

Australian Institute of Family Studies Reconciliation action plan 2012–14



Australian Government
Australian Institute of Family Studies



Reconciliation Australia
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANS

*The Australian Institute of Family Studies acknowledges
the traditional custodians of the land
on which we work, travel and live.*

*We pay our respects to their Elders,
their ancestors and future generations.*

Message from the Director

I am pleased to present our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

While our RAP journey is near the beginning, I feel our plan represents an important milestone in the Institute's long journey of research. For 30-plus years, the Australian Institute of Family Studies has conducted research and disseminated findings on family wellbeing. Much of our success can be attributed to our commitment to building positive relationships with our government stakeholders, research partners and participants, as well as with the broader community.

This plan formalises our commitment to working with and for a very important and significant group—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The actions set out here demonstrate our vision for recognising, respecting and valuing the histories, cultures and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I am confident we will make an important contribution to reconciliation and look forward to the next steps in our journey as we walk together with the first peoples of this land.



Professor Alan Hayes
Director
Australian Institute of Family Studies

Our vision for reconciliation

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) vision for reconciliation recognises, respects and values the histories, cultures and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to helping to turn around the disadvantages experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We also want to help promote the cultural insights and positive achievements of the first Australians. To achieve this, we will:

- promote understanding and respectful relationships by working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and agencies, and enhance organisational awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories;
- support respectful and ethical practice when conducting research with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, including evaluations of relevant programs and services;
- highlight positive practice in the delivery of programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities; and
- grow our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

Our business

AIFS is an Australian Government statutory agency in the portfolio of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Our role is to conduct rigorous and impartial research and to communicate research evidence to support the work of those who have a role in policy, advocacy and delivery of services in the best interests of families.

AIFS Directions 2012–15 specifies the Institute's four areas of research focus and our strategic goals. Our four areas of research focus are:

- family formation, development and diversity;
- the social and economic participation and wellbeing of families;
- safety for families; and
- delivery of services to support and strengthen families.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Formed in 2010, the AIFS Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group developed this plan in consultation with the Executive and other AIFS staff. The working group includes representatives from the two broad areas of the Institute (that is, the Research and Corporate and Strategy areas) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives external to AIFS. Reconciliation Australia and other members of the Reconciliation Action Plan community, including Australia Post and the Australian Government Solicitor, also supported the working group.

Relationships

Respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non-Indigenous Australians are essential to our work. They enhance our knowledge, understanding and appreciation of issues affecting the first Australians and support our efforts to conduct research of benefit to our culturally diverse society.

Focus area: Build a network of relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations

Action	Measurable target	Timeline/ responsibility
Deliver resources internally to inform the conduct of respectful and ethical research with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain, expand and promote the collection of AIFS materials that specify guidelines and protocols for conducting respectful and ethical research with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations ▪ Maintain a web page on the intranet with information about this plan and links to other resources about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ▪ Review and update (as appropriate) the ethics guidelines to include references to procedures and protocols for conducting research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 	<p>July 2012 Library/Web team Ethics Committee Secretariat (with support from the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group) All staff</p>
Develop and maintain supportive working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify organisations undertaking work that aligns with or complements AIFS research activities ▪ Seek input (as appropriate) from identified organisations to assist in our research (including primary research, literature reviews, research dissemination or other associated activities) using the principles outlined in <i>Engaging Today, Building Tomorrow: A Framework for Engaging With Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians</i> ▪ Explore and embrace opportunities to highlight research or co-author publications with members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, where appropriate ▪ Invite representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to review publications and join information exchange/ research project advisory groups, where appropriate 	<p>August 2012 All research staff</p>
Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher, policy-maker and practitioner involvement in the AIFS biennial conference, LSAC–LSIC research conference and seminar series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote conferences/seminars (particularly calls for abstracts or presenters) through agencies working with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ▪ Ensure conference/seminar programs incorporate research and information pertinent to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, as appropriate ▪ Support the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals, who would be otherwise unable to attend, in major AIFS events, including the Institute’s biennial conference and LSAC–LSIC research conference 	<p>July 2012 Conference planning committee External Relations Executive</p>
Continue to convene a working group, comprising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, to support the development and implementation of our plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold working group meetings at least bi-annually 	<p>July 2012 Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group</p>
Provide opportunities for all employees to build relationships during National Reconciliation Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organise at least one internal event to celebrate National Reconciliation Week ▪ Promote external National Reconciliation Week events on the intranet 	<p>May 2013 Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group</p>

Respect

For AIFS, it is profoundly important to recognise, respect and value the histories, cultures, lands and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As such, AIFS will promote cultural awareness and diversity among staff to ensure a greater understanding of these areas in the workplace.

Focus area: Develop and cultivate a workplace culture that acknowledges and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Action	Measurable target	Timeline/ responsibility
<p>Develop guidelines for event planning to ensure that AIFS events include, where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> welcome to country acknowledgement of traditional owners involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in event planning and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop event planning guidelines and publish on the intranet Induct staff involved in organising/coordinating public events (including conferences, workshops and seminars) in how to implement the guidelines Ensure the appropriate implementation of the event planning guidelines at the AIFS biennial conference and other events (such as the LSAC–LSIC research conference and AIFS seminar series) 	<p>July 2012</p> <p>Executive Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group External Relations Conference planning committees</p>
<p>Raise staff awareness, knowledge and respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promoting NAIDOC week celebrations investing in the ongoing development of cultural awareness in our staff through training and learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include this plan in the induction program for new employees Provide cultural awareness training for all staff and relevant project-specific training, as appropriate Celebrate NAIDOC Week by displaying posters and promoting appropriate activities on the intranet Acknowledge the traditional owners (through appropriate signage/text) in office entrances and on the Institute website 	<p>August 2012</p> <p>Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Human Resources Web team All staff</p>

Opportunities

AIFS is committed to creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our workplace to enhance the knowledge and skills of our workforce.

Focus area: Enhance existing recruitment, retention and development programs to grow our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

Action	Measurable target	Timeline/ responsibility
<p>Encourage and support recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (in line with Council of Australian Government targets of 2.7% Indigenous employees by 2015) through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying an internal champion to lead efforts to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the workforce including wording in job advertisements and on the employment page of the website to encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including wording in recruitment approval documentation to encourage consideration of advertising jobs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on selection panels considering participation in APS-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff recruitment documents updated to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants encourage managers to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on selection panels Investigate, on an annual basis, APS-wide programs designed to promote the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in order to identify opportunities for AIFS participation Make AIFS staff available (as appropriate) to mentor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees 	<p>August 2012</p> <p>Human Resources</p>

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Opportunities (cont.)

AIFS is committed to creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our workplace to enhance the knowledge and skills of our workforce.

Focus area: Enhance existing recruitment, retention and development programs to grow our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

Action	Measurable target	Timeline/ responsibility
Investigate training and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify training and development opportunities and incorporate into the induction program and highlight on the intranet; possible additions may include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community networks, regular conferences and/ or specific training initiatives 	October 2012 Human Resources
Support economic development by promoting products, services and initiatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and promote relevant products, services and initiatives (including catering and training organisations) on the intranet Continue to acquire and display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art from recognised ethical art traders (such as the Art Bank) 	August 2012 Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Executive

Focus area: Work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and organisations to conduct research and communicate findings that affect family wellbeing.

Action	Measurable target	Timeline/ responsibility
Ensure that issues of relevance and meaning to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are considered in the development of major strategic initiatives (including <i>AIFS Research Directions 2012–15</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish pathways (such as advisory groups or workshops) for staff and relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations (such as SNAICC and VACCA) to contribute to Institute policy/strategies to ensure they appropriately consider the research priorities and information needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities 	July 2012 Executive

Tracking progress and reporting

Action	Measurable target	Timeline/ responsibility
Report progress to AIFS Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet regularly (at least every six months) to monitor the achievement of targets Document six-monthly progress in a brief report, which will be submitted to the AIFS Executive for comment Post progress updates and achievements on the intranet for all staff 	January 2013 Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
Report to Reconciliation Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update compliance calendar to reflect reporting commitment for the plan Submit annual report on the progress of our plan to Reconciliation Australia 	May 2013 Contracts and compliance area July 2014 Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

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