 papers presented. We welcomed the contribution and support of 26 exhibitors, including the Gold Sponsor McArthur and Silver Sponsors, Lumary, 1800 Respect, Meaningful Ageing Australia and the Department of Human Services.

The keynote speakers were Natasha Stott Despoja AO; Professor Tom Calma AO, and appearing via videolink from Switzerland was IFSW UN Commissioner Priska Fleischlin. They were well-received by delegates and provided valuable context for much of the content and discussion during the conference sessions.

The Welcome to Country was delivered by Mickey O'Brien, an Aboriginal Elder who is a descendent of the Kaurna and Narrunga peoples. His words and engaging style set a great tone to the conference, especially as a key focus of the conference was this year's UN theme: International Year of Indigenous Languages. AASW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander board representative Linda Ford compered the plenary sessions.

The conference was opened by the Hon. Rachel Sanderson, South Australia's Minister for Child Protection, who lauded our efforts for social work registration in South Australia. AASW's National President Christine Craik delivered the Norma Parker address, which was inspirational, well-received and showed that our Association is forward thinking, with members at its heart.

The Annual General Meeting was held on the Friday afternoon of the conference, giving members the opportunity to hear from CEO Cindy Smith and Christine Craik about the achievements of the Association over the past 12 months.

Debbie Kilroy was the Conference Dinner Speaker, providing a blistering critique of the systems of oppression that lead to the incarceration of women and girls, and stimulating considerable discussion and debate.

In the final session of the conference, a panel on the registration of social work as a profession was held, with participation from now former director Anita Phillips, the Hon. Tammy

Franks MLC, Nat Cook MP and Lucy Sandford-Reed, Chief Executive of Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. This session was well attended, and highly rated in our delegate feedback. There will be more to come on this subject in 2020.

Delegate feedback on the conference was overwhelmingly positive, with participants valuing the breadth of the program, stimulating keynote





speakers, the opportunity to celebrate the social work profession and to network with colleagues from across the country.

In 2020, there will be a Symposium in Darwin, Northern Territory, and in 2021, we are proud to be hosting the IFSW Asia Pacific Social Work Conference in Brisbane. We hope to see you all there!



AASW Conference 2019

scholarships



Leonie Vela is a 49-year-old Indigenous social worker whose main aim in life is to assist in empowering people, especially those who suffer from mental health issues, significant disabilities, homelessness and other such societal problems. She runs her own disability support business in rural Queensland.

Indigenous scholarship winner: Leonie Vela

Leonie describes her experience attending AASW Conference 2019: Working together for a just society

From my arrival at the Adelaide Convention Centre on Thursday, 7 November for the Welcome for First Time Conference Attendees to the Closing Plenary Session on Saturday, 9 November the information, knowledge sharing, workshops and keynote speakers kept my interest piqued and my brain in learning mode.

On the Friday morning, the gathered social work crowd were offered a warm Welcome to Country by local Aboriginal man Mickey Kumatpi Marrutya O'Brien. This was followed up by the Conference Opening conducted by Rachel Sanderson MP - Minister for Child Protection in South Australia. Natasha Stott Despoja then spoke passionately about gender equality before sending everyone out to enjoy morning tea.

Then there were concurrent workshops that attendees could choose between, which offered myriad options to inspire further learning and creativity. A buffet lunch followed before we all enjoyed the Plenary session and the speech by Professor Tom Calma AO. After hearing from Prof. Calma, we moved into another session of workshops involving discussions around mental health, disability, Indigenous issues and other such stimulating topics.

The AASW Annual General Meeting was held in the afternoon. The decision to eliminate physical branch offices was discussed in the AGM and members had a say about what they thought of the initiative. There were some strong opinions on both sides. New Board members were voted in to replace those leaving and the conference provided a good opportunity to introduce the new Board members to everyone.

At the conference dinner on the Friday evening, we were honoured to have Debbie Kilroy OAM as the Dinner Speaker. Debbie spoke with passion and conviction about the plight of women in the Australian prison system and what work needs to be done to avoid unnecessary and prolonged incarceration. Debbie is an inspiration to many, having had the determination to turn her life around from prisoner to social worker and legal practitioner.

Priska Fleischlin, United Nations Commissioner of the International Federation of Social Workers, gave the address on Saturday, in which she discussed the importance of the role of social workers in human rights. From there we moved onto the Norma Parker Memorial Address. The rest of the day was spent in concurrent sessions working on Indigenous issues, mental health issues, the Reconciliation Action Plan, social work pioneers, family violence, trauma and abuse. We then went on to have an informative and instructive discussion around the case for social worker professional registration. After all of this, it was time to call an end to another wonderful and fulfilling conference.

•

Indigenous scholarship winner: Trish Hayward

Trish Hayward describes her experience at the AASW Conference 2019: Working together for a just society

I had the privilege of obtaining a scholarship to attend the AASW Conference 2019, held in Adelaide, 7-9 November 2019. The research that professionals presented at the conference was relevant to social work practice and gave me a better insight into what is happening in the human services sector. I met social workers from so many different fields and it confirmed for me the diversity of the social work profession.

The keynote speakers highlighted their passion and experience of working in the social work field. Professor Tom Calma AO spoke of his work in the Northern Territory, which was a highlight for me because of my own work in Territory. Prof. Calma's human rights and social justice campaign was inspirational and he was well-received and respected by the delegates.

The opportunity to participate in the workshops and hear current research in homelessness, poverty, equality and diversity - just to name a few - was excellent and the workshops were well presented.

The scholarship also gave me the opportunity to attend the dinner. My fellow diners were inspirational and reminded me why I entered the field of social work. The dinner speaker, Debbie Kilroy OAM, gave a compelling speech about leading advocates and protecting the human rights of women and children through decarceration of the prison system and social control.

Debbie's views about case management and white privilege gave perspective about social work practice. This was one of the highlights of the conference for me, leading to personal reflection and reflection about my professionalism as a social worker in my practice.



Trish Hayward is an Elder from the Noongar Nation, located in south-west Western Australia. She lived in New Zealand for 20 years and worked in various positions in finance, administration, and schools. She worked in a specialist school for young Maori and Pakeha mothers and their babies for 4 years. On returning to Australia, she completed a Bachelor of Social Work at Edith Cowan University. She has worked for a local non-government community service, designing and delivering a Protective Behaviours program for Indigenous families.

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The value of collaboration

Starlight's support of Indigenous children's health outcomes

BY CLAIRE TREADGOLD

The Starlight Children's Foundation (Starlight) has been working for more than 30 years to support children with chronic and serious illness. In 2006, Starlight began partnering with health teams, visiting communities in regional and remote Australia and in 2013, the program formalised into the 'Healthier Futures Initiative' (HFI).

Although many children, regardless of cultural background, experience stress or anxiety attending a healthcare appointment or when undergoing treatment, for some Indigenous children, there can be additional challenges. The delivery of formal health care can be complicated by an intergenerational lack of trust in the health system, resulting in poor engagement, low clinic attendance, and overall negative healthcare experiences.

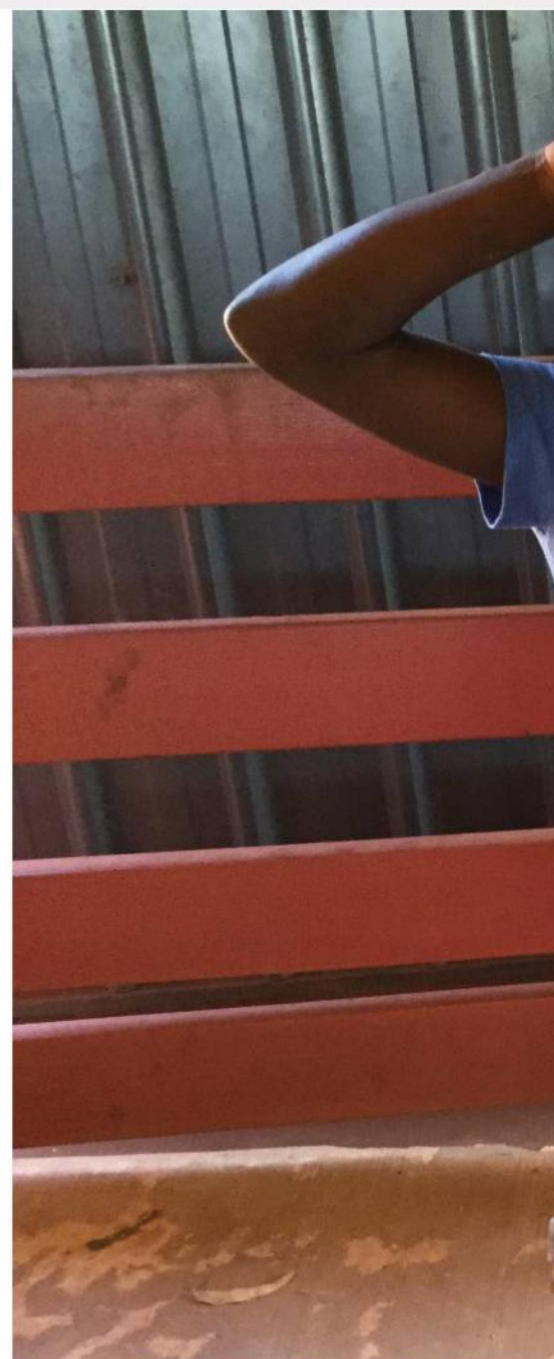
Recognising the importance of providing positive interactions and the need to support Indigenous children in receiving culturally appropriate care, HFI aims to improve the wellbeing of children and adolescents by enhancing the primary healthcare experience through fun, play, and positive distraction.

The Healthier Futures Initiative involves 'Captain Starlight' accompanying teams conducting outreach clinics with Indigenous communities. Captain Starlights are professional performers who engage with children through activities such as art, music, storytelling, comedy and games. Their role is often to assist health teams by attracting children to the clinics and providing opportunities for entertainment and play while waiting to be seen. They assist to create a more positive and engaging environment, alleviate boredom and reduce the anxiety of those about to undergo procedures.

Key to the success of HFI is the partnership with the clinical team. Starlight has been working with teams of health professionals to address a wide range of conditions, from rheumatic heart disease through to ear health. While initially, the program was predominately located in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, it has spread in recent years to numerous locations in Queensland and South Australia. The Captains have even travelled with teams to East Timor. Some of the newer collaborations have included early child and maternal health checks and a focus on respiratory health.

Feedback from the clinical teams, local community health and social workers, details the multiple benefits of this collaborative approach. They have noted that the Captain Starlights act as both an enticement (or drawcard) to attend the clinics and as a mechanism for reducing anxiety in children waiting to see the team. Comparing trips with and without Captains present, there have been repeated reports of children leaving prematurely, not receiving the full range of appointments or treatment they require, without the engagement or distraction provided by the Captain Starlight team.

Additionally, the rapport that the Captain Starlights build with the children and families through the HFI visits has been reported to provide support for children who need to travel from remote communities to



HFI aims to improve the wellbeing of children and adolescents by enhancing the primary healthcare experience through fun, play, and positive distraction.



the city for treatment. A social worker will contact the Starlight team at the hospital for a visit, and even if it is not the same Captain, the familiarity of the costume and interactions are reported to offer a strong sense of connection and comfort.

Starlight has previously evaluated the HFI program. However, in recognition of the recent growth and expansion in both partnerships and locations, a new evaluation framework is being developed. Combining quantitative and qualitative data, it will also include the use of traditional methods such as 'yarning circles'. By drawing

upon the experiences and insights of stakeholders, the evaluation will identify what works successfully to ensure positive outcomes, as well as opportunities for improvement in the program delivery.

Starlight will continue to seek new clinical partners for HFI and ultimately it is hoped that by working with and supporting the youngest members of the community, the program will help to create positive, anxiety-free experiences and facilitate a change in attitude towards the healthcare system.

•



Dr Treadgold is the National Manager, Research and Evaluation for Starlight Children's Foundation and has more than twenty years of experience in service delivery for children and young people and non-profit management. She was recently appointed an Adjunct Associate Professor with the School for Women' and Children's Health, UNSW Medicine.

A role model for many

NAIDOC Community Award for social worker

AASW Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Taskforce member and accredited mental health social worker AJ Williams-Tchen was awarded the 2019 Frankston-Mornington Peninsula NAIDOC Community Award for his contributions to community, showcasing cultural pride, community spirit and personal resilience.

AJ, who is of Wiradjuri/Wotjobalak background, manages his own consultancy Girraway Ganyi Consultancy, specialising in the provision of Aboriginal cultural awareness training, mental health first aid (MHFA), cultural mentoring programs and Aboriginal workforce development activities. He first qualified as a nurse before going on to attain a Bachelor of Social Work (Hons) at Victoria University, and Master of Social Work from Melbourne University.

AJ has facilitated more than 480 MHFA courses and 700 cultural awareness workshops nationally. He is also a cultural mentor to young Aboriginal men at three private schools in Melbourne, and to Aboriginal workers in community health settings.

In the past few years, AJ has had a significant presence working across the south-eastern region of Victoria in Frankston, Hastings and the Mornington Peninsula. He has provided 54 MHFA workshops to

Aboriginal community members and kin, facilitated cultural awareness workshops to over 40 community service organisations, and has established mentoring programs at a number of schools.

The community award recognises his commitment and passion in ensuring that Aboriginal voices are always heard, cultural issues are raised and addressed, and that community is well supported in mental health and self-resilience opportunities.

In all trainings AJ shares his family history and stories that incorporate personal experiences of stolen generations, mental health issues, a battle with the eating disorder bulimia, bullying, racism and discrimination, and lateral violence. In doing so, he also provides strategies to help overcome such issues on personal, professional and systemic levels.

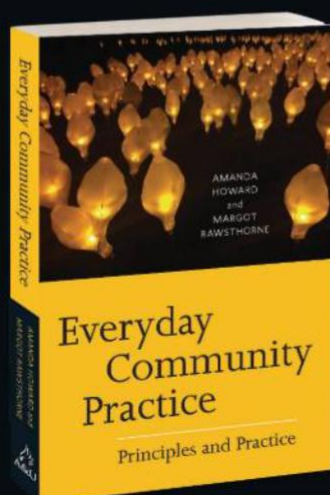
AJ is a role model for many, with his self-resilient style that has seen him overcome the traumatic



experiences he has faced, gain academic qualifications – including three post graduate degrees – and his ability to demonstrate effective leadership in creating thought change environments.

AJ has previously been awarded the 2012 NSW Mental Health Matters Award and the 2015 Victorian Indigenous Emerging Leader Award.

•



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A time to walk together with courage

National Reconciliation Week 2019

'Grounded in truth. Walk together with courage' was the theme of National Reconciliation Week, held 27 May - 3 June.

'The theme this year is about the truth of our history as a country and, more importantly, how we have treated each other as Australians', Linda Ford, AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative director commented.

'This year's theme invites us to talk about the past and acknowledge the terrible truths within it,' Linda continued. 'As a nation we need to honour the survivors and mourn the loss of parts of two amazing cultures and peoples - Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In doing this we set the agenda for how we move forward together as one nation.'



Linda and Christine discussing National Reconciliation Week

AASW National President, Christine Craik welcomed the appointment of Ken Wyatt as the first Indigenous person to hold the portfolio for Indigenous Affairs. 'We hope this marks the beginning of a new era in Reconciliation and addressing the disadvantage and injustice experienced by so many Indigenous people in this country,' Christine said.

In support of National Reconciliation Week, the Australian Association of Social Workers renewed our commitment to work with Indigenous peoples to collectively address the injustices they continue to face, while calling on all Australians to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

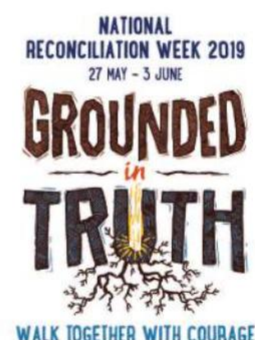
Reconciliation is about building meaningful relationships and working together for a more just Australia. This, Christine explained, begins with learning more about the resilience and achievements of Indigenous

Australians who have persevered in the face of great adversity and remain the oldest continuing culture in the world.

For social workers, National Reconciliation Week is also about learning from the past and working with Indigenous Australians to address the structural disadvantage and discrimination they face in all facets of their lives. This includes advocating for Australian governments to listen to Indigenous voices.

The AASW called on the federal government to establish a Voice to Parliament as described in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, as well as working with Indigenous communities in partnership and collaboration, at every step in the Close the Gap strategy. It is about time we recognised the knowledge and expertise of Indigenous people and follow their lead to identify solutions and bring about change.

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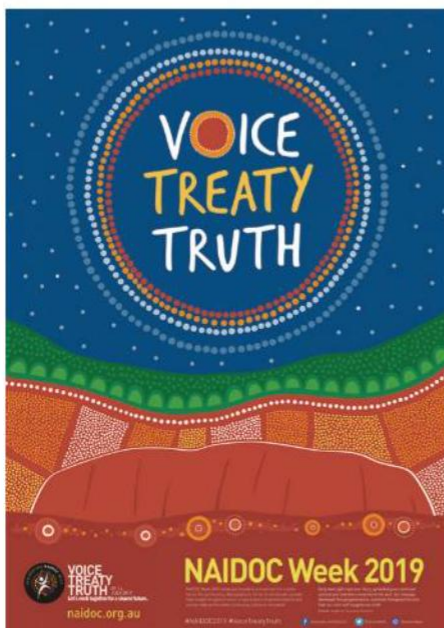


Voice. Treaty. Truth.

Time to listen to Indigenous Voices

NAIDOC Week 7–14 July 2019

'Voice. Treaty. Truth', this year's theme for NAIDOC Week, was of particular significance, given the call for an Indigenous voice to Parliament and the fact that 2019 was the United Nations' International Year of Indigenous Languages.



According to AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander board representative Linda Ford, 'Voice, treaty and truth are the key elements of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which Australian social workers support, including a Voice to Parliament.

'It is time to listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about the past, about the present and to join forces for the future of our nation,' she said.

'Now is the time for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to talk about the past, to acknowledge our place as part of the fabric of our nation, including our traditions and our contributions, and to move forward as a nation together.'



Speaking on behalf of the Association, Linda said, 'We look forward to advancing this year's theme of Voice. Treaty. Truth into action across the community.'

NAIDOC's theme Voice. Treaty. Truth reinforces the idea that a voice to parliament for our country's Indigenous peoples is not a radical suggestion: it is a necessary step in shaping a just and inclusive Australia.

The AASW welcomed Minister for Indigenous Affairs Ken Wyatt's support for action to advance constitutional recognition for Indigenous Australians. In line with NAIDOC Week's theme, Voice. Treaty. Truth, it is a significant step in advancing the voice of Indigenous Australians.

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Celebrating Indigenous languages

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (IDOWIP) is celebrated on 9 August each year. It is a day where we reflect on the strength and resilience of Indigenous peoples in Australia, and across the world, celebrating what has been achieved while recognising how much more needs to be done.

Linda Ford, AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative director said, 'Days like the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples are an important time to appreciate the progress made and how far Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have come given the devastating impacts that colonisation has and continues to have on communities.'

'Due to the strength and perseverance of Indigenous voices calling for justice, the Australian community is starting to comprehend the legacies of racism, colonialism and structural oppression. Australia Day protests are getting larger each year and we have seen a cultural shift from new generations who are looking towards Reconciliation.'

'We now have a Minister for Indigenous Affairs who is actually Indigenous. It was a long time coming, but we did get there. This progress would not have been possible without generations of Indigenous resistance and advocacy,' she said.

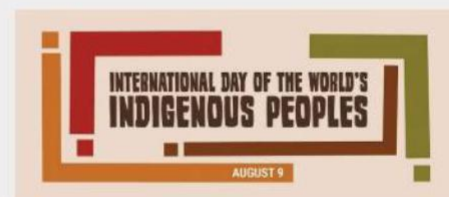
Furthermore, 2019 marked the United Nations' Year of Indigenous Languages. On IDOWIP we also celebrate the richness and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and

recognise the incredible work being done across communities to keep so many languages and dialects alive in the face of centuries of cultural genocide.

AASW National President Christine Craik said, 'On this day, the AASW renews its calls on the Morrison Government to establish a Voice to Parliament as described in the Uluru Statement from The Heart, as well as working with Indigenous communities in partnership and collaboration, at every step in the Closing the Gap strategy.'

'Governments need to begin the process of Reconciliation by listening to Indigenous voices acknowledging repeated calls for sovereignty and treaty. Reconciliation is not possible without challenging the structural barriers that continue to oppress Indigenous peoples and have formed the basis of so many of our systems and institutions.'

As social workers, we continue to reflect on the past, present and future and celebrate how in the face of such great adversity, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have persevered, and remain the oldest continuing culture in the world.



Linda Ford was interviewed on Black Star Radio with breakfast host Greg Reid.

You can also listen to the [AASW's podcast](#) where Candice Butler, review panellist for this edition of *Social Work Focus* and Branch Management Committee member of the AASW's Queensland Branch, is interviewed for IDOWIP.

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2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
Indigenous Languages





Trauma Education

presented by **Dr Leah Giarratano**

Leah is a doctoral-level clinical psychologist and author with 24 years of clinical and teaching expertise in CBT and traumatology

Two highly regarded CPD activities for all mental health professionals: 14 hours for each activity

Both workshops are endorsed by the AASW, ACA and ACMHN – level2

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Clinical skills for treating post-traumatic stress disorder

Treating PTSD: Day 1 - 2

This two-day program presents a highly practical and interactive workshop (case-based) for treating traumatised clients; the content is applicable to both adult and adolescent populations. The techniques are cognitive behavioural, evidence-based, and will be immediately useful and effective for your clinical practice. In order to attend Treating Complex Trauma (Day 3-4), participants must have first completed this 'Treating PTSD' program.

7 - 8 May 2020, Melbourne CBD

14 - 15 May 2020, Sydney CBD

21 - 22 May 2020, Brisbane CBD

28 - 29 May 2020, Auckland CBD

11 - 12 June 2020, Perth CBD

18 - 19 June 2020, Adelaide CBD

Clinical skills for treating complex traumatisation

Treating Complex Trauma: Day 3 - 4

This two-day program focuses upon phase-based treatment for survivors of child abuse and neglect. This workshop completes Leah's four-day trauma-focused training. Applicable to both adult and adolescent populations, incorporating practical, current experiential techniques showing promising results with this population; drawn from Emotion focused therapy for trauma, Metacognitive therapy, Schema therapy, Attachment pathology treatment, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, and Dialectical Behaviour Therapy.

25 - 26 June 2020, Auckland CBD

6 - 7 August 2020, Melbourne CBD

13 - 14 August 2020, Sydney CBD

20 - 21 August 2020, Brisbane CBD

3 - 4 September 2020, Perth CBD

10 - 11 September 2020, Adelaide CBD

Program Fee (bank transfer is preferred however Visa and Mastercard are accepted)

Early Bird \$795 each when you pay more than three months prior

Normal Fee \$895 each when you pay less than three months prior

Pairs \$1,290 or \$1,390 as above when you register and pay for Day 1-4 in one transaction

Optional 2- 3 instalments by bank transfer only; minimum four months prior to workshop.

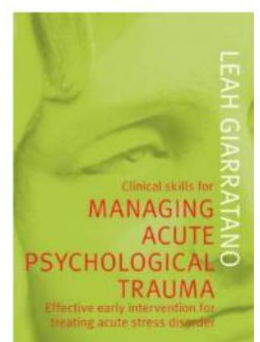
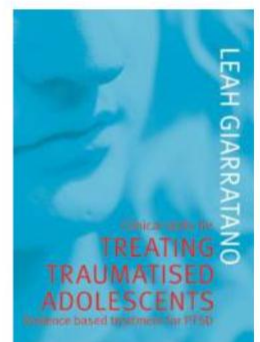
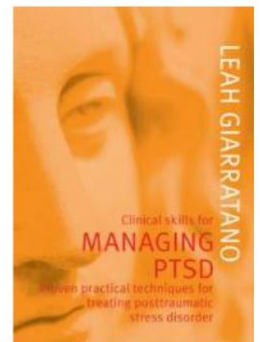
Program fee includes GST, program materials, lunches, morning and afternoon teas on all workshop days.

Register directly on our website for a single workshop and note you must have first completed Day 1-2 to attend Day 3-4. For Days 1-4, please email your location preference, name, address, mobile and any dietary requests for catering and you will receive a reservation invoice with the discounted fee and payment instructions.

Please visit www.talominbooks.com for further details about Leah's books and training

Please direct your enquiries to Joshua George, mail@talominbooks.com

Note that attendee withdrawals and transfers attract a processing fee of \$77. No withdrawals are allowed in the ten days prior to the workshop; however positions are transferable to anyone you nominate.



What gives you the courage to fly...
to make your heart soar?



Lecturer in Social Work Anika Farwa showcasing conference artwork

Time to reflect and celebrate

School of Allied Health, ACU

One journey is near its destination and another is set to begin for hundreds of undergraduates who celebrated their achievements at the 2019 School of Allied Health Final Year Student Conference.

More than 40 soon-to-be social work graduates gathered across Australian Catholic University's Brisbane, Canberra and Strathfield (Sydney), campuses to recognise the contributions their peers have already made and will continue to make as graduates.

While final assessments were looming on the horizon, the event provided an opportunity for students to reflect on their entry into the profession.

'You are about to embark on an even more exciting journey: that of a healthcare professional,' National Head of School of Allied Health Professor Suzanne Kuys said. 'Regardless of your journey, I believe that every one of you

has the potential to change lives and to make an impact.'

The keynote speech was delivered by Nicole Turner, a Kamilaroi woman and Chair of Indigenous Allied Health Australia. She spoke about the many issues affecting Closing the Gap policies and challenged the cohort to make a difference.

'I hope your journey is really rewarding,' Ms Turner said.

The conference program was rich in diversity. Social work professional development sessions and student oral presentations were among the wide range of work showcased, including an inspirational artwork produced by staff

and students on the theme 'What gives you the courage to fly...to make your heart soar? #letsflyacusw19.'

Bachelor of Social Work Honours student Charlotte Bailey presented on her research project titled 'Social workers' perspectives on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) approach to choice and self-determination'.

'The NDIS has fundamentally changed the way disability support has been provided to over a quarter of a million Australians, with "choice and control" being its most publicised principle,' explained Charlotte.

Her study explores social workers' perspectives on how the NDIS is approaching this principle and the related social work ethical principle of self-determination.

'The knowledge and research experience that I gained throughout the process, particularly the support I received from my supervisors, were rewarding.

'Studying social work was worthwhile, and the incredible staff and student cohort that accompanied me through the journey, were supportive.'

ACU prepares future social workers with specialised knowledge to work across a wide range of health and human services agencies. For more information, visit www.acu.edu.au.



Group photo of staff and students, Brisbane Campus

Champions for change

Social work Churchill Fellows, leaders in contemporary social work

BY MARIE-CLAIRE CHERON-SAUER

Delegates attending the AASW Conference 2019 in Adelaide were able to learn about the opportunities for social workers available through a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship.



The Churchill Fellowship is a prestigious award recognising the importance of an issue to Australia and the potential of applicants to make a difference to Australia and their communities. It is an opportunity for people from all walks of life to undertake overseas travel, learn globally about innovations in their chosen field and bring knowledge back to Australia. Approximately 100 Fellowships are awarded nationally each year across diverse areas of interest – health and social welfare, the arts, and science among others.

The AASW Conference 2019 presentation was facilitated by Marie-Claire Cheron-Sauer, herself a recipient of a Churchill Fellowship in 2012. It featured the work of three social work Churchill Fellows: Debra Swann (2018 CF), Margy Green (2016 CF), and Jo Cavanagh (1990 CF).

The individual presentations demonstrated the Fellowship experience from the initial idea, application, travel and research to long-term implementation and impacts. Margi Bennett, (1994 CF), also joined the speakers for a Q&A session about

the potential of Churchill Fellowships to progress the aims of the social work profession and champion positive social change. The opportunities as well as the challenges of being a recipient of a Churchill Fellowship were also explored.

This is the first time the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust has funded an exhibit at an AASW conference, featuring the work of social work Churchill Fellows. Interested delegates also received a booklet featuring social work Churchill Fellows and additional information about Churchill Fellowships.

The Trust established the Social Work Churchill Fellows' Community of Practice in 2018, under the leadership of Marie-Claire Cheron-Sauer, recognising the potential of the group to drive positive change in Australian communities. The group's aims include:

- influencing the delivery of health and social assistance in Australia by actively engaging with key stakeholders and contributing to policy and program development
- promoting the specific contribution of contemporary social work to the

health and wellbeing of people and communities in Australia

- being a resource for social workers, schools of social work, governments, organisations and the community in specific areas of practice.

Social work is a leading profession in the health, human service and other industries. As an applied discipline, social workers make significant contributions to the health and wellbeing of people in their communities and workplaces. The multifocal lens inherent in social work practice provides unique understanding and skills for addressing the complex issues facing people and their communities.

The community of practice group currently consists of more than 40 Fellows, a number that is growing annually as more social workers are awarded Fellowships. Each Fellow is an expert returning to Australia with new knowledge and innovative ideas. Any social worker considering applying for a Churchill Fellowship can approach members of the community of practice for advice, support and mentoring.



AASW strongly opposes Newstart drug testing

AASW National President Christine Craik spoke out strongly against the federal government's proposal to introduce mandatory drug testing for Newstart recipients, which would be accompanied by a possible reduction in income support payments.

Members are also available to present to your workplaces and to provide consultation to your work.

The Social Work Churchill Fellows' group has its own webpage, <https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/cfs-social-work/>, which provides further information on each Fellow, their work and areas of expertise, and access to their reports from their travels. If you are interested in accessing further information about the Churchill Fellowships, visit the Trust's website at: www.churchilltrust.com.au.

Applications for 2020 open 1 February and close on 30 April.

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Marie-Claire Cheron-Sauer is a past National Vice-President of the AASW and Director, SummitVision Consulting. Marie-Claire is a Churchill Fellow, having been awarded a Fellowship in 2012 to undertake a review of social work education and workplace planning in UK, Denmark, Canada and the USA.

Christine dismissed the suggestion of the drug testing as being deeply unethical and based on a lack of understanding of the complex nature of addiction.

'There is absolutely no evidence that drug use is more prevalent among people who are unemployed, or that drug use is the most significant cause of unemployment. Furthermore, there is no evidence that mandatory drug testing of people living on income support payments is effective.

'This is a punitive, vindictive and ideologically driven approach to policy that ignores evidence and punishes some of the most vulnerable members of society. Creating a national narrative that shifts the attention from the lack of assistance needed by vulnerable people, to blaming them for their vulnerability, is not a sign of a compassionate government.

'People who are struggling with drug and alcohol use require treatment and support, and denying income support is not a form of treatment. If the government is seriously concerned with the impact of drug use, then much greater attention needs to be paid to the availability and accessibility of drug treatment services. The sector is poorly

resourced with huge waiting lists and this policy would only compound the problem.'

The income support system was originally developed as a commitment to fairness, equality and mutual responsibility. By contrast, both fairness and equality are missing from this policy that punishes people for being poor.

'Denying people income support payments will lead to destitution, increased homelessness and ill-health among people who already experience poverty. The flow on impacts will also be significant and this policy lacks any consideration about how it will affect families, loved ones and communities, including the possible increases in family violence and other forms of abuse.

'Social workers understand that meaningful supports and long-term change comes from working in collaboration and empathy, not coercion,' she said.

Given that there is no relationship between drug use and employment, there can be no justification for testing people on the basis of their employment status.

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YOUR DISTINCTION



FIND OUT MORE

What is Your Distinction? The AASW's credentialing program

AASW's Your Distinction program continues to distinguish specialist and advanced social work practice in a range of areas. Credentials which are available are the [Accredited Clinical Social Worker](#), [Accredited Family Violence Social Worker](#) and the [Accredited Mental Health Social Worker](#).

Credentials assure individuals and their families, the Australian community, employers and funding bodies that accredited social workers have acquired a specialist level of expertise in their field of practice. The AASW has had an accreditation program since 2005, and the expansion of the program has been led by both industry drivers and demand from members.

Over the coming months, new credentials will be launched. [You can register your interest on our website](#). We have received interest from members suggesting the credentials be expanded to include other areas of practice.

These credentials offer you an opportunity to position yourself as a social worker with a reputation of expertise and distinction, assuring the people you work with that you meet the highest standards of knowledge, safety and quality of service in social work.

For eligibility requirements and to apply, visit the [AASW website](#).

Why Should You Become Accredited?

Some of the many benefits from becoming accredited include:

- Credentials are a symbol of quality and established competency
- Credentials are a sector indicator of achieved experience and capability
- Your Distinction – a credential establishes that you have achieved recognition in your field of practice
- Commitment to ongoing excellence – the credential demonstrates the currency of your skills and knowledge by setting a high standard of continuous professional development that validates your commitment to excellence
- A formalised community of practice and network of peers – through sharing of knowledge and experiences and delivering on best practice.

World Mental Health Day

The AASW calls for significant sector reform

The AASW has called on all Australian governments take action to address the suicide epidemic we currently have in this country.

On World Mental Health Day, 10 October, AASW National President Christine Craik called for 'a multifaceted and systemic approach to mental health supports that are person-centred and human rights-based.

'Suicide is the leading cause of death in Australia for people aged 15-44^[1], and the suicide rate is more than four times higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities,^[2] Christine said.

During Mental Health Month, it is important to not only challenge how people understand mental health and suicide, including negative assumptions and stereotypes, but to talk about how to have supportive conversations with friends and family who may be at risk.

'Social workers see firsthand the resilience and courage of individuals and families impacted by suicide, and the effects that the inability to access adequate care can have of the lives of so many.

'Our mental health system is crisis-driven and does not adequately address the full psychosocial needs of individuals, groups and communities. Mental health is a complex issue, but we do know that prevention and early intervention are key in order to address family violence, homelessness, sexual assault and other issues that lead to poor mental health and its devastating impacts. We need a much greater focus on early intervention, recovery and community to effectively support individuals, families and communities,' said Ms Craik.

'We need to see mental health as fundamentally a human rights issue.

'By taking a human rights approach to mental health, we need to focus on the needs of traumatised individuals and disadvantaged groups, and to the interaction between discrimination and marginalisation. It demonstrates the importance of many principles that underpin the service system such as equality of access to services and the

need for standards and accountability in the delivery of services,' she said.

'Furthermore, the mental health system is built on colonising practice and is deeply failing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The disproportionate rates of suicide are a national emergency that needs immediate state and federal action.

'Change is possible and central to this is strengthening the participation and collaboration of people with lived experience within the system.'

[1] <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/life-expectancy-death/deaths-in-australia/contents/leading-causes-of-death>

[2] <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-natsisps-strat-toc~mental-natsisps-strat-1~mental-natsisps-strat-1-ab>



International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

AASW stands with Generation Equality against rape

On International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 25 November, the AASW supported this year's theme and stood with Generation Equality against rape. Violence against women is our national shame, made worse by the disproportional rates of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in this country.

AASW National President Christine Craik said, 'While the legends, folklore and contemporary Australian culture continue to celebrate and be dominated by the overwhelming importance and attention of all things masculine, such as mateship, and male sporting legends, little attention is paid to the consequences of this entitlement, namely violence against women and girls in the form of rape, sexual assault and family violence.'

Social movements such as #MeToo are building on decades of feminist work, assisting new generations to become galvanised, aware, and to join older activists in addressing this toxic culture and the silencing of women's voices that allows rape culture to continue. We know sexual violence is an epidemic in Australia and we know the majority of women do not feel safe or supported to report these crimes to anyone, let alone the police.

Ms Craik said, 'Australia is a country built on white patriarchal structures which continue to enable and deliver unequal power to men over women, and despite some advancements in gender equality, women in this country bear the brunt of this on a daily basis. This gendered inequality plays out in all facets of social life, including the fact that we have one of the most gender-divided workforces in the world with 'women's work' being valued less on every measurement.

'In social work, we know this only too well. Our profession of social work is female-dominated, with many social workers having their own lived experiences of violence against women. We are equally or more skilled and educated than most male-dominated professions and we often face elements of risk in practice, including exposure to further violence.'

Yet social work, like so many other female-dominated professions, continues to be paid less than most male dominated professions. The continuing message this sends to society is that women and their work are not as valued as men.

Ms Craik said, 'This pernicious message informs the attitude of the wider culture and enables the continuation of male entitlement, the result of which makes women vulnerable to violence.'

'As social workers, we know that violence against women is a complex social problem with white patriarchal structures at its core, leading to continued gender inequality. The skills of social workers in identifying and working with systemic discrimination such as this, leaves the profession in a unique position to address the structural causes of violence against women while also assisting victim-survivors at an individual level.

'We obviously have a long way to go in dismantling the foundations that result in violence against women and we call on the Australian government to examine the ways in which so many of our cultural and social structures contribute to this, especially those practices that are not safe for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. There is a desperate need to do this, alongside an increase in funding for primary prevention, early intervention, crisis work and recovery. We need real action, right now.'

•



Christine Craik and Accredited Family Violence Social Worker Abbey Newman appeared together on the ABC Radio Melbourne to discuss family violence on the Mornings program with Virginia Trioli.

PROMOTING THE IMPORTANCE *of Human Relationships*



**WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY
17TH MARCH 2020**
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A healthy environment is a fundamental human right

Human Rights Day

On Human Rights Day, 10 December, the AASW called on all governments to commit to immediate action on climate change and celebrated the advocacy of young people in striving for a more just and sustainable world.

Having access to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a fundamental human right and something that governments worldwide are failing to achieve.

The theme for 2019 was 'Youth standing up for human rights' and this year also marked 30 years since the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is incredibly pertinent given it is young people and children who are showing real leadership in the fight for climate justice.

Article 24 of the Convention states that appropriate measures must be taken against the dangers and risks of environmental pollution for the wellbeing of a children.

Australian social workers strongly support young people's collective

action to claim their right to a sustainable future, as they have shown in the Fridays for Future movement that have seen young people across Australia and internationally rally for action on climate change.

AASW National President Christine Craik said, 'Young people are actually fighting for their own and for everyone else's human rights, because global leadership is failing to act on climate change.'

'We reject suggestions from our country's leaders that it is climate activists who are making young people anxious, or that young people should not protest and rally on the issue of climate change.'

'Article 15 of the Convention upholds their right to do so, stating that we must

'recognise the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly'.

'If young people are anxious, it is because they can see the consequences of climate inaction from our political decision-makers. We know as social workers, that having a voice and working towards some control of your own future actually combats anxiety and mental health issues. Like everyone else, they are seeing the lungs of the world disappearing in catastrophic weather events both here in Australia and overseas.'

'We commend young people for exercising their right under the Convention to advance what we are seeing and experiencing is a national and global emergency.'

Cashless debit card disadvantages Indigenous populations

The Cashless Debit Card stigmatises and punishes people based on their location and unemployment status, AASW National President Christine Craik said.

In its submission to the Senate committee inquiry into the Northern Territory Income Management Scheme, the AASW reiterated its opposition to the Cashless Debit Card for those on Centrelink benefits. The AASW maintains that the proposed expansion is based on a flawed evaluation that was discredited by many experts because of a lack of rigour.

The AASW called on the government to listen to the experiences of the communities in which the card has been introduced.

Ms Craik said, 'There is significant stigma associated with the card and many people describe a deep sense of shame when they are forced to pay using the card. These may be people who have never smoked, abused alcohol nor engaged in gambling and yet are treated as though they cannot be trusted with cash. Just because they live in regional, rural and remote Australia.

'The card imposes significant hardship because cash is still important in small communities. For example, the card prevents people from buying things at local markets, or buying second-hand goods. It hampers children's educational opportunities by preventing their parents from paying for their school excursions,' Ms Craik said.

The AASW is concerned that the Cashless Welfare Card is disproportionately harmful to the economy of Aboriginal communities. 'It affects smaller Indigenous businesses who may not be equipped to accept the card. It puts at risk the independent Indigenous credit union, which currently provides banking services to remote Indigenous communities and is a major employer of local Indigenous people in its region,' said Ms Craik.

'What we have seen so far is that it significantly disadvantages Indigenous populations and undermines their right to self-determination, autonomy and dignity. The AASW therefore strongly opposes the proposal to extend the Cashless Debit Card.'

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Human Rights Day reminds us that young people are the ones who will live with the long-term consequences decisions taken today.

Like all of us, young people want to see our decision makers focus on our long-term needs and the right of all young people to a clean and healthy planet.

Decision-makers must resist the temptation to put convenience and short term interests ahead of long-term protection of rights.

The climate activism of young people shows that they understand this also.

Ms Craik said, 'The right to a clean, life-sustaining natural environment is key for the vision of the future for many children and young people. They believe that the generation that is currently making decisions do not appreciate the long-term consequences of its climate inaction for future generations.

'In this context it is important to recognise today's young people in their collective action and to recognise how important this action is in setting up a sustainable, healthy and just world.'

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Centrelink's debt recovery system is a war on the poor, says AASW

Centrelink's automated debt recovery system is a war on the poor and the vulnerable, AASW National President Christine Craik said.

Speaking at a Senate Inquiry into Centrelink's automated debt recovery scheme, Christine described the scheme as harsh, unfair and a denial of natural justice.

In its submission to the inquiry, the AASW pointed out that people usually apply for Centrelink benefits following a crisis or a major change in their lives. They are often vulnerable and distressed.

'Social workers have experience of supporting people through these hardships and we know that the confusion and unpredictability of daily life for people in these situations, alongside the difficulties in being able to contact Centrelink, often makes it difficult to fully understand or meet the bureaucratic benchmarks that are required,' Christine said.

The AASW acknowledged that changes have been made to the scheme, but points out that the fundamental principles remain the same.

'It is bad enough that people receive a letter which puts the onus on them to prove that they have not incurred a debt. But when vulnerable people, like the people we work with, are presumed guilty and asked to produce documents going back six years, their anxiety and distress levels often increase and for good reason.

'For example, it is difficult to keep track of documents when you are experiencing homelessness, and difficult to take everything you need if you are having to flee a violent perpetrator. In cases like this, re-establishing contact, and asking for favours from anyone in their past, can seriously threaten their safety.'

For Christine, it gets back to trust that our government organisations will treat people fairly without a beginning presumption of guilt.

'For many people on Centrelink who have paid taxes all their lives and trusted that the system will take care of them should they need it, they find that this trust is betrayed and do not feel as if they are being treated fairly.'

The AASW calls on the government to work with the community sector and people who have been in this situation to design a debt recovery process that is fair, accurate and responsive to the difficult life circumstances in which many Australians find themselves.

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AASW meets CASW/ACTS

AASW Communications Lead Angela Yin dropped in to the office of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) to speak with CEO Dr Fred Phelps when visiting Canada in May 2019.

Social worker associations in Canada are based in each province with the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), which is based in Ottawa, the country's capital, as the peak body. All the provinces are members of the national body, except for Ontario (the largest province) and Quebec, the French-speaking province. Despite Quebec not being a member province, as is usual in bilingual Canada, the association also has a French title, Association canadienne des travailleuses et travailleurs sociaux (ACTS).

CEO Dr Fred Phelps explained that it is very common for the people of Quebec to see themselves as separate in many respects and not join national bodies. He recommended I visit Quebec if I got the chance as Canadian culture is very different when viewed from the English-speaking and French-speaking perspectives.

There are many similarities between the work of the AASW and the CASW, especially in social policy and advocacy. In fact, earlier in the year, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) wrote to the AASW requesting assistance with Scope of Practice documents. Mental health and Reconciliation are issues of top priority for the professions of both countries.

A major difference is that social work is a registered profession in Canada, but registration is province-based, and there are 10 provinces in Canada. In many respects, Canadian provinces have much more autonomy than Australian states. For example, Australia has Medicare, which is a national system of health care. Fred explained that in Canada, each province has its own health system and surprisingly, there is no reciprocal recognition with other provinces within the country, let alone with other countries.



This is reflected in the way CASW operates – it is much smaller in staff structure than AASW, but that is because much of the other work is carried out by the province-based social work professional bodies and regulators.

Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is a major priority for the professions of both countries. Australia and Canada have diverse First Nations peoples who have suffered from the impacts of colonisation and institutional and systemic racism, but whose continued ingenuity, resilience and advocacy is felt in the consciousness of both countries. Canada's Indigenous are known by the many First Nations tribes, the Metis (a people of mixed First Nations and French heritage) and Inuit, who are in the north of the country.

It is also starting to become more common for Canadian public gatherings to begin with an acknowledgement of the local First Nations peoples, similar to the acknowledgement of country in Australia. When I toured the

provincial Parliament of Ontario, an acknowledgement was given.

Fred spoke about a national campaign the CASW is currently leading. CASW is calling for the government to forgive the student loans of social workers who move to rural locations to work. Other health professionals, such as doctors and nurses are eligible to have their loans forgiven. In Canada, university education is paid for either through scholarships, upfront in cash or through private loans, which are repayable with interest. This is unlike the Australian system, where the HECS or HELP regime allows students to pay the loan back through the tax system when they have a job that meets the repayment threshold.

I was pleased to take the opportunity to meet Fred and exchange ideas about Canadian and Australian social work.

In 2020, the IFSW International Social Work Conference will be held in Calgary, Canada, of which CASW/ACTS will be a major partner.

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Vale



Judith Watkins 1918-2019

Judith's life was well lived and well loved. She touched many lives during her 100 years on earth.

I have had the opportunity to speak with some of her friends and colleagues who spoke of her with great warmth. She had intellect, energy, humour (especially loved the cheeky) and great compassion. But she also had a strong faith and values, independence and a strong sense of personal responsibility. Family played an absolutely primary role for her.

Judith was a woman of her time and with no fuss she went on to achieve significant milestones in her academic and working life. She may not have known it, but she helped many of us women (and men) in the next generation and the generation beyond, to see that we could explore the many opportunities available in life, married or not. In fact, she was herself assisted by the many strong women in the Lenehan and Watkins families who went before her.

Born in her grandfather's house, in Gladesville, Judith grew up in Wyong where the family had a house on the river. Early on Judith stood out, obtaining honours at the 'Primary Final' at the local Catholic school in Gosford. Judith went on to high school in Gosford, spending a couple of years boarding at Woolwich Convent. She left school to go to business college and by her late teens she was working as a bookkeeper in a range of organisations

in the Central Coast, Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

When the Second World War broke out, Judith moved to Melbourne, flatted with her cousin Ruth and joined the WAAF. She was with the WAAF for three years until the end of the war. Judith was always proud of being a servicewoman and of the work she did at the time.

In 1951, Judith completed a two-year diploma in social studies (social work) at Sydney University. At age 32 Judith moved to Brisbane and worked with the Spastic Centre.

In 1956, Judith travelled to England by boat to continue her studies. She completed her studies with a certificate in mental health from the University of London. She met Patti on the course. Patti was from Finland and from a strict Protestant family. Judith told me how they hitchhiked their way through Europe, but Patti was more scared to tell her parents about travelling with a Catholic than the hitchhiking. Judith and Patti had a lifelong friendship until Patti's death some years ago.

On returning to Australia, Judith worked in Sydney in the area of child guidance and had a successful career working with children and families and later in policy formulation until she retired at 55 in the mid-1970s.

For much of her working life, Judith lived in Balmoral in a unit down near the beach. She then bought a little cottage in Leura in the early 1980s and moved

up there for about 10 years. While there Judith had a dog, Cordelia, that she was very fond of. Leura was always near to her heart and she made many friends up there, including the local priest Father Peter Morrissey.

Judith spent the last 28 plus years of her life at the RSL ANZAC Village, much of the time at Cutler Village in a self care unit and the last few years in Mosman Trust nursing home.

Dementia is not an easy path for anyone especially when combined with failing sight, and yet throughout her illness, Judith maintained her dignity, her humanity, her humour and her ability to reach out to others and touch their hands and hearts. One Mosman Trust staff member told me of a morning when she was upset as they had just lost a special resident. She told of how Judith reached out to her and comforted her, sensing her distress.

Judith built strong friendships with so many of those who came into her orbit through family, work, study, travel, faith and other shared experiences. We will miss Judith, a remarkable centenarian, but I am very glad that she touched our lives in the way she did and I feel she leaves a world much better for it.

By Anne Lenehan Jones

Vale



Monica Bacusi 1979-2019

Monica Bacusi, the National Manager of Social Work in the Department of Human Services, passed away from cancer on Friday, 30 August 2019. She was only 40-years-old, but had enjoyed a stellar career and will be very fondly remembered, not only by social workers but also by her extended network of friends and colleagues in the department.

Monica was born in Tehran, Iran but moved to Australia at seven years of age with her family. She was a voice for multicultural Australia within the department, at one point leading the Multicultural Services Team in addition to Social Work Services.

Monica graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Social Work degree in 2002, and a Master of Social Work in 2004. She completed her final student placement at the Department of Human Services' Liverpool Service Centre and took up employment with the department when she graduated. She was then promoted to Social Work Manager in 2007, assuming responsibility for the Social Work Service in Central NSW. She broadened her departmental experience in a variety of roles outside of the Social Work Service, and in 2016 was promoted to National Manager Social Work Services.

Jen Rufati, General Manager Smart Centre Operations Division, Department of Human Services, observed at her wake, 'I've had the privilege and honour of having Monica work with me and my team over the last two years at the Department of Human Services. One of the first things I personally noticed about Monica was her spirit. She was high achieving, always happy and most importantly always ready to be there for you... I've even heard stories of how her commitment went far beyond the call of duty. I mean how many brides have you heard of, that on their wedding day not only had their personal phone on the

bridal table, but also their work phone, ready to respond in any situation?'

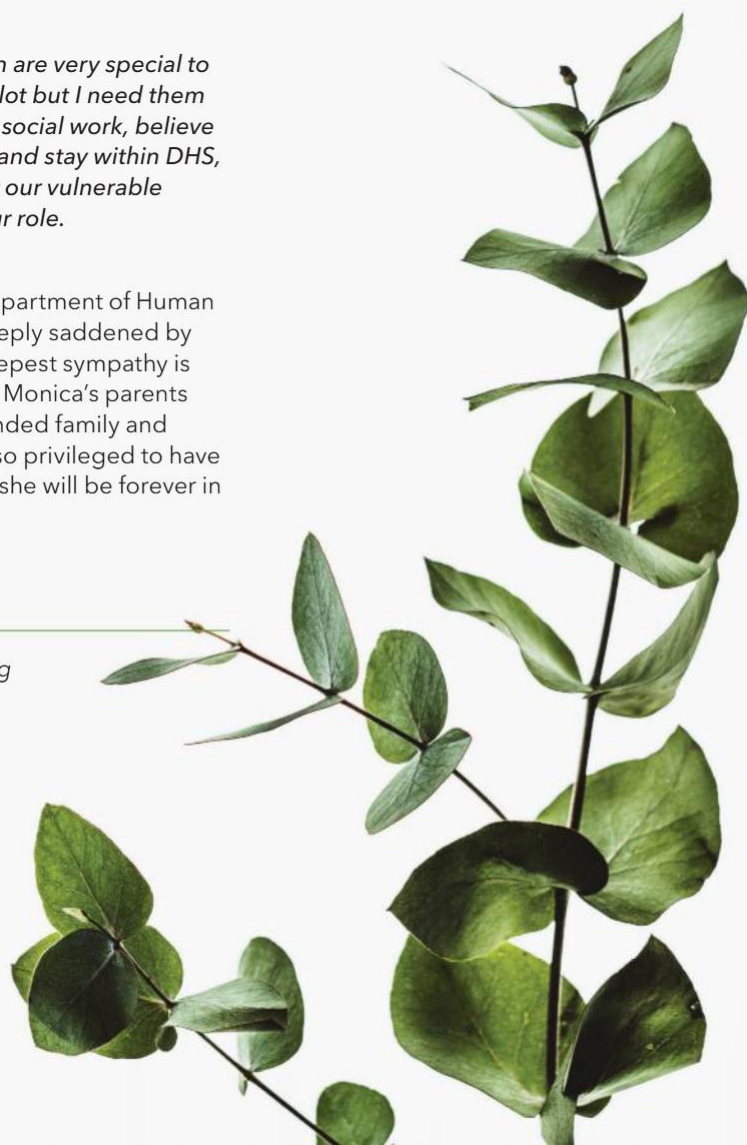
Colleagues have reflected that Monica embodied social work values with her genuine respect for persons, her strong commitment to social justice and her unerring professional integrity. If Monica was speaking with you, you were the most important person in the room, no matter how busy she was or how mundane your concerns. Her values were grounded in her faith and the love of her family and beloved husband, Salam.

At her funeral, Salam relayed Monica's final words to her social workers,

My EL2 work team are very special to me, I love them a lot but I need them to keep going for social work, believe in our profession and stay within DHS, this is very key for our vulnerable customers and our role.

On behalf of the Department of Human Services, we are deeply saddened by her loss and our deepest sympathy is extended to Salam, Monica's parents and sister, her extended family and friends. We all feel so privileged to have known Monica and she will be forever in our hearts.

By Caroline Manning



Tribute to Kerry Reed Gilbert

Kerry Reed Gilbert, Aboriginal poet and activist died in July 2019. Her death notice in *The Canberra Times* published her full name hence the AASW's decision to use it here.

The 2014 Spring Issue of the *National Bulletin* (the predecessor to *Social Work Focus*) contained a poetic exchange between Kerry and AASW life member Pamela Trotman with respect to 'Culturally Appropriate' – one of her poems.

Kerry gave Pamela a copy of her book when they met in 2005 as Pamela knew Kerry's father and had been involved in Aboriginal Affairs during the 1970s. Her poem 'Culturally Appropriate' prompted Pamela to write a reply, which became the focus of the original article in 2014. Kerry was very welcoming of Pamela's approach back in 2014 and their joint contribution to the former *National Bulletin* magazine.

Kerry Reed Gilbert's original poem, 'Culturally Appropriate?' (below), was first published in Talkin' About Country in 2002 and is reprinted here with Kerry's permission, including a new final stanza she added just for Pamela.

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE

Culturally Appropriate?

Hey, brother you heard them words

– *culturally appropriate*

Them the buzz words for today.

Culturally appropriate Sistagirl,

what's that mean?

Well, it's about them white fellas

Makin' their services *culturally appropriate*

To us Mob – Us Blackfellas.

They suppose to do this stuff so

We can finally get some basic human rights

In this country. Our country.

Hey sis, I hate to tell you this,

They gonna be saying those word when

Your burying me 6 foot under.

Cause we ain't gonna get human rights

In our own country in my lifetime.

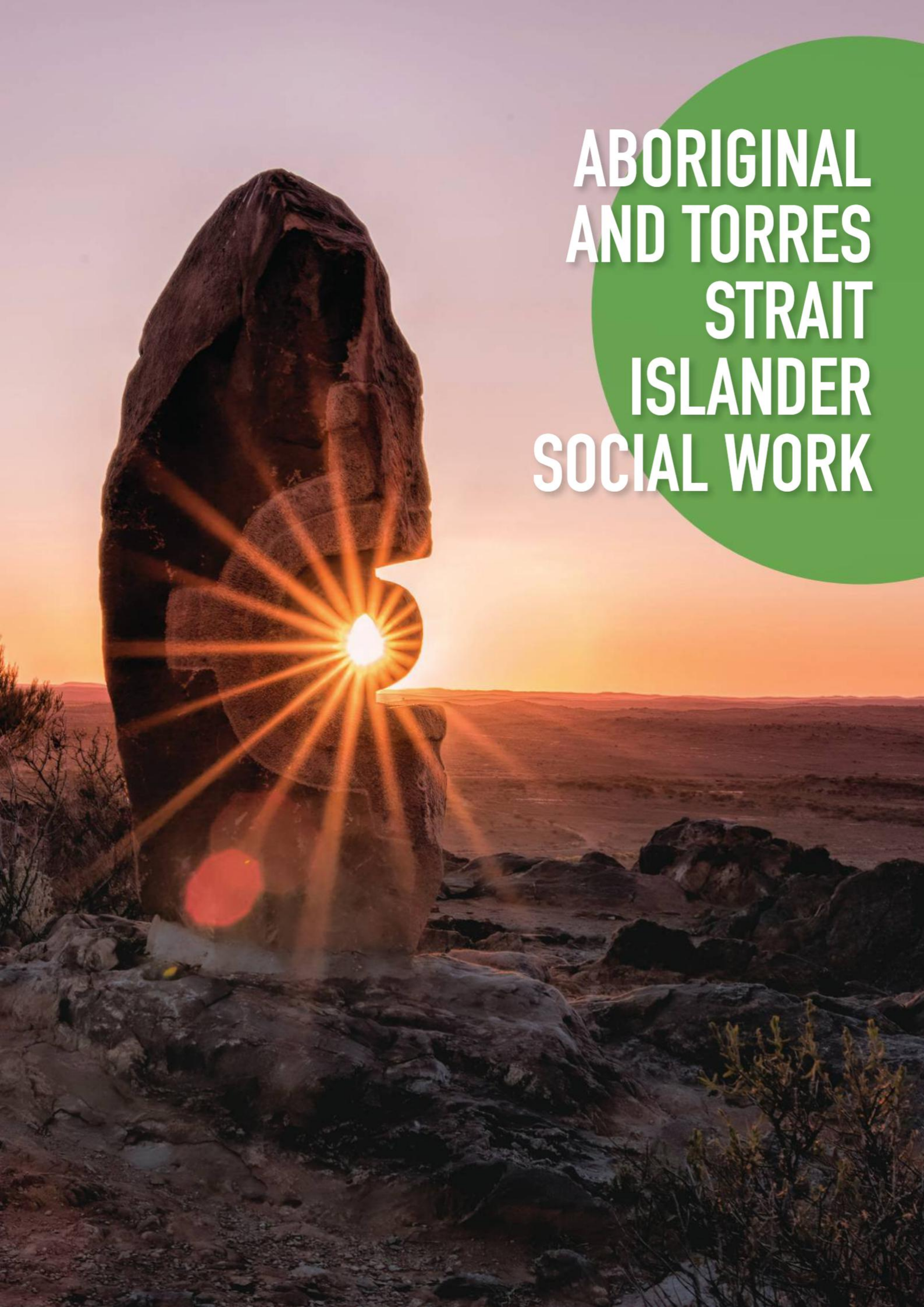
No sista, not in my lifetime.

Hey Pam you got it right

Hey

Kerry Reed Gilbert (2002)





ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK

Aboriginal masculinities

A Tasmanian social worker's perspective

JACOB PREHN

According to the Australian Department of Health and Ageing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men have the worst health of any group in Australia, says Jacob Prehn, a proud Worimi man and social worker.

We have a life expectancy 10.6 years less than non-Indigenous men, we experience more frequent and intense psychological distress, we are hospitalised at a rate 2.4 times greater and are up to seven times more likely to have interactions with the criminal justice system. These troubling statistics are similar to other Indigenous men in New Zealand, Canada and the United States, but this is no coincidence. There is nothing genetically deviant or biologically dysfunctional with these men, rather the lowered outcomes are the result of colonisation and its by-products.

Although acknowledging this discourse and its causes are important, highlighting the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and challenging the dominant negative narrative is needed. Pointing out the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men who live outside the colonial stereotype of the Indigenous male is part of the empowerment process. A feature of the colonial project has been to define who and what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are, and a component of our struggle has been to take back our right of self-definition.

We are loving fathers, uncles, sons, grandfathers and cousins who enjoy spending time with our families and communities. We display significant resilience despite the hardships and negative life events we have experienced, and which continue to occur on a frequent basis. We are smart, knowledgeable and intelligent men who make significant contributions across

a range of areas, such as academia, politics and performing arts. We have an understanding of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world and the non-Indigenous world; to us, our culture is central to our identity and wellbeing and is a strength that helps sustain us in times of need.

When working as a social worker alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Male Health Framework 11 principles serve as a useful guide. These principles align with social work's values and ethical positioning and provide a strong foundation for working across different contexts. These principles include:

- reconstructing male empowerment and self-determination
- a holistic approach
- continuity of care
- shared, integrated, collaborative and responsible processes
- partnership approach
- strategy and policy development
- access and support
- the health workforce
- the evidence base
- allocation of funding
- governance.

When I ran an Aboriginal Men's Group in Hobart's northern suburbs, these principles formed the foundation of my practice framework. A holistic approach to health and wellbeing was



About the author

Jacob Prehn is a proud Worimi man living on Palawa Country, Hobart. He works as a lecturer at the University of Tasmania. Jacob's research explores a range of topics including Indigenous men, families and the strength of culture. He is a qualified social worker and Aboriginal health worker.



taken across physical, mental, social and spiritual domains and I worked to ensure this care was continuous through one-on-one time and group work. The governance of the men's group, which was handled by the men themselves and formed a central aspect of the group's success, aimed to empower and allowed for self-determination in its direction; I was only there to support.

During this time, the Aboriginal Men's Group was fortunate enough to secure two mainstream funding grants to establish Tasmania's first Aboriginal Men's Shed and to undertake an extended Bush Adventure Therapy program. Men's Sheds provide space for Aboriginal men to express their identity, undertake activities such as making wooden cultural tools like waddies, clapsticks and spears, or other items such as tables and plaques. Through Men's Sheds, there is the ability to integrate health and wellbeing discussions in a more relaxed and decolonised environment. The Bush Adventure Therapy allowed the men to get on Country, undertake culture

activities, do day trips or have camps while integrating collaborative and challenging activities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men need social workers and other allies to walk alongside and empower us to overcome the negative effects of colonisation and self-determine our narratives.

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A feature of the colonial project has been to define who and what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are, and a component of our struggle has been to take back our right of self-definition.

Combatting white supremacy

Why being a good person is not enough

HELEN BASILI

As a white social worker with a significant proportion of clients who identify as people of colour (POC), I have good reason to reflect on the evolution of my journey with white supremacy. This process has been enriched by the work of East African writer, lawyer and broadcaster, Layla F. Saad. I completed Saad's *Me and White Supremacy Workbook* (2018) earlier this year and was catapulted into a soul-searching confrontation with shameful past behaviours and beliefs and, ultimately, a sense of empowerment and a commitment to do better.

Saad's workbook began as a 28-day Instagram challenge, which she then distributed from her website as a free e-book. Due to the widespread interest generated by the book, it is now only available for purchase from Saad's publisher <https://www.meandwhitesupremacybook.com/>. The work is a generous gift to white people,

... a kind of self-guided workbook and personal anti-racism tool that has been designed to help you to take ownership of your participation in the oppressive system of white supremacy and to help you take responsibility for dismantling the way that this system manifests both within you and without your communities. (Saad, 2018)

The workbook is designed to be completed over a minimum of 28 days. Each day the reader is provided with information about a different aspect of white supremacy and then given a series of prompts to be explored in a journaling exercise. The reader is instructed to respond to the prompts writing in the first person and drawing on specific examples from their personal experience with what Saad terms, 'BIPOC (Black people, Indigenous people and People of Colour)'.

I graduated from my social work degree armed with a strong attachment to anti-racist values and my professional identity as a social worker, attachments that I unconsciously associated with being a good person. Saad's workbook helped me understand how my attachment to believing I was a good person was often an obstacle to acknowledging my collusion with white supremacy.

The *Me and White Supremacy Workbook* prompted me to journal about an incident that occurred more than two decades ago, when I was a young social work student. I was employed at a casual job in the mid-semester break and approached a new staff member who was a POC and whose accent did not sound Australian to me. I smiled and asked him, 'where are you from?' He glared at me and answered sarcastically, 'planet earth!' I did not respond verbally but my actions were no doubt indicative of my thoughts. The smile dropped from my face, I walked away and never spoke to him again during the time we worked together.

In hindsight, this was a perfect example of what sociologist Robin di Angelo terms 'white fragility' (Saad, 2018). I was so accustomed to racial comfort that I erupted in a cold rage at the slightest challenge to this sense of entitlement. I also engaged in what Saad refers to as 'white exceptionalism', believing that



About the author

Helen Basili is an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker in private practice, who specialises in working with survivors of interpersonal violence. Her interests include promoting diversity, addressing the impacts of discrimination on mental health, and effective altruism.

I was one of the good white people and was therefore immune to racist behaviour. I remember my sense of frustration that my colleague could not see that I was one of the good white people and my use of 'tone policing' by inwardly judging him for using what I considered to be his harsh tone of voice and choice of words.

The fact that I was able to go blithely through life for the next two decades without considering my former colleague's feelings is illustrative of my white privilege. By engaging with the *Me and White Supremacy Workbook* I had to consider his perspective for the first time. I saw that I had othered him, that I sent him a clear message that he didn't belong in this country and that I did. I saw the great injustice and cruel irony of a white person sending such a message to a POC upon land that was stolen from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I failed to consider how many white people had asked him the same question before, how exhausted he might have been by this type of interrogation and the angry responses of white people when he didn't respond in the way they wanted.

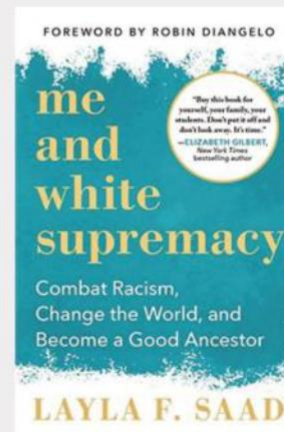
This was just one of many incidents in my past that I confronted. I had to hold myself accountable for my 'white apathy' and the many times I turned away from information about the violence that is inflicted on BIPOC because I found it too overwhelming (more white fragility). I recalled occasions when I heard other white people making racist comments prefaced by 'I'm not a racist but...' and failed to break rank with white solidarity and call them out on their racism. I saw how I clung to stereotypes, such as the 'strong Black woman', as a means of avoiding the legitimate distress of Black women around me who bore the brunt of white supremacist and patriarchal violence.

Although Saad asks incisive questions designed to bring her readers into contact with uncomfortable memories such as these, she does not allow us to wallow in shame or guilt. The workbook finishes by asking readers to contemplate and list their specific commitments to ongoing anti-racist work. Saad also makes it patently clear that our work will never come to an end as long as white supremacy flourishes.

I found the experience of completing the workbook an empowering one because it helped me to detach from an identity founded on being a 'good person'. This was a liberating experience as I began to accept my limitations as an imperfect individual and develop a less defensive stance that gives me more space to grow.

As a white person who benefits from the white supremacist systems around me, having good intentions is not enough. The risk of becoming complacent and colluding with these systems is omnipresent and, if unacknowledged, can result in unintentional racism that is as harmful as unbridled hatred. The *Me and White Supremacy Workbook* explains that to counter this risk, it is necessary to commit to seeking out, and elevating, the perspectives and work of BIPOC on a continual basis. Far from being burdensome, this can be an enriching process, which reveals the value in a multiplicity of experience, creativity and knowledge.

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Developing a culturally responsive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff mental wellbeing strategy

JULIE PRIVETT

Mental health is equally as important as physical health. In all social work fields of endeavour, we work with influences of mental health. The statistics show us that an average of one in five will experience a mental health episode and that 50 per cent of us will experience some type of mental health issue in any 12 months.

Considering how important mental health is for every Australian, only recently have we seen an upsurge for mental wellbeing frameworks in the workplace. In the [Creating a Mentally Healthy Workplace: Return on Investment Analysis](#) final report by Price Waterhouse Coopers, it stated that there is a significant economic impact of workers' poor mental health – in 2014 this cost was calculated at \$11 billion annually in Australia.

There are various factors that contribute to positive worker wellbeing that can be grouped into personal, professional and organisational reasons. More specifically, these include work stress, lateral violence and bullying, occupational health and safety issues, working conditions, office layout, job security, recognition, human and physical resources, professional development, the ability to communicate effectively, management style and workplace flexibility.

Many workplaces are starting to develop workplace wellbeing strategies that also include a mental health focus. But how might this look from an Indigenous perspective where there are historical, intergenerational and cultural aspects that should be considered?

There are significant differences in all areas of life outcomes between the general Australian population and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life outcomes. Mental health statistics are much higher and more likely to be under-reported for

Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 34 per cent more likely to experience mental health issues due to social determinants than other Australians, according to the [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#), accessed 1 May 2019.

Working within an Aboriginal-controlled service, I started to gain an insight into this as well as how there comes to be a blurring of lines across professional, personal and cultural roles as they intertwine within the cultural expectations of the community. Understanding the roles that people play with regards to status, for example, being an Elder can affect an employee's availability for organisational work when they must travel for Sorry Business or sit on Koori Court. An employee may not be able to work with a cousin or Auntie because of kinship rules and the place they hold within the community.

Working at the service also allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of what 'connection' meant. Social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) is a preferred term to mental health, particularly since it focuses on a positive approach. The SEWB model shows the importance of 'connection' and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing. Connection with spirit and ancestors, body, mind and emotions, family and kinship, community, culture and country contribute to the understanding of 'self'. When one of these connections is out of balance then SEWB is out



About the author

Julie Privett is a social worker who currently works within counselling and specialised family violence in rural Victoria. Julie is passionate about mental health and believes in constant learning and critical reflective practice. Julie previously worked within a community-controlled Aboriginal service that was a model for her capstone project in completing her Master of Mental Health Practice.

of balance. A great resource for understanding this further is the 2014 [Working Together](#) document of edited research freely available from the Telethon Kids Institute. Another important document is the [Gayaa Dhuwi \(Proud Spirit\) Declaration](#) which combines the five themes of mental health, suicide prevention and the nine principles of SEWB.

In developing a staff mental wellbeing strategy, it is then important to consider the place of connection in Aboriginal society and cultures, which have been affected by colonisation and is apparent through significant intergenerational trauma and grief around loss of identity through a disruption in connection.

Workplaces are complex systems. Behaviours are influenced by a range of factors. The local context must also inform the development of the wellbeing plan when considering which tribes, clans and kinship systems might come into play.

How then can workplaces successfully develop a staff wellbeing strategy that is culturally supportive of the needs of Indigenous people?

- 1 Look at and compare the suggested frameworks for developing this strategy. Most suggestions tend to focus on an integrated approach of promoting wellbeing, developing protective skills, and supporting staff.
- 2 Adopt a cyclical process and treat the plan as a living document - one that is written, trialled, evaluated and adapted to meet the needs of the organisation and its employees.
- 3 Know who the tribal groups are in the area and access their knowledge.
- 4 Understand that the roles held by community members can be multiple and affected by these roles and kinship ties.
- 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have a more collectivist approach to managing issues and solving problems.
- 6 Consideration needs to be given to types of leave that cater to the roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the community such as ceremonial leave and 'sorry' business.

There are significant differences in all areas of life outcomes between the general Australian population and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life outcomes.



About the authors

Amy Cleland is a Lecturer and Program Director: Social Science (Human Services) in the School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy at the University of South Australia. Amy coordinates Aboriginal Knowledges across social science, social work, and psychology programs.

Sophie Diamandi is currently Program Director of Student Wellbeing and Community Engagement at the University of South Australia. She has led initiatives in Aboriginal student engagement, recruitment and retention, and providing leadership on wellbeing and academic issues. Sophie is the manager of the Cultural Diversity project and has provided consultancy services across federal and state departments.

Antonia Hendrick is a Wadjella with English and Spanish ancestry. Her parents secured employment and shelter on arrival in Western Australia at a time when many Aboriginal people were denied these rights. Antonia is a social work academic at Curtin University, Western Australia. Her research interests include participatory community practice and decolonial work.

Trudi Marchant is a social worker with national and international experience including postgraduate qualifications in social policy and migration. She is of Anglo-Irish descent, from the fifth generation of families from predominantly Australian settler communities clearing country and farming in Victoria and Western Australia.

Reaching across the divide

Aboriginal Elders and academics working together

AMY CLELAND, SOPHIE DIAMANDI, ANTONIA HENDRICK AND TRUDI MARCHANT

The Reaching Across the Divide: Aboriginal Elders and Academics Working Together (RAD) project presented at AASW Conference 2019 in Adelaide, provided one example of how to embed Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing and being in tertiary education aiming at recognition, Reconciliation and restoration (Hansen, Hansen, Corbett, Hendrick & Marchant, 2019 (in press); Hendrick & Young, 2019).

The University of South Australia's Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences: School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy (SPSWSP), funded Aboriginal Nyoongar Elders Auntie Louise and Uncle Percy Hansen and Auntie Joanna Corbett and a Wadjella (non-Indigenous person) academic to travel across many nations, from the Nyoongar Nations of the Wadjuk people to Kurna Country, to present on their RAD project. The aim, to learn from this project's implementation in the School of Occupational Therapy, Social Work and Speech Pathology, Curtin University, Western Australia and its applicability in another School and context.

RAD's applicability across disciplines, including social work and occupational therapy, and its impact on diverse roles and responsibilities, from students through to Pro-Vice Chancellor engagement, and human resource processes and procedures, was shared and is further detailed in print (Hansen, Hansen, Corbett, Hendrick, & Marchant, 2019, in press). The presentations, with one being for the SPSWSP, modelled RAD's practices by centring Elders' wisdom, skills, principles and spirituality, which was key to the transformational properties and change demonstrated by students and staff participating in RAD (Hansen et al., 2019, in press). Conference attendees witnessed and experienced Aboriginal Elder yarning and oral story-telling (Hansen & Corbett, 2017; Hansen, 2017) which is central to RAD's success. This demonstration of

Aboriginal pedagogy kept attendees engaged and willing to extend the presentation time well into the lunch period with people yearning to yarn with the Elders long after the session had finished: 'we know we need to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being but we don't know how and this has given us some ideas about how to go about this', we heard echoed from conference attendees.

In RAD's evaluation, social work and occupational therapy students reported on improved knowledge, skills and confidence when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly in fieldwork. Staff too reported increased knowledge about curriculum development and engagement processes important when partnering with Aboriginal families and communities to better ready students to work in culturally responsive ways. Conference attendees commented on how listening to the Elders, of their experiences and the process of RAD, had moved them to act to do things differently.

The University of South Australia's funded visit was further co-funded by the UniSA Pro-Vice Chancellor Aboriginal Leadership and Strategy, to support the Elders to meet with South Australian Elders in Residence at UniSA. From this meeting, a continued partnership is envisaged, bringing benefit to local social work and other

Reflecting on the RAP

studies at UniSA. The learning goes two ways.

Looking ahead, the School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy are keen to collaborate with Curtin University to learn more about the RAD program in field education with the Elders at Curtin University. Having heard the WA Elders sharing their experiences at the AASW Conference 2019 and at UniSA has been heart-warming for future collaborations and opportunities. Our social work and human services students will be able to gain a deeper understanding of the Aboriginal ways of learning and doing. This will expose the students to more respectful connections with Aboriginal communities for increased cultural safety, accountability and responsiveness.

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The aim of the AASW 2017-2019 Reconciliation Action Plan was to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to trial approaches that build relationships, show respect and improve opportunities. The RAP was established to enable us as a profession and association to continue to build the right foundations for long-term outcomes.

Over the last two years, the RAP has helped lay the foundations of key actions, but also identified areas for continued improvement to move towards Reconciliation through meaningful actions and change.

The RAP allowed the AASW to build on previous actions and processes and advance in several areas. This has included:

- establishing the RAP Working Group to monitor the RAP development
- implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting with increased Indigenous voices and representation in the group
- development and implementation of a cultural awareness training plan for all staff in conjunction with SNAICC
- participation in and undertaking of National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC events at national and branch levels of the association
- continuing policy and advocacy efforts such as collaboration on the Close the Gap Refresh submission, resulting in advocacy on key Indigenous issues through our pre-budget submission and federal election campaign
- increasing media releases and media statements on key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues
- establishing dedicated pages on the website for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activities of the AASW and an annual *Social Work Focus* edition dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander themes and voices.

The RAP has also identified key areas that the AASW needs to work on for the next RAP, focusing on culture, process and communication:

- The structure and format of the working group led to barriers to building relationships.

- There was a lack of understanding about the role of the Implementation Group, which contributed to a lack of communication and transparency.
- Greater focus and space needs to be created to reflect on the history of social work profession in Indigenous communities.

Looking to the future - 2020-2022 RAP: Key learnings for the next RAP

The AASW is currently working with Reconciliation Australia to finalise our next RAP. The new RAP will focus on:

- Building Relationships and Network Building
 - » opportunities for greater face-to-face meetings and decolonisation of processes
 - » getting out on Country
 - » more visibility on the website and improved communication to members.
- Growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership and advancing current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples members
 - » advancing current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members into leadership roles, including on staff
 - » helping career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members.
- Education
 - » Exploring the scope of the AASW to work toward decolonising processes and practices in social work education.

We will continue to update members on the progress of this work, including the launch of the new RAP.

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AASW Member Benefits Program

Members have access to a range of benefits through their AASW Member Benefits Program. Below is a selection of benefits that may be of interest to you.



AIG Travel Insurance

Members save 30% on travel insurance* with AIG.

Everyday AIG assists travellers who lose their luggage, experience travel delays, miss transport connections and special events or even become sick whilst overseas due to unforeseen circumstances. It's when these unexpected things happen you need the confidence of AIG Australia's travel insurance supported by 24-hour emergency assistance.

Applying for cover is easy! Visit your AASW Member Benefits website for online quotes and purchases.

**Terms & conditions apply.*



Income Protection and Life Insurance

Whilst most people acknowledge the importance of insuring their homes, cars and personal possessions, they often overlook their most valuable asset, their income. No one expects sudden illness, accident or death to occur, yet if they do, they can be devastating for you and your family.

Members can obtain quotes on Income Protection Insurance, Term Life Insurance and Life and Total and Permanent Disability (TPD) Insurance through their AASW Member Benefits Program.



Freedom, Snooze, Plush and the Original Mattress Factory E-Gift Cards

Freedom, Snooze, Plush and the Original Mattress Factory are all members of the Greenlit Brands Group. They are proud to offer members a **10% discount** on the purchase of e-Gift Cards which can then be redeemed in-store.

Gift Card purchases are paid by direct debit and therefore incur NO transaction fees although a \$1 per card processing fee applies.

Visit your AASW Member Benefits website for more information.



Departure Lounge Accommodation

With more choice than ever, the Departure Lounge is ready to send you on your next weekend getaway, hot city break, country escape or sunshine and sand holiday.

Save up to 50% on accommodation at selected Peppers, Mantra and BreakFree properties throughout Australia and New Zealand.

For more information and online bookings visit your AASW Member Benefits website.

Petals Florist Network

Petals offers an extensive selection of the finest quality flowers, bouquets, arrangements, posies, corporate gifts, sympathy tributes, celebration flowers, plants and gift baskets. With something to suit every occasion whether happy or sad, there is something for every taste from very traditional to ultra-modern.

Members **receive 20% discount** on the flower value of your online order.

Visit your AASW Member Benefits website to view the range of flower options available and to order online.



For more information on these and all your benefits:

visit your AASW Member Benefits website:
memberbenefits.com.au/aasw or contact your
AASW Member Benefits team on 1300 304 551
or email: aasw@memberbenefits.com.au



Engage effectively with *all* your clients.

Introducing our new Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Cultural Competency.

Become a well-rounded professional.

Learn how your ideas and values have been shaped, in order to understand Australia's shared history. A history that continues to impact on your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

In the process, you'll enhance your intercultural understanding and become a culturally responsive communicator.

With the Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Cultural Competency you can:

- choose an elective tailored to your profession
- gain an accredited postgraduate qualification
- study online, in your own time.

Find out more

→ study.csu.edu.au/gc-indigenous-competency



Charles Sturt
University



Social Work Focus

ADVERTISING

Social Work Focus is the Australian Association of Social Workers' member magazine. It is published four times a year and is accessible to members via email and on our website in accessible digital formats, such as PDF, flipbook and a webpage.

You can advertise in *Social Work Focus*.

We accept advertising as follows:

ADVERTISING RATES

		4-ISSUE package BULK DISCOUNT	
		Single issue rate (\$)	Price per issue (\$)
Full Colour	Full page (inside covers)	\$1,050.00	\$945.00
	Full page (back cover)	\$1,260.00	\$1,134.00
	Half page (horizontal)	\$630.00	\$567.00
	Full page	\$982.50	\$803.25
	Quarter page (horizontal)	\$346.50	\$311.85

Prices are inclusive of GST and per advertisement.

ADVERTISING DEADLINES

2020 deadlines

Issue	Bookings & artwork	Publication
Summer 2020	10 January	26 February
Autumn 2020	27 March	29 May
Winter 2020	26 June	28 August
Spring 2020	25 September	27 November

Prices are inclusive of GST and per advertisement.

SUPPLYING ARTWORK

AASW will only accept final art that is supplied as a print ready, high resolution PDF with minimum 3mm bleed and crop marks. Minimum of 10mm margins are recommended for full page ads. All images must be 300 dpi.

Please send your artwork to editor@asw.asn.au

Please check that the size of your advertisement reflects our specifications.

If your advertisement does not reflect the quality of our magazine, we will contact you before we make any changes to it.

ADVERTISING SPECIFICATIONS (SIZES)

Full page 210x297mm Plus 3mm bleed	Half page horizontal 192x148mm	Quarter page horizontal 192x74mm

KEY:	Artwork area
	Bleed (min 3mm)
	Page trim

HOW TO BOOK YOUR ADVERTISEMENT

Please complete this booking form and scan/email it to:

Email: editor@asw.asn.au

To discuss your advertising needs, contact:

Social Work Focus Editor

Phone: 03 9320 1005

Email: editor@asw.asn.au

