

Families Australia
Action Plan for Reconciliation
2018 - 2020

Families Australia

About Families Australia

Vision

Australian families, in all their diversity, enjoy the greatest possible wellbeing.

Mission

Families Australia is a national, member-based, not-for-profit organisation that strives to improve the wellbeing of all Australian families by initiating, inspiring, informing and influencing national public policy debates.

Families Australia works to promote a national policy environment in which the needs and interests of families, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, are heard and addressed.

Families Australia has over 800 member organisations providing services in urban, rural and remote locations across Australia. These organisations operate in a diverse range of fields such as family support, child protection, domestic violence, disability, education, grandparent/kinship care, foster care, mental health, and youth work.

Acknowledgement

Families Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.

Photographic acknowledgement

P3 – Keynote speakers, Child Aware Approaches Conference 2017

P3 – Representatives of the Redfern Alliance and Senators, 14 February 2017, after the Redfern Statement was delivered to the Prime Minister

P4 – Oration and keynote speakers, Child Aware Approaches Conferences 2016-2017

P5 – Elders offering Welcome to Country at Child Aware Approaches Conferences 2015-2017

p6 – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community leaders' panel discussion, Child Aware Approaches Conference 2013

Families Australia

Action Plan for Reconciliation 2018-2020

Advancing the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Our Vision for Reconciliation

Families Australia is committed to Reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples. Families Australia activates this commitment by advocating for improvements such as increased health spending, and universal provision of high quality, culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families including child welfare and family support programmes.

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About Families Australia

Families Australia is a national, not-for-profit, peak organisation that strives to improve the wellbeing of Australian families, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised. We do this by providing policy advice to the Australian Government and Parliament on behalf of more than 800 member organisations around Australia.

Our four key current goals are to build stronger Australian families, end child abuse and neglect, eliminate family and domestic violence and advance the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

Strategic intent for our Action Plan for Reconciliation

In consolidating its Action Plan for Reconciliation (the Plan), Families Australia aims to ensure that the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities, are supported, valued and taken into account when devising strategy and policy positions. We will:

- actively build on existing relationships;
- expand, where possible, our partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members and stakeholders;
- construct as many opportunities as possible to consult with, and support, the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and thought leaders; and
- consistently advocate strongly for the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues in the development of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 (National Framework) including substantive advancement of enhanced outcomes in the implementation phase of the National Framework Three Year Action Plans.

Reflections

Families Australia recognises the impact and history of trauma on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all that we do.

Families Australia recognises the wealth of knowledge and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander thought leaders.

Values

Families Australia respects the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to preserve and practise their culture and to make decisions about their future.

Families Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to be treated with respect, heard on all issues that affect them, and consulted fully on policy and service delivery issues.

Actions

Families Australia develops and maintains partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled organisations.

Families Australia advocates for, and actively promotes, the needs and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all our policy and activity actions.



Our Action Plan for Reconciliation: 2018-2020

The Plan was developed in consultation with the Board reference group and senior staff. The priorities and spirit of the Plan were developed in collaboration with the representatives of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board members, who in turn represent the interests and concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders children, families and communities nationally.

Our Plan Reference group is comprised of the Chair, two Aboriginal Controlled organisation members of the Board, the CEO and Deputy CEO.

Our Plan is a foundation document that guides our actions and decision making and is the shared responsibility of all Board and staff members to uphold.



RELATIONSHIPS

Families Australia is committed to strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These relationships are intrinsically valuable to our organisational culture and traditions.

| FOCUS AREA: Building stronger relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies, associations and leaders. | | | |
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| Action | Target | Progress / Date | Responsibility |
| Engage more effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander thought leaders and organisations, to raise awareness of our policy and campaign work. | Seek input from, and share, our relevant policy papers and submissions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander member organisations and stakeholders. | Ongoing commitment – Six-monthly review | Deputy CEO/Comms Officer |
| Commit to high level support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander campaigns, as they relate to Families Australia’s sphere of influence and strategy | Actively contribute to the ongoing development and implementation of the SNAICC – National Voice for our Children <i>Family Matters Campaign</i> , and the Healing Foundation’s <i>Bringing Them Home 20 years on: an action plan for healing</i> . | Ongoing commitment – Annual review | CEO, staff and relevant Board members |
| Recognise the important contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations make to policy development and service improvement. | Share information through our e-bulletins about national cultural events, research, reports, resources and programs. | Ongoing commitment – Annual review | CEO, staff and relevant Board members |
| Grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership of the National Coalition on Child Safety and Wellbeing (National Coalition). | Support membership by national Aboriginal Controlled Organisations and academics to the National Coalition. | Ongoing commitment – Annual review | Board and staff |
| Action Plan Working Group (APWG) actively monitors the Plan development and implementation of actions, tracks progress and reporting. | APWG oversees development, launch and implementation of the Plan, raises awareness of the Plan internally and meets six monthly to monitor and review outcomes. | Ongoing commitment – Six monthly review | AP WG |



RESPECT

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and their diverse cultures is of great importance to our organisation. It helps to strengthen our understanding of, and support for, the first peoples of this land to exercise their rights.

| FOCUS AREA: Acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and their right to land, sea and community. | | | |
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| Action | Target | Progress / Date | Responsibility |
| Build knowledge and awareness of cultural resources and their applicability. | Include the Reconciliation Australia cultural awareness tool in Board and staff Orientation kit. APWG identifies a suitable consultant to deliver training on cultural awareness and safety for all staff and the Board. | 30 September 31 May 2018 | Office Manager All staff and Board members |
| Celebrate the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. | Attend and promote national Reconciliation days and events, such as NAIDOC Week, Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day, and the CAA national events reference group activates the Welcome to Country protocol, based on the locations in which events are held. Support and endorse the objectives of the Redfern Alliance. | Ongoing commitment – Annual review | All staff and Board members |
| Display our support for Reconciliation more visually within the organisation. | Include the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and ‘Acknowledgement statement’ on our websites, Board papers, major reports and e-bulletins. | 31 July 2017 Annual review | Deputy CEO/Comms Officer |
| Encourage a national policy discourse that is practical and solutions focussed. | Ensure strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled organisational engagement and participation with the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009 – 2020. | Ongoing commitment – Annual review | CEO and Deputy CEO |



OPPORTUNITIES

Capacity building opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities to demonstrate systems and knowledge leadership are important to our organisation's responses.

FOCUS AREA: Improve knowledge exchange and collaborative partnership opportunities.

| Action | Target | Progress / Date | Responsibility |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge brokers and research on family wellbeing and safe practices. | Invite contributions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge leaders to contribute to all activities related to improving outcomes for children, young people their families and communities. Encourage the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people through participation in conferences, forums and other events. | Ongoing commitment - Annual review | Deputy CEO and Comms Officer |
| Encourage greater understanding of structural and systemic barriers to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families. | Work with Aboriginal Controlled Organisation knowledge brokers such as SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, the Healing Foundation and QATSCIPP, to address factors that contribute to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Out-of-Home-Care. Encourage procurement of services from Aboriginal Controlled organisations. | Ongoing commitment – Annual review | Exec staff and relevant Board members |
| Invest in a <i>pro bono</i> partnership, utilising in-kind (and if available or required) financial support, with a suitable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation. | Develop a partnership with Winangay Resources, that promotes widely their evidence informed and evaluated resources, encouraging their participation in national policy development, as well as opportunities to contribute to event reference groups and display. | Ongoing commitment - Annual review | Exec staff and relevant Board members |



Commitments from the previous AP (2015-18) that are now business as usual

| Action | Target |
|---|---|
| Acknowledge Traditional Owners. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners continues will be given at every Board meeting and all policy forums. • Formal Welcome to Country ceremony continues to be our tradition at major events, and is delivered by an Elder of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at every national conference. • Acknowledgement of Country continues to appear on all staff emails and in all Board meeting papers. |
| Build knowledge of cultural resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference for the AP Working Group established and maintained. • Continue to invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait thought leaders to deliver the Families Australia Oration. • Key e-publications (NFN and National Coalition e-bulletins) continue to include numerous cultural resources, research and articles to inform organisational policy and practice. • We continue to encourage participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board members in all events. • We continue to build our relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander member organisations. • We continue to build governance practices that are culturally aware and adept. |
| Support engagement in, and participation by, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander member and stakeholder organisations in our national policy development processes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and thought leaders continue to be invited to participate in, and contribute to, major events such as National Families Week, National Framework conferences, policy forums and events. • We will continue to support the contributions of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and their organisations to the National Coalition on Child Safety and Wellbeing, in particular the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 – 2020, and its Three Year Action Plans and Working Groups. • We continue to encourage participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled organisations in all of our policy statements and submissions. • We continue to acknowledge the potential for impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our policy developments processes. |
| Be active advocates for Reconciliation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to demonstrate our commitment to Reconciliation through all communication platforms including the website and social media. • We continue to actively support national days of significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples such as NAIDOC Week, National Sorry Day, Closing the Gap, and National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day. • We will continue to ensure that the likely effects on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities are taken into account in our consideration of new policy and our comments on policy. • We will continue to promote Reconciliation in our products and presentations as appropriate. |
| Improve Human Resource policies to enhance opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to exceptionally low staff turnover, no opportunities for recruitment has occurred since revising the HR and advertising policies to recruit. |