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AASW

Australian Association
of Social Workers

Australia's Most Collaborative
Case Management System



Aboriginal Males Healing Centre (AMHC) Gains a Competitive Advantage by Utilising ECINS Case Management System

Highlights of AMHC's program and the implementation of ECINS include:

- ✂ Unique rehabilitation program for aboriginal domestic violence offenders
- ✂ Based in the mining town of Newman, an isolated desert region of Western Australia
- ✂ Struggled with fundraising and funding due to political and social roadblocks
- ✂ Implemented ECINS case management system in 2018
- ✂ Data from the system helped them prove results of their program and obtain funding
- ✂ Now building a residential facility and expanding services to help more families
- ✂ Launching ECINS mobile app to give participants more ownership of their healing process

With ECINS, the Aboriginal Males Healing Centre has gained a **competitive advantage in securing funding and moving their program forward.**

Test Drive ECINS with 3 Months of FREE Access Through our Community Support Program

Learn more about how ECINS provides the data needed to boost funding efforts while creating better outcomes for vulnerable people.





Cover photo credits:

Aboriginal photographer, artist, film maker, drone pilot, Adjunct Professor Wayne Quilliam continues to expand his cultural practice as one of Australia's leading creative minds. His award-winning career includes the coveted NAIDOC Aboriginal Artist of the Year, Human Rights Media Award, Walkley Award for photojournalism and nominated as a Master of Photography by National Geographic.

He has created and curated over 300 exhibitions throughout the world and the first photographer to hold 4 individual exhibitions at the UN in New York and Geneva for his work on Indigenous people rights.

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

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

In 2020, Wayne released his first book title 'Culture is Life'. He has been commissioned to create a series of work to be projected onto the Sydney Harbour Bridge during Vivid Festival. Wayne's art will feature on the Mt Yengo wine labels and his 3D creations will open at the World Expo on Dubai.

www.aboriginal.photography

www.aboriginalart.art

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Linda Ford

Directors

Suzanne Doorackers-Sprague

Elisha Ebdon

Dr Fotina Hardy

Brooke Kooymans

Julianne Whyte OAM

Director - Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander representative

Professor Susan Green

Melbourne office

Level 7, 14-20 Blackwood Street

North Melbourne VIC 3051

PO Box 2008, Royal Melbourne Hospital

VIC 3050

P: 03 9320 1022

aasw.asn.au

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

P: 03 9320 1000

membership@aasw.asn.au

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ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

P: 03 9320 1000

editor@aasw.asn.au

Social Work Focus

ISSN 2209-0045 (PRINT) | ISSN 2209-0053 (ONLINE)

Published quarterly, *Social Work Focus* belongs to the membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers. We welcome interesting articles relating to social work practice and research. We also accept paid advertisements and industry news.

Guidelines

Articles and advertisements must meet the requirements of our [contributions guidelines](#) and [advertising specifications](#).

Editorial and advertising enquiries

Marketing and Communications Officer

P: 03 9320 1005

editor@aasw.asn.au

www.aasw.asn.au

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NEXT EDITION

Contributions for the Summer 2022 issue will be accepted until Friday, 28 October 2022.

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.

EDITORS

Angela Yin

Amanda Place

COPYEDITOR

Ann Philpott

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

Join us on social media:



National President's Report

Let's walk together to Reconciliation

As I write this, I cannot believe how quickly the year is flying by. It is an honour to present the annual special edition of *Social Work Focus*; the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander edition as our "focus". I hope you are as inspired by the stories and articles in this edition as I am.

As I write this, we are on the cusp of publishing our fourth Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We recognise that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples have the oldest continuous cultures in the world and we are still on the path to Reconciliation.

In this edition of *Social Work Focus*, we reflect on the achievements of the last RAP. While we are proud of the achievements during this period, including publishing a new Code of Ethics which now ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Knowledges and Cultures are recognised and celebrated in social work practice and more comprehensive cultural awareness training, we know there is more to do. Our action plan

includes further engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, the development of principles of consultation and engagement with Indigenous members, non-members and staff. Thank you to the RAP Working Group for keeping us on track.

What the reflections of AJ Williams-Tchen, Elizabeth McEntyre and Rowena Hammond tell us is that Reconciliation goes beyond cultural awareness. 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.

VITTORIO CINTIO

AASW National President



Reconciliation and decolonisation is a process and journey. You can see that by our 20-year timeline in this edition – how far we have come as an Association and as a profession and the work still to do. Reconciliation and decolonising our practice is a life of unlearning. It is not simply an acknowledgement at the beginning of a meeting. It's understanding why those things are important. What do we know about the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work and live? Now that working remotely, attending events, being educated, informed and entertained now routinely happens "on-demand", have we adapted how we acknowledge the custodians of the very diverse lands on which we work and live? Have we reached out to the elders in our local areas to make sure they are part of the work we do? If we haven't, it's time to step up and make those connections.

I commend to you the feature articles of this edition on allyship, supervision, connecting to culture and the voices of women. There is much we can continue to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and this is an ongoing learning and sharing process as we journey together.

Vittorio Cintio

Vittorio Cintio



CEO's Report

Engaging with AASW members

I always look forward to the annual Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander edition of *Social Work Focus*. We find ourselves in a pivotal moment in Australian history, as Prime Minister Anthony Albanese prepares the nation for a referendum on enshrining the First Nations Voice to Parliament in our Constitution, as outlined in the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The AASW has always fully supported the Uluru Statement and this is most welcome progress.

Even though we are well through the year, there is plenty happening at AASW. We have the *Mental Social Work and Contemporary Practice* symposium on Thursday, 17 November 2022. As I write this, we announce our second keynote speaker The Hon. Emma McBride MP, the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health. Securing the Assistant Minister to be a speaker at the AASW's symposium talks to the value the new federal government places on social workers' role in mental health and the influence of your professional Association.

Assistant Minister McBride's portfolios are extremely relevant to the work that social workers do and we look forward to continuing our work with her and the government more broadly.

I encourage you to register for the symposium, and I look forward to exploring this rapidly changing and growing area of contemporary social work practice with you.

Since the last edition, we received the outcomes of the Member Needs and Satisfaction Survey 2022, which we conduct every two years. Like previous years, members' main reasons for retaining membership were keeping up-to-date with the sector, CPD, access to Credentials, professional status,

and public and professional indemnity insurance.

Members wanted to see an increased focus on professional reputation, profile of the profession, continued advocacy and member support. The Association stretches your dollars far. As the largest self-regulated allied health profession, we undertake significant social policy and advocacy work on behalf of the profession and community, promote the profession, develop and offer innovative and original CPD, while at the same time, we regulate the profession. This means funding the development of the ASWEAS, the Code of Ethics and Practice Standards. We fund and support the Ethics function of the Association, which are similar functions to AHPRA. This means the AASW has to prioritise and be targeted in its approach to get maximum impact across the different responsibilities and areas. Getting the balance right is always the challenge.

Demonstrating the value and quality of the AASW's CPD program, our Advanced Supervision Program has been selected as a finalist in two categories for the Australian Institute of Training & Development (AITD) Awards, in conjunction with Family Safety Victoria and Redpoint Consulting. These are: Best Blended Learning Solution and Best Capability Building Program. The winners of these categories will be

announced on Thursday, 20 October 2022 in Melbourne.

The Advanced Supervision Program was developed to meet key recommendations in Coronial, Royal Commission and State Ombudsman reports that highlighted social workers need extra support with clinical supervision, supervisors need extra support and advanced training, and that supervisors who are also team leaders need support to navigate their dual roles. This is a crucial piece of CPD that will assist social workers and the people we serve in very difficult circumstances.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the Editorial Board of *Australian Social Work* journal for steadily moving the publication into the top quartile for journals in its category globally. This is an outstanding result and demonstrates the quality of the research undertaken in Australia. The position of the journal and the papers published clearly shows that Australia punches above in the study and practice of social work. This is an enviable position which I am sure you agree we wish to maintain.

Best wishes



Cindy Smith



CINDY SMITH

Chief Executive Officer

AASW Reconciliation Action Plan

2020–2022 Update

As we conclude the AASW Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-2022 (RAP), we reflect on the achievements we made over the last two years. The Association has continued to progress important initiatives to advance Reconciliation and ensure we meet the RAP deliverables. It has been an exciting two years of initiatives in this space, with some significant strides in further embedding Reconciliation into the Association.

Our achievements and highlights across the last two years include:



RELATIONSHIPS

- Delivered an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Social Work symposium in 2020
- Over the duration of this RAP, we have undertaken consultation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members for:
 - › National symposium on truth-telling
 - › Pre-budget submissions
 - › At state and territory level for policy submissions
 - › National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children successor plan
 - › 26th Asia-Pacific Regional Social Work Conference
 - › National Policy Platform
 - › Survey Consultation: National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Child
 - › National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse
 - › Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Established a National Advisory Panel for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and develop other ad hoc advisory/consultative frameworks to ensure voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are present in the work the AASW undertakes.
- Developed and circulated two videos of AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members across social media and our website for National Reconciliation Week and one video for the 26th January.
- Celebrated the story of our 16,000th member as an Aboriginal man and his story in *Social Work Focus*
- Two annual Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander *Social Work Focus* special editions
- Maintained two AASW Board members who identify as Aboriginal women and RAP Working Group Chair is a Board member.
- Celebrated National Reconciliation Week including:
 - › Encouraging emails from CEO to staff attend events
 - › Information published across our socials
- › Multiple branch events held around the country
- Continued to circulate updates on the RAP via different communication channels and initiatives
- Draft revised Practice Standards now includes Standard 2 – which relates specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- The AASW Constitution now embeds advancing Reconciliation as an objective and an activity of the organisation.
- CPD includes offerings inclusive of acknowledgement and more offerings related to Indigenous knowledges and cultures.
- Over the duration of the RAP, we've continued to communication information and resources relating to specific dates, events and activities of significance to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples internally to staff, externally to members and to the broader public. This has included:
 - › National Reconciliation Week
 - › NAIDOC Week
 - › 26th January



- › National Apology to the Stolen Generation
- › Close the Gap Day
- › Harmony Day
- › National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
- › National Child Protection Week (and the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children involved with child protection)
- Maintained relationships with Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander organisations, and other organisations such as the *COSS's around the country who undertake initiatives to advance Reconciliation.
 - › Joined the Raise the Age campaign
- Human Resources policies adopted such as EEO and Anti-Discrimination Policy.
- We have held:
 - › online Truth-telling sessions
 - › a *Social Work People* podcast episode on decolonising the human services field
- We have updated our Code of Ethics and the Practice Standards to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Knowledges and Cultures are recognised and celebrated.



RESPECT

- Cultural awareness (basic and advanced) continues to be delivered to all staff
 - › Basic Cultural Awareness training was delivered to 69 staff members during the period July 2020 to June 2022
 - › Advanced Cultural Awareness training was delivered to 38 staff members during the period July 2020 to June 2022.
- Cultural learning strategy developed after consultation, awaiting sign off from CEO. Will be implemented in next RAP.
- Welcome to Country is provided at larger, significant events, and providing an Acknowledgement of Country for smaller events such as internal meetings. Acknowledgement to Country and Welcome to Country Protocols provided at:
 - › Had a Welcome to Country provided at the *26th Asia-Pacific Regional Social Work Conference 2021 to a global audience*
 - › Welcome to Country at Child Protection symposium in 2022
 - › Acknowledgement of Country at the start of each *Social Work People* podcast.
 - › Acknowledgement of Country at whole of organisation staff meetings
 - › Acknowledgement of Country is undertaken at all BMC and related committees and events across the Branches and has been well engaged with.
- NAIDOC Week information and resources communicated to staff and to member base across communication channels
- NAIDOC Events undertaken 2022:
 - › SA Branch – SA – NAIDOC Movie and Discussion viewing of *The Drover's Wife: The legend of Molly Johnson* (2021)
 - › NSW Branch – NSW – NAIDOC Week - Uluru Statement from the Heart presented by The Uluru Youth
 - › NT Branch – NT – NAIDOC Week: Learning from the people around us: Listening to the stories we tell.
 - › ACT Branch – ACT – Get Up! Stand up! Show up! NAIDOC Social Work Event: Yarning, listening and learning from First Nations
- In 2020, Social Work Capability Framework for whole of profession developed including a capability dedicated to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. This framework is used to design the CPD Program and liaise with trainers on key capabilities to deliver on clear learning outcomes
- Level 1 and Level 2 Cultural Responsiveness on-demand learning licences purchased from IAHA made available to members at a better rate from October 2021. Offers 10 CPD hours. Since it was made available in October 2021, there have been 73 registrations for the Cultural Responsiveness OnDemand CPD.
- The CPD Team hosted a live webinar during March titled "Inclusive and Empowering Aboriginal Child Protection Practice" delivered by Linda Ford. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/events/event/aasw-webinar-recording-inclusive-and-empowering-aboriginal-child-protection-practice>
- This recorded webinar has been added to the AASW CPD On-Demand catalogue within the collection titled "Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/professional-development/swot-social-work-online-training>





OPPORTUNITIES

- Mentoring program includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors and mentees.
- All national events include scholarship opportunities



GOVERNANCE

- RAP Working Group maintained
- RAP Implementation Group maintained, including RAP Champion
- Signed up to participate in the biennial Workplace RAP Barometer
- Draft RAP 2022-2024 completed and awaiting sign-off.



CHALLENGES

Further work needs to be undertaken to:

- Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support their work and progress reconciliation
- Develop principles of consultation and engagement
- Engage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members in our work
- Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-members in our work
- Embed reconciliation in the broader communication activities of the AASW
- Engage Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members

The Association has continued to progress important initiatives to advance Reconciliation and ensure we meet the RAP deliverables.

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20 years of Reconciliation

Supporting self-determination of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples

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

At that time, we made a commitment to do better and to support the fulfilment of fundamental human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including the right to self-determination and, civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights.

Over nearly two decades, the AASW has committed to being educated about, and supporting the education of others on the impacts of colonisation, racism and the need to recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and cultures.

We have developed principles and ethical considerations for our members and the students in social work courses to ensure this must form part of their practice, irrespective of

their professional setting or stream of practice.

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

Our commitment to advance reconciliation is prominent in all aspects of the Association. We commit to updating this work with each and every iteration to ensure it is in line with contemporary practice and

understanding. With each RAP, we develop new and innovative means to drive reconciliation, founded on the non-negotiable principle of self-determination.

We know there is a significant role for the social work profession in advocating for and effecting systemic change to enshrine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's rights. We also have a role to play in shifting entrenched and counter-productive attitudes in the broader Australian community.

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



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

1

NOVEMBER 2013 – JUNE 2015 1ST RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

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

2

JUNE 2017 - JUNE 2019 2ND RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

2017	Parliament of Victoria <i>Inquiry into Youth Justice Centres</i> submission. The AASW advocates for the rights of children and express significant concern regarding the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection and youth detention system.
2018	Submission to Council of Australian Governments <i>Closing the Gap Refresh</i> .
APRIL 2018	Christine Craik, AASW President and Linda Ford, AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director write and publish ABC news article <i>Aboriginal children need loving, safe and culturally appropriate homes</i> .
AUGUST 2018	<i>International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples</i> - yarn with Josephine Lee, winner of the Northern Territory Mary Moylan Award for Excellence in Social Work, and former Board member and RAP Working Group member. Recording is available to members and the public. Josephine tells us to look to Indigenous culture when seeking solutions to environmental problems.
MAY 2018	First edition of <i>Social Work Focus</i> , the AASW's membership magazine, dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture, knowledge and practice launched.
JUNE 2019	National Reconciliation Week: the AASW releases a video - <i>in conversation with Linda Ford - AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director and Christine Craik - AASW President</i> . State/ Territories hold their own local NRW events, with support from National office.
AUGUST 2019	<i>International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2019</i> : celebrating Indigenous languages with Candice Butler - Queensland Branch Management Committee member celebrating IDOWIP and the UN-declared Year of Indigenous Languages - 2019.
AUGUST 2019	Breakfast Radio Interview: Linda Ford AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director chats to Greg Reid of Black Star Radio about Indigenous Languages on <i>International Day Of The World's Indigenous Peoples</i> .

3

JULY 2020 - JUNE 2022 3RD RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

JANUARY 2020	2nd edition of <i>Social Work Focus</i> dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture, knowledge and practice.
JULY 2020	Online Truth-Telling session held with members and non-members.
2020	Joined the <i>Raise the Age</i> Campaign to raise the age of criminal responsibility in Australia from 10 to 14 and actively engage in this campaign.

3

2020	ASWEAS revised and builds on existing commitment, and required curriculum and now includes 'Constructions of social work purpose, place and practice - the complex history of social work, in Australia and internationally, with a particular focus on the historical and contemporary disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the implications of this for social work practice; The history and contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and, Psychosocial health and wellbeing across the life cycle.'
AUGUST 2020	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Advisory Panel established to assist in informing policy responses.
JUNE 2020	National Reconciliation Week event: <i>In This Together</i> video with Linda Ford - AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director and Christine Craik - AASW President. Distributed to members and available to the public on the AASW website.
2020	Social Work Capability Framework for whole of profession developed including a capability dedicated to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
NOVEMBER 2020	Delivered <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Work Symposium</i> - 425 delegates attended.
OCTOBER 2020	3rd edition of <i>Social Work Focus</i> dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture, knowledge and practice.
JANUARY 2021	Linda Ford, Board Director, and past Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Director and RAP Working Group Chair appointed to the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) Indigenous Commission.
JANUARY 2021	Community Hub group established for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples social workers.
JULY 2021	The Editorial Board of <i>Australian Social Work</i> journal develops and implements <i>Guidelines for Articles by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Authors and About Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues</i> which is publicly available on Taylor and Francis Online under instructions for author for the journal.
MARCH 2021	<i>Social Work People</i> , the AASW's podcast series which explores the diverse world of social work and connects listeners to the people driving the change and providing advocacy on the issues that impact upon the quality of life of all Australians, features Dr. Lorraine Muller who discusses decolonising the human services system.
APRIL 2021	Australian Government convenes <i>Indigenous Voice to Parliament</i> consultation and the AASW, through consultation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members and National Advisory Panel submit in support of the <i>Uluru Statement from the Heart</i> .
JULY 2021	South Australian Branch offers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social worker students free membership for 12 months as part of NAIDOC celebrations.
MAY 2021	<i>Social Work Peoples</i> episode for National Reconciliation Week features Pat Turner AM who discusses Reconciliation.

JUNE 2021	States and territories host their own National Reconciliation Week activities.
FEBRUARY 2021	Mentoring program launched with specific pairing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors and mentees.
APRIL-JUNE 2021	<i>Australian Social Work</i> top Journal article downloaded in the last 12 months is 'Wayanha: A Decolonised Social Work' by Sue Green and Bindi Bennett.
JUNE 2021	<i>National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children Successor Plan</i> submission to Department of Social Service's.
JULY 2021	NAIDOC Week celebrations hosted by state and territories.
SEPTEMBER 2021	Equal Employment Opportunity & Discrimination Policy and Workplace Harassment & Bullying Policy adopted.
SEPTEMBER 2021	4th edition of <i>Social Work Focus</i> dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture, knowledge and practice launched.
OCTOBER 2021	Corporate supplier contract negotiated with IAHA and cultural responsiveness eLearning purchased for a two year period made available to AASW members via our online catalogue.
NOVEMBER 2021	AASW hosts the <i>26th Asia-Pacific Regional Social Work Conference 2021</i> online. Australian Welcome to Country provided to a global audience; International Federation of Social Work Indigenous Commission provides keynote panel discussion and includes Board Member Linda Ford; AASW Climate Statement launched which calls out the need to address the climate emergency by drawing on First Nations Knowledges; and, 5 x scholarships provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to attend the conference.
NOVEMBER 2021	AASW National Excellence Awards launches inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Member Social Worker of the Year.
26 JANUARY 2022	2021's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Worker of the Year, AJ Williams-Tchen interviewed about what 26th January means and indicates it is a day to reflect on our nation's true history. The video is distributed through all media communication channels including publicly accessible social media channels.
JANUARY 2022	<i>Australian Social Work</i> has special themed issues (volume 75) - <i>First Nations/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues in Social Work: Moving Forward</i> - this marks the second special themed issue dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
31 MARCH 2022	A revised Constitution is accepted by the AASW members, which introduces both objectives and activities of the Association which relate to reconciliation initiatives.

3

JUNE
2022

Two videos of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members discussing what Reconciliation means to them developed and communicated across all communication channels

JUNE
2022

Review of cultural learning needs of staff and draft Cultural Learning Strategy developed

JUNE
2022

Draft Practice Standards 2022 developed and released for consultation with members. For the first time, the Practice Standards include a specific, standalone Standard: 'Social workers practice in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the spirit of self-determination as agents of change, advancement and healing.'

JUNE
2022

Signed up to participate in the biennial Workplace RAP Barometer (WRB).

We believe that Reconciliation is everybody's business, and through our work at the AASW, we believe we are creating a current and future workforce which can work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples



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26 January

AJ Williams-Tchen



The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Social Worker of the Year 2021 AJ Williams-Tchen reflects on 26 January. He is an Aboriginal man of Wiradjuri / Wotjobulak background.

26 January is a day that occurs every year. It's also a very contentious day because it means many different things to different people. To some people, it's a celebration; it's about citizenship. But for a lot of people, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it's a day of mourning. It's sometimes referred to as Invasion Day.

It is quite contentious. To me, it's a day of reflection. It's being able to think about what Australia Day means to

yourself; what Australia Day means to your family; what Australia Day means to your clients and the people that you work with. It's making sure we understand the true history. It's about understanding the history that you've learnt: how accurate is it? How real is it? How far back are some of those things, where you might place them?

For example, the Stolen Generation. Some people think that happened hundreds of years ago. The reality is,

I'm a member of the Stolen Generation. Yeah, this stuff has happened in my lifetime. Often, people don't see that upfront, until I share my story with you. And I think that is the key message for Australia Day this year. It's about listening to stories. It's about understanding the true history and making sure that whatever Australia Day means to you, that you celebrate it in a way that allows you to reflect on true history.

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National Reconciliation Week 2022

Be Brave, Make Change

Elizabeth McEntyre - Worimi woman

I begin by thanking our Worimi ancestors for guiding us in not being afraid to embrace our true selves, to learn and improve everyday, to be kind and generous towards each other, to live with integrity and purpose and to make time for those things that really matter in life. Today is National Sorry Day or National Day of Healing. Today we

The wisest thing that we could do now is to walk forward together equally, and without fear

remember the Aboriginal children that were forcibly taken from their families and communities with the deliberate intention of having them forget who they were, their Aboriginality, their cultural identity and way of life and to become white. This remembering is a big part of the Reconciliation process between black and white Australians. Between the First Peoples and the settler colonist, descendants of this country. Worimi people are intimately connected to Barray, to this freshwater and saltwater country. We love and belong to Country. We know that Barray keeps us strong. We know Barray keeps our emotions, body, mind, spirit, our family, and communities well. This knowing and this love of Country is shared by most if not all of the people who live here in Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest.

Elizabeth acknowledged four people from Worimi Country who are photographers, showcasing and describing beautiful photographs of Barray.

A few days ago, we had a turning point for Reconciliation when the new Prime Minister Anthony Albanese reaffirmed his pledge to progressing Voice, Treaty and Truth. We have waited five years for this point in time, so the wisest thing that we could do now is to walk forward together equally, and without fear. We are strong enough to free ourselves from the strain of settler founding, to decolonise and be transformational so that we, and our children and our grandchildren and our grandchildren's grandchildren can grow in unity and abundance.



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Be Brave, Make Change



Rowena Hammond - Peramangk woman

My name is Rowena Hammond. I'm a proud Peramangk woman from the Adelaide Hills region in South Australia. My mob is the Ngarrindjeri mob, which means "belonging to the hill" which is Mt Barker. I am on Bungandidj country in lower south-east South Australia.

Reconciliation can't happen until we are able to acknowledge that there has been a wrongdoing

Reconciliation can't happen until we are able to acknowledge that there has been a wrongdoing and because there hasn't been that acknowledgement that there has been a wrongdoing, we can't reconcile something. In my family, there has been a lot of lateral violence perpetrated towards our family. There have been other mobs saying that we're not Aboriginal and that's because they haven't understood that there have been things occur over time that have impacted us.

So, Stolen Generations. My great-great-grandmother was Stolen Generation, then her daughter, all of her children and then all of her children. But Reconciliation is about more than that, it's not just about the Stolen

Generation. It's about people being able to understand the difference between Sorry Day and the Apology and understanding the difference between Closing the Gap and Close the Gap. It's the difference between the Redfern Speech and the Redfern Statement. If they acknowledge those things at all. It's really important for people to learn our past. Our past. It's Australian past. Not an Aboriginal past or a non-Indigenous past. It's Australian past. Anything that happened from 1788 to current day is Australian past. And if we want to be able to reconcile, then we have to be able to all know the truth.

I think that Reconciliation Week is an opportunity for people to show that they actually acknowledge Reconciliation that's occurring, but I think that there is more that needs to be done throughout the rest of the year. It's not a tick-box situation. You can't just go Reconciliation Week - I did it! Tick. You need to be able to be reconciling throughout the whole year. The most important thing is that people need to understand the past and support the truth-telling. But they need to support Indigenous people to do their self-determination. That space between Reconciliation and self-determination is where we all meet and that Indigenisation stuff and so when it comes to the Welcome to Countries and the Acknowledgement of Countries they can't just be "Well we did a Welcome to Country, We did

an Acknowledgement of Country". It's got to be meaningful, it's got to have substance to it. The reason we do Welcome to Country is because we are welcoming another mob onto a country. Back in ancient times, it was a way of signifying peace and welcoming.

If Australia can truly reconcile, I think it would help some of that grief go away because there are lot of things that we carry through every generation and we know that we have been trying to do the right thing. I think it would help to know that we have survived and that our voices will keep surviving. That is the one piece that will never be taken away.

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**BE
BRAVE.
MAKE
CHANGE.**
NATIONAL
RECONCILIATION
WEEK 2022

Community Hub discussion groups

Your online community

Have you joined your online social work community yet?

You can connect with other social workers across the country by logging in to the [AASW website](#) and visiting the discussion groups in the Social Work Australia Community Hub. These groups provide opportunities to connect, chat and collaborate with other social workers virtually – wherever you are, whenever it's convenient for you.

Here are some tips to get you started.

••• JOIN A GROUP

Join a discussion group, or groups, that are relevant to your practice. Once you join a group, posts from the group will be included in your 'My Feeds' on the Community Hub home page, making it easy to keep up to date.

••• SAY HELLO

Don't be shy. Introduce yourself to a group to grow your own network. If you're looking for ideas about what to post, you could share your practice interests and career path, what you love about being a social worker, and what you would like to get out of participating in a discussion group.

••• ASK A QUESTION

You don't need to be an expert or have lots of experience to post in a discussion group. If you have a practice-related question, there's a good chance someone else is wondering the same thing. Asking questions of other social workers is a great way to get advice from colleagues and start a conversation.



••• RESPOND TO A QUESTION

You might not think you have anything worth adding to a discussion, that someone else knows more than you. Brush off that imposter syndrome and share your thoughts and ideas with the discussion groups. There's no pressure to come up with the right or 'perfect' reply and there's more than one answer to most questions. There's also nobody else with your specific experience, so every perspective is valuable.

••• SHARE

The discussion groups are collaborative spaces. You are encouraged to provide your own insights, but you can also share conversation starters such as resources, reports, infographics, media and journal articles, or even a photo relating to your practice (e.g. showing your remote practice location, practice setup, pets/therapy animals at work).

This is your community and your opportunity to connect with colleagues, to make a difference through shared knowledge, and to grow the professional identity of social work. Be a part of it. Add your voice.

Visit the Community Hub discussion groups and join a conversation today. Simply log in to the [AASW website](#) using your AASW member login details and use the QuickLink from the home page to the [AASW Online Community Hub: Social Work Australia](#).

There are now more than 30 different discussion groups available, across a range of practice areas and career stages, and that number continues to grow. With so many options, there's sure to be a group and conversation for you to join.

The groups are member forums where you can ask questions of your professional community, share your knowledge and expertise, exchange ideas, learn practice tips and insights from others, and contribute to the profession's collective knowledge.



NAIDOC Week 2022

Get up! Stand up! Show up!

National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across the lands now known as Australia in the first week of July each year (Sunday to Sunday), to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This year's theme – [Get up! Stand up! Show up!](#) – encouraged all of us to champion institutional, structural, collaborative, and cooperative change while celebrating those who have already driven and led change in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over generations.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The South Australia Branch held a movie night of *The Drover's Wife: The legend of Molly Johnson*.

This movie stars Leah Purcell, who also directed it, wrote the play based on a reimagining of Henry Lawson's classic short story, and wrote the screen adaptation. Leah Purcell AM is an Aboriginal Australian ([Goa-Gunggari-Wakka Wakka Murri](#)) stage and film

actress, playwright, film director, and novelist.

It was a sold-out event, with 30 AASW members attending the film screening and discussion at the Palace Cinema.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

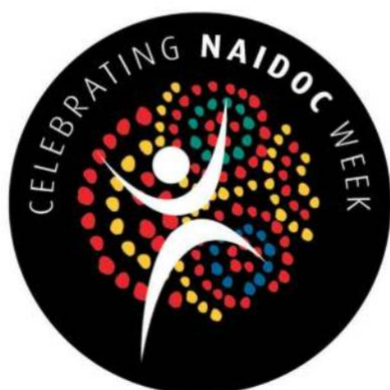
The Northern Territory Branch ran a truth-telling session featuring Jahmayne Coolwell, the Team Leader at the Local Indigenous Medical Centre in Darwin. Jahmayne leads the social and emotional wellbeing team. Jahmayne shared his lived experience, and gave an insight into what inspired him in becoming a social worker to inspire other First Nations people to pursue a career in this field. There were 18 attendees to this online session.

NEW SOUTH WALES

The NSW Branch hosted an online session of 47 people on the Uluru Statement on the Heart by First Nations youth. The Uluru Youth are a collective group of First Nations peoples aged 18-30 who support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

The ACT Branch hosted Aunty Elaine, a proud and strong Galar Wiradyuri woman at a NAIDOC afternoon tea, surrounded by the incredible art exhibition "Life Source" by Aboriginal woman Leah Brideson, while listening and learning from real, lived experiences. 16 people attended.



GET UP!
STAND UP!
SHOW UP!

3-10 JULY 2022



How to be the best ally?

AJ WILLIAMS-TCHEN

Many non-Indigenous social workers often ask, "How can I be a good ally for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients, families and colleagues?" As an Aboriginal social worker, cultural mentor and facilitator of cultural awareness training, I offer these five strategies for consideration to advance practice, to show respect, to allow true reconciliation to occur, and to be a true ally.



About the author

AJ Williams-Tchen (BSW Victoria University, MSW University of Melbourne). A proud Wiradjuri and Wotjobulak man). 2021 AASW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island Social Worker of Year

As Director of Girraway Ganyi Consultancy since 2007, he has facilitated over 500 Aboriginal cultural awareness trainings and 690 Mental Health First Aid workshops nationally. He provides cultural mentoring programs in schools and workplaces. Currently Cultural Advisor to AGECS, ISV, ANZAED, NDEC, IBAC and Beyondblue. He is also a poet and YouTuber.

Allyship is not just a one-off event. It should be viewed as a process. Being an ally is not an identity, and it can't just be self-defined. Only those that you ally with can recognise and determine your ally status. True allyship is about feeling uncomfortable at times. It is about having those uncomfortable conversations, being able to embrace emotions that make one feel challenged, hurt, guilty and even humbled. It is about being there with us, but at times not feeling part of us. It is about always listening and knowing when to share your thoughts and experiences.

The five strategies that I believe will help you be a better ally are:

1 Learn who the local Indigenous community are

Do some research both online and in person. Find out who are the traditional custodian group/s of the lands where you live and work? Who are the Elders or Respected People that you should get to know and talk with? Where is the local Aboriginal Health Service or Corporation? Is there a local Gathering Place in the area? What Indigenous specific services are around? How do you access these services in terms of referrals for your clients? It is essential that you educate

yourself about the community that you're interested in demonstrating allyship towards. To do this you need to use all your social work skills: research, technology and networking. Do your own research *before* reaching out to members of the community which you are trying to ally with. It is not the community's job to teach you how to be our ally.

2 Undertake as much cultural awareness training as you possibly can

Cultural Awareness is not just a one-off event. It should be viewed as a life-long journey. Each training that you do will be different. Each cultural facilitator will give you their own interpretation of Aboriginal history, their own personal and family stories, and provide you with strategies and considerations to think about when you are working with Aboriginal clients in different community-based settings, doing research, seeking consultation or undertaking direct case work.

3 Stand up for us when required

Allies need to be there when we need them. Don't sit back and do nothing when you hear others use derogatory terms or voice negative stereotypes



about Aboriginal people or about Indigenous issues, whether in person or online. Stand up and call out concerns about any bad language or behaviour that you witness. A true ally would not be compliant in allowing such behaviour to be tolerated. Advocate for us when we need it – but don't speak on our behalf. We can speak for ourselves, if we are given the platform to do so. Stand beside us, not in front. Allying with a movement does not mean controlling it, leading it, and pushing your own agenda. It is about knowing when to speak up, show up, shut up and stand up. You will never get it right all the time – and that is okay. Own any mistakes and keep the support coming.

4 Give platforms for our voices to be heard and then listen to what is said

Allow our voices to always be part of the narrative. Our voices have historically, and still are, often silenced, edited to suit the "white narratives of the systems that we work in" or are simply taken away from us. Whether you are writing policy, undertaking research, requesting our representation on advisory panels

or working groups, or requiring paid or unpaid consultation around Indigenous issues, remember that we are the experts of our own cultures. We will tell it as it is. We live every day being Aboriginal. Respect the lived experience of what is shared with you. It is important to always remember that as Aboriginal people, we are the experts of oppression, as we (ourselves, our family and our ancestors) have been directly affected by it. Our interpretation and lived experience take precedence over the opinions of people who have not experienced it. This means listen without comment. Avoid tokenistic gestures like inviting us to the table, but then not letting us be part of the meal. Our voices will help guide you, provide culturally appropriate advice and support, give true perspectives and enhance your knowledge, skills and experiences.

5 Be prepared to listen and not voice your opinions at times

As uncomfortable as it might be at times, the best thing to do is just listen. Don't assume that your presence or opinion is always necessary. Allyship is about taking a back space and

supporting our right to be heard. Show up when you are invited. It is about recognising that you may not automatically be a member in the community you mean to ally with, but you do need to make a concerted effort to better understand the struggle that we continue to endure. This means that you may need to hold back on your ideas, opinions, beliefs, ideologies, and resist the desire to "save us". With adequate resources, supports, platforms and opportunities, we know the best solutions that meet our needs. We need you there unconditionally, in good times and in bad. A true ally supports the cause, not causes the support.

I hope that this article will make you think.

We do need your allyship.

We also need you to understand and practise effective allyship.

Allies work with us to allow us to have our voices and our causes heard.

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About the authors



Joseph Fleming, PhD, is a qualified registered mental health social worker, counsellor, academic and supervisor with over twenty five years' experience. Joseph also has a particular interest in men's health and cultural practice. He is currently working in private practice delivering clinical social work services in mental health settings and using a range of evidence-based strategies.



John van der Giezen has over thirty years' experience as a social worker, working with disadvantaged people with a particular focus on working with Aboriginal people and in mental health settings, both government and non-government. He has been involved in the establishment of several new programs including Ruah Inreach, Aboriginal Community Support Service and the Specialist Aboriginal Mental Health Service. He was instrumental in lobbying for the review of the Mentally Impaired Defendants Act, 1996 and was a member of the Review Panel.

John also provides extensive training in the areas of Aboriginal Mental Health and cultural security to clinicians and at three universities in WA. He has twice been nominated for Human Rights awards for his work in the Aboriginal community.

John van der Giezen was named Fremantle City's 2016 Citizen of the Year on 26 January for his work in mental health.

Sharing stories, sharing culture

A reflection on effective supervision for Aboriginal social workers

DR JOSEPH FLEMING
JOHN VAN DER GIEZEN

In Australia, an important strategy in responding to Indigenous disadvantage is the ongoing challenge to attract more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the social work profession. Despite this the literature and research into appropriate and effective models of social work supervision for Aboriginal staff is quite limited. Particularly in Australia, there has been limited attempts to develop an approach to supervising Aboriginal staff in a way which meets their professional development needs.

This article will describe some brief current practice insights in social work supervision from two non-Aboriginal social workers in consultation with Aboriginal health workers from Western Australia. This knowledge and practice wisdom has been developed from more than three decades of combined direct social work practice. It is hoped by sharing this brief practice reflection that this article will provide other practitioners with some ways to ensure culturally safe supervision for Aboriginal staff.

**Culturally, responsibility
to family and community
are foremost and
there is an importance
attached to social
relationships and
extended family**

CONTEXT

When collaborating with Aboriginal people, it is especially important to consider their unique social and emotional wellbeing through a holistic lens (Dudgeon, Garvey & Pickett 2000, pp. 2130). Unfortunately, many non-Aboriginal social workers and other health professions struggle to understand these issues when considering cultural safety aspects.

It is important for health professionals to approach their jobs with cultural understanding, sensitivity, and awareness as well as openness (Dudgeon, Garvey & Pickett 2000, p.20). Unfortunately, there is little research available into appropriate and effective models of social work supervision for Aboriginal social workers.

As non-Aboriginal supervisors, we must never assume anything and always consider every aspect affecting the health of an individual, no matter how insignificant it may appear. For Aboriginal people in Australia, the

day-to-day life of being a member of the community cannot be separated from their work life. This is because the basis of which Aboriginal communities operate are far different from non-Aboriginal communities.

There is always an ever present and significant crossover. An Aboriginal worker is always considered "to be on" (this an expression coined by a Western Australian Aboriginal health worker that refers to work that continues to occur beyond the office hours the value of mutual obligation). This is magnified by the fact that many live in small intricately connected communities, with expectations that people have an equal responsibility to family, community, and the workplace. Culturally, responsibility to family and community are foremost and there is an importance attached to social relationships and extended family. Individuals are seen as belonging to their family, clan, and their traditional land (Summerville & Hokanson, 2013).

This was reflected in a recent experience by the author in a remote community setting. Here a worker was arriving late for work each day and looking very tired. As the supervisor was concerned for the worker's wellbeing, the worker was asked about the reason for the lateness and the worker said that they had not had any rest when they left the workplace, mostly because of family issues and helping others outside the standard nine-to-five office hours. The supervisor assisted in helping the worker develop ways to balance the work with family time, which included looking at more flexible work arrangements with more flexible start and finish times.

INTEGRATING CULTURAL, CLINICAL, AND ORGANISATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The importance of moving beyond the traditional supervisee/supervisor dyad has been acknowledged elsewhere

by previous research into Indigenous supervision (Elkington, 2014). Building upon this knowledge, the author of this article, has found that effective supervision needs to constantly challenge this dyadic relationship, providing a robust discourse about supervision on three core elements of practice. The discourse begins by taking an ecological systems perspective of the supervision process. This process is inclusive of the whole context in which the person exists.

It considers that Aboriginal social workers' connection to family and their community responsibilities occur beyond the agency gate. It can be described as the three worlds: the world of the supervisor, the world of the supervisee, and the world of the organisation.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF THE SUPERVISOR

The supervisor must have embedded within their practice a level of proficiency in cultural competency. This means that they must understand and enact a set of values, principles and demonstrated behaviours and attitudes around being able to work effectively cross-culturally.

As an Aboriginal the supervisee can work across the dominant western culture and within their own Aboriginal culture due to their experiences of growing up and practising as a minority member of society.

A supervisor of an Aboriginal worker must be able to display this cultural competence and demonstrate their understanding to enhance the level of trust and the relationship with their supervisee. The supervisor is also the key ally or advocate for embedding cultural competency within the organisation.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY OF THE ORGANISATION

Cultural competency of an organisation takes courage and vision. The level of cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity of individuals working within the organisation has a flow-on effect for the Aboriginal social worker. A process of vouching occurs for Aboriginal workers within an organisation, where the Aboriginal workers are often the representatives of the organisation in the community. Thus, the proficiency of collaborating with an Aboriginal community by its employees affects the standing of the worker within the community. A supervisor's role of supporting the Aboriginal social worker includes advocating and acting as an ally to embed culturally proficient organisational practices and ways of working.

THE WORLD OF THE SUPERVISOR

As a supervisor, you bring into the role a lot of your own values and beliefs. Some of these can be helpful to supervision and others restrictive. From the authors' experience, this world needs constant checking in with others around you, including your supervisee.

An example from practice would be not appreciating the diverse ways that men's and women's business (Bell, 1998) is conducted in many communities. It may be inappropriate supervisor to supervise a female, for example. Age as well as gender should be considered, so that the supervisor is older, or at least the same age, as the supervisee. If there is some sensitivity around this issue, there is room for negotiation.

THE WORLD OF THE SUPERVISEE

This will be further highlighted in this article, but central to the supervision process is understanding, without judgement, Australian Aboriginal cultural beliefs and practices.

Availability, reliability, and an understanding of the stresses of life in an Aboriginal community are important, as is the ability to take time to yarn.

The growth of the supervisee in practice is crucial to the Aboriginal understandings of the creation of the earth, family and kinship responsibilities, and times when the supervisee may not be available because of Lore or sorry business. Aboriginal Lore and the stories passed from one generation to another, through word, dance and imagery, are often referred to as the Dreaming (Reconciliation Australia, 2015, para. 1). "Sorry business" is an English expression mostly adopted from mainland Aboriginal people to refer to a period of cultural practices and protocols associated with death.

The most widespread ceremonies of sorry business are conducted around the bereavement and funerals for a deceased person (Sad news, sorry business: Guidelines for caring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through death and dying (version 2), 2015).

THE WORLD OF THE ORGANISATION

There is a plethora of information on organisational theory that exists in the literature (Hughes & Wearing, 2007). In the case of social work supervision, organisational theory often draws on systems theories and approaches (Hafford-Letchfield & Engelbrecht, 2018). For the author of this article, the organisation needs to provide a sound level of cultural safety and trust in which social work supervision for Aboriginal staff can be nurtured and developed. This process is not a one-off but ongoing. This process begins with organisations having a clear understanding of the key elements of recruitment, orientation, support, and retention of Aboriginal social workers. From experience, the author has seen many examples where this has been achieved sometimes ineffectively and sometimes successfully.

Over the years this has improved with many organisations now developing their own Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs), which is a framework for organisations to support the national reconciliation movement.

RELATIONSHIPS, TRUST, YARNING

Developing strong personal, professional, and trusting relationships is a primary component of effective supervision of Aboriginal workers. Do not assume that trust is bestowed as part of your professional title or position; it is something that must be earned.

Availability, reliability, and an understanding of the stresses of life in an Aboriginal community are important, as is the ability to take time to yarn, to give people the opportunity to reflect on their experiences in the workplace and at home. The use of stories as a means-making tool in narrative supervision has several purposes (Sommer et al., 2009).

According to Ward and Sommer (2006), this method promotes safety as supervisees can use the external perspectives of the stories to reflect on their personal difficulties. Stories can be chosen to reflect on specific situations. By looking at how a story's protagonist overcomes obstacles, Ward and Sommer (2006) suggest that supervisees can use this knowledge to attain professional and personal development.

FORMALITY VERSUS RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

There is a tendency to consider supervision as a regularly scheduled meeting between practitioners, and for non-Aboriginal practitioners this works: a balance of supportive, educative, and administrative supervision is a proven formula. But a more appropriate model of supervision for Aboriginal practitioners can be better described

as mentoring. There are some key steps to this process: namely, building a relationship and developing trust, and "Two-Way Learning".

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP AND DEVELOPING TRUST

It is important for non-Aboriginal staff to see the benefit of these interactions to further their own understanding of Aboriginal ways of working, interactions of culture and community, and the protocols that Aboriginal people need to respect while working and living in their community. Developing a positive and supportive relationship is essential. Developing trust in that relationship is also essential. Aboriginal supervisees should be given the choice of who they would prefer as a supervisor. This begins with the supervisor becoming open to questions, which may at times seem very personal, such as who is your family, where are you from, what are your intentions and are you going to stay?

TWO-WAY LEARNING (IT IS A CONVERSATION)

Supervisors do need to see the relationship as a two-way process: a supervisor supports and educates the supervisee, but is also opened to learning about communication styles, language differences, aspects of culture and the relationships Aboriginal people have in their families, extended families, Aboriginal community, and wider community. The concept of considering two-ways learning as an aspect of formal supervision is that this concept brings equality to the exchange and reduces the perceived power differential between supervisor and supervisee.

Discussions with Aboriginal colleagues about the way supervision is structured indicates that although the formal supervision is important and valued (i.e. fortnightly meetings), equally valuable is

the ongoing informal dialogue (yarning up) while in the workplace, perhaps while driving between appointments, during breaks, brief case discussions or any opportunity to talk.

A challenge for non-Aboriginal practitioners is that there will also be a significant crossover between an Aboriginal person's work role and their life in the community and even family life. As professionals we understand and respect the rules of confidentiality in our workplaces. For Aboriginal people living in small, close-knit communities, there is an expectation of a much higher level of confidentiality and this needs to be respected.

CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to reflect on practice supervision with Aboriginal social work staff. Whilst not technically an academic paper, it has sought to highlight some important, yet subtle, practice insights developed through social work practice. It is hoped that by sharing these practice reflections that other practitioners will accept the challenge and celebrate the learnings and work for a more culturally safe way for Aboriginal staff to explore key practice issues.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the following people for their consultation and for their help in the completion of this article: Fred Yasso, (Wuli Wuli), Nicole Slater, (Wongi Noongar), Carolyn Griffin, (Walpiri Gurindji), Matt Hughes, (Wadjela). Your wisdom will help us to find a better pathway for learning.

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Connecting with culture, ancestry and Country builds identity and self-worth

MADDISON MOHAN

Maddison Mohan is a Bundjalung woman living on Darkinjung Country, NSW. Maddison is the Programs Coordinator at the newest residential rehabilitation centre in NSW and the first women specific Aboriginal Community Controlled service in NSW, The Glen for Women. Maddison is one of the founding staff members and key members of the leadership team.



About the author

Maddison Mohan has completed a Bachelor of Social Work from Western Sydney University and in 2019 was awarded the Western Sydney University Deans Award (the Dani Gilroy Memorial Prize in Social Work for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander work).

Maddison has been able to use the skills gained through her education to work in a variety of settings including public health at Central Coast Local Health District (CCLHD), in Private Health at Brisbane Waters Private Hospital and in Aboriginal Community Health settings with Yerin Health Facility and now at The Glen for Women.

Yaama! I am Maddison, a 28-year-old social worker, and proud Bundjalung woman living on Darkinjung land. I care passionately about the Indigenous community, and want to make change so that our culture and community can continue and grow and thrive.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent four per cent of the Australian population, yet we represent over 20 per cent of the population using rehabilitation services for alcohol and other drugs.

Many factors, over the last 60 years, have contributed to this. Successive governments have oppressed Aboriginal people through their sheer ignorance and assimilation policies. They forcibly removed children from families and have embedded racism into their laws by perpetuating violence and discrimination.

When governments continually target the Indigenous community for multiple generations, up to and including today, the result is detrimental to the overall development of the individual.

Severe levels of trauma, grief and loss of land, culture and identity follow.

The Indigenous community may live in inadequate housing, have ill health, higher unemployment rates and poorer educational outcomes. As well, they may experience chronic neglect, abuse, violence and a shorter life expectancy.

Some try to cope with an unhealthy mechanism, including alcohol and other drugs. Government services may become involved, and once again remove children from their families to be placed into care. And so this cycle of dispossession and disadvantage continues.

Yet community is deeply resilient, and, when working together, we have the power to break this cycle.

Because government health services were failing the Indigenous community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people set up Australia's first community health centres 40 years ago. Our services are incredibly effective, and now the government models their own health, legal and childcare systems on ours.

I work at The Glen Centre, an Aboriginal community-controlled



alcohol and other drugs residential rehabilitation service. Recent research tells us that Aboriginal men attending The Glen are twice as likely to complete treatment than Aboriginal men attending mainstream services.

Connection to culture, community and family are essential for the social and emotional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. At The Glen, culture is at the centre of healing. The program is based on the

idea that if the person can connect with their culture and ancestry, including their responsibility to Country, they can build a better sense of identity and self-worth. They can then determine where they want to go in life, and what qualities they need to develop to get there.

The Glen operates under the Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation Network model of care, which states:

Aboriginal people and communities have unique perspectives, distinctive cultures, varying traditions and practices, embedded kinship and relationship protocols, and diverse histories. Respect for these elements is at the core of culturally safe practices and responsive service delivery. Family and kinship ties, coupled with relationships with land and country lie at the heart of many Aboriginal people's identities. Communities are



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Yet community is deeply resilient, and, when working together, we have the power to break this cycle



often a complex blend of different cultural and historical ties, traditional owners and those who have been relocated or removed.

All participants support each other through the program and take part in community events. Once people have completed the residential program, they may want support to continue. They can live onsite in our transition program while we support them to connect to wider society.

My work colleagues strive for cultural competence, that is, acknowledging that experiences, values and perspectives change from culture to culture and from person to person. They also strive to be aware of biases based on social prestige and acknowledge the effects of systemic

forces such as education and economic and health status on an individual, and that this varies from ethnicity, culture and subculture.

I love that my work contributes towards community being able to pass on new knowledge to create healthy relationships and coping styles for future generations.

•

Hearing the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to increase access to interpersonal violence services and information

RENEE LOVELL AND TONI SMITH

About the authors



Renee Lovell has over 20 years working in the health and community sectors, with a focus on creating sustainable change for women experiencing disadvantage. Renee works from a social justice framework. She has qualifications in youth work, international public health, and management, and is working towards a Masters in Social Work.



Toni Smith is a proud First Nations woman who has been employed in community and Aboriginal Health work for over 20 years. Toni is currently a principal Aboriginal health worker within NSW Health. She is also a Sydney University nursing graduate.

This article was written to share findings of a project called Tidda-Links, and to share reflections gained along the way of an Aboriginal health worker and a non-Aboriginal health manager. Tidda-Links was designed to increase access to sexual and domestic violence services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in metropolitan Sydney. The project was led by Toni Smith, who was born on the land of the Gadigal People, and has maternal, ancestral links to the south-eastern NSW town of Bega, the nation of the Yuin People.

The Tidda-Links project developed in response to the significant impacts domestic and sexual violence has on health and wellbeing, with the majority impacted being women and children¹. One in six Australian women have been subjected, since the age of fifteen, to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or previous cohabiting partner². Each day in Australia, eight women on average, are hospitalised after being assaulted by their spouse or partner³. Aboriginal women are disproportionately represented in these statistics, with an Aboriginal woman being twice as likely to be a victim of sexual assault and 45 times more likely to experience domestic violence than a non-Aboriginal woman⁴. Aboriginal women also have a higher likelihood of receiving inadequate or inappropriate

service responses. As a result, they are increasingly vulnerable to the risks and effects of violence⁵.

With the knowledge that services designed for Aboriginal women should be developed in collaboration with them, and that culturally aware and competent service design leads to more effective service delivery and better health outcomes⁶, we designed Tidda-Links. Tidda-Links was underpinned by the principles of trauma-informed practice: safety, trust, collaboration, empowerment, choice, and acknowledgement of cultural, historical and gender issues. A wise group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women formed an advisory group for the project, guiding it through ethics, implementation, analysis and dissemination of findings.

Semi structured interviews were conducted with 17 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women between 23 and 65 years and residing within the district's boundaries. All women reported lived experiences of sexual assault and/or family violence, and highlighted the impact of intergenerational trauma and colonisation on their willingness to access services. They spoke about their lived experiences with mental health, drug and alcohol services, and homelessness. After thematic analysis, 12 themes were identified as barriers and enablers relating to accessing services. We have chosen to share these with you in the knowledge that a social work readership will take the voices of the participating women and use them to create change. Whilst Tidda-Links was based around family and sexual violence, the findings are transferrable across services.

BARRIERS TO ACCESS

1. Lack of cultural safety - Cultural safety is an environment that is physically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe for the women, where there is no challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need:

What happens if it's been a female and there is a male [doctor] and that's an Aboriginal woman and they feel like they can't be touched by a male? Aboriginal woman, 62 yrs

2. Negative past experiences of government services - Including racism, stereotyping, judgement, not being believed and institutional racism:

'... Um the racism...even though they say it's not there. It's very subtle. The judging...It's you know? Being judged as a black woman [coming] through the door. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman, 55 yrs

3. Fear - Women are afraid of retribution, further violence, their partners being incarcerated, or their children being taken away.

4. Lack of confidentiality, privacy and discretion - Women have doubts about their personal information not being private and confidential.

5. Prioritising others over self - Protecting others and putting self-last:

...they [family] are devastated when they realise you've been going through this like years later, you know? They might find out and it crushes them. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 53 yrs

6. Shame and stigma

Most Aboriginal [women] are too scared to say something... they just hold it in...they should be calling it out, it's a crime... Aboriginal woman, 38 yrs

ENABLERS AND WAYS TO INCREASE ACCESS

1. Cultural competence - Being able to understand, effectively interact and communicate with people across cultures:

The communication...because some Indigenous people feel uncomfortable talking to a non-Indigenous [person] because they feel that they don't understand. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman, 55 yrs

2. Culturally informed practice - Providing trauma-informed assessment and intervention that acknowledges, respects and integrates cultural values, beliefs and practices:

Yeah, they like to speak to the Aunties...because you like to speak to that elderly woman that has been there, done that... Aboriginal woman, 42 yrs



3. Increased service promotion – Within culturally accessible platforms.

4. Discreet location and transport – Having a service that is not clearly labelled or known as the domestic violence and sexual assault service.

5. Increased workforce cultural knowledge – Knowing about another culture's history, characteristics, beliefs, values and behaviours.

6. Increased workforce knowledge on domestic and family violence, and sexual assault

I think the workers should be resourced and knowledgeable on these topics [domestic and sexual violence] because the statistics are high in the Aboriginal community. Aboriginal woman, 40 yrs

WHERE TO NEXT?

Local Aboriginal women have provided information to enable increased access to domestic and sexual violence services. It is essential that practitioners and service planners implement changes in response to their voices. In our services, discussions have begun on how we can put these findings into action. We challenge you to find a way to implement these into your own services, and to share these findings with your social work and non-social work colleagues.



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MY REFLECTIONS

Aboriginal Health Worker (Toni Smith)

Reflecting on the project gives me a sense of accomplishment. We have these increasingly alarming statistics and the women interviewed were inspired to have their say on our services and systems and how they measure up, culturally. The barriers and enablers came from good community consultation and truth telling. Disclosures were expected, and although traumatic at times, the women were able to sit down and have a yarn about violence and services, and to increase health service knowledge about the community's need. I believe Tidda-Links will be an ongoing conversation, with hopefully more studies and programs to ensure culturally accessible, safe, and informed services for our people, if and when they need them.

This experience of working within a mixed research team was an excellent example of non-First Nations women walking alongside our local First Nations women.

Non-Aboriginal Health Manager (Renee Lovell)

It was a great privilege to work alongside Toni and the knowledgeable and passionate Tidda-Links advisory group. I learned many things that I will take with me. One reflection I wish to highlight is how, as we worked through the project, it became apparent how complex the Aboriginal Health Worker role is. They are both local community members and health workers simultaneously, and they overcome challenges on a daily basis, working within a colonised system. This was particularly evident when discussing Aboriginal cultural ways of being, women seeing themselves as family protectors, and their shared experiences of discrimination, racism and bias.



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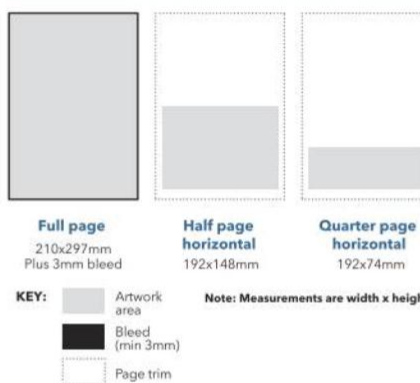
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