



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



International
Social Service
AUSTRALIA



4/10

Community Gathering

H. Pigram
2015

REFLECT

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

FEBRUARY 2021 - AUGUST 2022

WWW.ISS.ORG



Artist: Hayley Pigram

I am a Darug woman from the Sydney area. I was born and raised on my traditional homelands in the southwest of Sydney and have always had a close connection to my culture and Country.

As an urban Aboriginal Artist, my art takes many forms to reflect my culture. While I often enjoy utilising a dot style of painting, I pair this with bright colours and unusual mediums. I feel this pairing represents myself as an Artist who has a deep traditional spirituality, yet lives a modern lifestyle.

My art tells the story of a modern woman with an ancient heritage. Much of my art practice is a reflection of my journey towards an understanding of healing and hope. It also allows me a way to express my deep connection to my family, their stories, their pain and our anger. Art gives a visual language for stories too complex for words to ever represent.

"Community Gathering"

This work tells the story of different people coming together to meet.

Meeting together on common ground these vastly different people find connection in sharing their similarities. The differences fall away in the meeting place and the connections are felt more deeply.

Together we are more than we could ever be alone and our differences are less important than our connections.

About this document:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

ISS Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners and pay our respect to Elders past and present of the land on which our NSW Office stands, the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. We also wish to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and pay our respects to all Elders, past and present, of the land on which our Victoria Office stands; the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples of the Kulin Nation. We also offer this respect to the Traditional Owners of the land throughout Australia. ISS Australia acknowledges the importance that connection to land and culture has to identity and the wellbeing of children, families and communities.

ISS AUSTRALIA CEO STATEMENT

It gives me great pleasure to introduce ISS Australia's first Reconciliation Action Plan. ISS Australia provides social work, legal and family mediation services to children and families separated by international borders.

ISS Australia is committed to the reconciliation journey in Australia to bring justice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for past wrongs. We are committed to delivering culturally safe practices to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our own services.



As an organisation that assists people impacted by international family separation, we acknowledge the great harm and trauma caused by past separation practices in Australia, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were wrongfully separated from their families.

We acknowledge the ongoing injustice still occurring today, as reflected in the high incarceration rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

We hope that our commitment to this Reconciliation Action Plan will in our own small way assist our nation in its journey to true reconciliation where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, having survived past injustices, assume their rightful place as the empowered and respected First Nations people of Australia.

I would like to thank Rebecca Chapman, our Managing Lawyer and ISS Australia's own reconciliation champion, for her significant commitment in developing this plan and both Reconciliation Australia and Community Legal Centres NSW for their encouragement, support and stewardship. We look forward to the important journey ahead and doing our best to help bring true reconciliation to Australia.

Peter van Vliet
Chief Executive Officer
ISS Australia

RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA CEO STATEMENT



Reconciliation Australia welcomes International Social Service Australia to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP. International Social Service Australia joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Reconciliation Australia welcomes International Social Service Australia to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP. International Social Service Australia joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with over 2.3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables International Social Service Australia to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations International Social Service Australia, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia


OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

ISS Australia acknowledges and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and diverse cultures of Australia. We recognise the ancient sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. ISS Australia acknowledges the past injustices faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and is mindful of the deleterious impact of past Australian Government removal policies, including separation through adoption, fostering or institutionalisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We are also mindful that these practices still continue throughout Australia and lead to the continued institutionalisation and incarceration of First Nations people at high rates. These injustices have an ongoing impact on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our vision for reconciliation is for a just and equitable Australia where the truth of past injustices is acknowledged and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard and valued. We aspire to an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures share the foundations of our national identity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have power over their own destiny.

Our vision is also for an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to their culture through family and Country relationships. ISS Australia seeks to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to create a better future for their children, in a spirit that is underpinned by justice and self-determination. ISS Australia recognises the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples being connected to their family, culture and Country; and acknowledge these as integral to the development of positive self-identity and building healthier and stronger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In ISS Australia's work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we aim to acknowledge and address the trauma from past and current removal practices and deliver culturally safe and appropriate services that build positive self-identities and family connections.

ISS Australia recognises the importance of building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to grow our understanding of how best to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients throughout Australia. We will endeavour to provide accessible and high-quality services that support and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and people.



**"When we have
power over our
destiny our children
will flourish."**

**Uluru Statement from the
Heart**

OUR BUSINESS

We are a leading organisation in the provision of support to individuals and families who have experienced separation from family connection. Our Mission is to protect, defend and support the best interests and rights of children and families in Australia who have been separated by international borders. As ISS celebrates diversity, it continually strives to practice in a culturally appropriate manner. The principles of professionalism, confidentiality and empathy are at the heart of the organisation's work. We are dedicated to providing high quality client service in the following areas:

- 1 International Parental Child Abduction. ISS Australia operates a national service that supports people affected by international parental child abduction. Lawyers can provide legal advice to parents seeking information about international parental child abduction, prevention of international travel, international relocation and international access arrangements. Our lawyers can assist parents prepare return and access applications under the 1980 Hague Convention on the International Aspects of Parental Abduction, and applications under Australia's Bilateral Agreements with Egypt and Lebanon. Social workers can support and referrals to all people affected by international parental child abduction, including grandparents.
- 2 International Family Mediation. ISS Australia's International Family Mediation (IFM) Service can provide expert assistance in the resolution of family disputes across international borders. IFM is the process whereby a Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner (FDRP) assists family members affected (or likely to be affected) by separation or divorce across international borders to try to resolve their disputes with each other.
- 3 International Child Welfare. ISS Australia provides an International Child Welfare service through working with child protection authorities and other services, both nationally and internationally, in cases of alleged child abuse and neglect. The services include facilitating international child protection and police checks, facilitating and conducting international kinship care assessments, and assisting with the overseas aspects of an out of home care adoption. ISS Australia is funded by the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice to assist in international child welfare and kinship care matters.
- 4 International Post Adoption Tracing. ISS Australia's International Post Adoption Tracing Service works internationally to reunite families who have been affected by adoption where one party lives in NSW. The service provides free tracing, intermediary and reunion support and information to people affected by adoption in NSW, thanks to funding from the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice.
- 5 NSW Special Search. ISS Australia's only domestic service is the NSW Special Search Service, which provides free specialised search and reunion services to people who were separated by government intervention in NSW, for example through adoption, being under the care of the Minister, foster care, or being placed in a children's home in NSW. The service is funded by the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice.

We are located in Pyrmont New South Wales, which is the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. We are also located in Melbourne Victoria, which is the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples of the Kulin Nation. We offer our service nationally and currently have 16 staff members.

ISS Australia has provided services throughout Australia since the 1930s. We are an independent not-for-profit organisation that is also a branch of the ISS international network of organisations who work together to achieve the same aim of supporting children and connecting families across international borders. There are over 130 members of the international network.

ISS Australia relies on government grants, philanthropic funding and donations to continue to provide its valuable services throughout Australia.



OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

ISS Australia is pleased to release its first Reconciliation Action Plan. With this RAP, ISS Australia aims to create a foundation for a culturally safe organisation by expanding our knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. We believe that our RAP will guide us as we seek to form and develop relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partner organisations and extend our reach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Our goal is to embed this knowledge within ISS Australia so that we can provide high quality and culturally safe support to our clients. ISS Australia intends this RAP to reflect our commitment to supporting clients with professionalism and compassion.

ISS Australia's RAP will be overseen by a Reconciliation Working Group (RWG), which will work to implement the RAP with the support of the RAP Champion Rebecca Chapman, Managing Lawyer. This RAP aims to set achievable targets to ensure that we can develop and embed our knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The Reconciliation Working Group will consult with staff and state-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and monitor ISS Australia's progress against the RAP.

RELATIONSHIPS

ISS Australia acknowledges the importance of building positive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partner organisations and clients. Building these relationships is a key part of driving change within ISS Australia and the broader community. Developing positive working relationships will help us to build our capacity to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and increase uptake of our services.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1.1 Establish mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders	1.1.1 Locate and utilise a directory of local Aboriginal organisations	June 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
	1.1.2 Research best practice principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations	December 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
1.2 Build relationships by celebrating National Reconciliation Week	1.2.1 Promote NRW on social media	May 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
	1.2.2 Encourage participation in an external NRW event	May 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	1.2.3 CEO to participate in NRW event with First Nations stakeholders	May 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	1.2.4 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources to staff	May 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
	1.2.5 RAP Working Group Members to participate in an external NRW event	May 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
1.3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	1.3.1 Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness of our Reconciliation Action Plan within ISS	March 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	1.3.2 Include the RAP in staff inductions	March 2021	Chief Executive Officer / Service Managers
	1.3.3 Publish the RAP on our website	March 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair



RELATIONSHIPS CONT.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1.3 (Ctd) Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	1.3.4 Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey	September 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	1.3.5 Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey	September 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	1.3.6 Use our social media to acknowledge, celebrate and promote NAIDOC, Yabun and National Reconciliation Week to our community	July 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
1.4 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	1.4.1 Research best practice in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination	December 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	1.4.2 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs	May 2021	Chief Executive Officer

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures is fundamental to building positive relationships with First Nations communities. ISS Australia respects the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and the longest continuous cultures on earth. To demonstrate our respect, ISS Australia commits to developing our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and commits to using that knowledge to support our clients.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
2.1 Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning	2.1.1 Review cultural learning needs within ISS	June 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	2.1.2 Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation	May 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	2.1.3 Subscribe to relevant information sources and circulate throughout the organisation, for example, Koori Mail, Indigenous Law Bulletin, Career Trackers Yabun and National Reconciliation Week to our community	April 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
	2.1.4 Identify cultural competency training	June 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
	2.1.5 Staff to participate in cultural competency training annually	December 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	2.1.6 All staff to participate in the organisation's completion of the CLC Cultural Safety Workbook	December 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
	2.1.7 Use the "Share Our Pride" Tool and the Decolonising Solidarity website: https://decolonizingsolidarity.org/	June 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair



RESPECT CONT.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
2.2 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	2.2.1 Explore information regarding the Traditional Owners of the land on which our two offices stand	December 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	2.2.2 Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country Protocols	October 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	2.2.3 Organise a Welcome to Country to be provided at the beginning of all significant internal and external meetings	June 2021 / December 2021/ June 2022 for review	Chief Executive Officer
	2.2.4 Publish an Acknowledgement of Country on our website and in our email signatures	March 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	2.2.5 Include an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of all internal meetings	June 2021 / December 2021 / June 2022 for review	Chief Executive Officer
2.3 Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating and acknowledging significant dates, for example, NAIDOC Week	2.3.1 Prepare and circulate a calendar of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates, with particular attention to local events, and invite all staff using outlook calendar	March 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
	2.3.2 Raise staff awareness of the meaning of NAIDOC Week	July 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
	2.3.3 Promote and encourage staff participation in external NAIDOC	July 2021	Chief Executive Officer



RESPECT CONT.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
2.3 Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating and acknowledging significant dates, for example, NAIDOC Week	2.3.4 CEO to participate in an external NAIDOC event.	July 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	2.3.5 RWG to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event	July 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
2.4 Deliver culturally safe services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	2.4.1 Offer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients referrals to Aboriginal controlled services where available	June 2021, December 2021, June 2022 for review	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
	2.4.2 Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, maps, publications, artwork in ISS Australia offices so that our office environment positively influences cultural safety within the organisation for staff and clients	June 2021	Chief Executive Officer / Deputy Chief Executive Officer
	2.4.3 Apply cultural competency learnings when supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients	June 2021, December 2021, June 2022 for review	Chief Executive Officer



OPPORTUNITIES

ISS Australia commits to encouraging the employment of First Nations people and to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with employment opportunities, such as training and leadership opportunities.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3.1 Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development	3.1.1 Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation	September 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	3.1.2 Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities	June 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	3.1.3 Review current policies and procedures, including anti-discrimination policies and procedures, to better understand any internal barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	September 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	3.1.4 Review employment policies to ensure sufficient flexibility to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, like preferencing experience over formal qualifications.	September 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	3.1.5 Monitor the application of recruitment processes and encourage the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants	June 2021, December 2021, June 2022 for review	Chief Executive Officer / Service Managers
	3.1.6 Advertise non-identified positions in Aboriginal media channels, like the Koori Mail.	June 2021, December 2021, June 2022 for review	Chief Executive Officer / Service Managers



OPPORTUNITIES CONT.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3.2 Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes	3.2.1 Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses	October 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	3.2.2 Investigate Supply Nation Membership	June 2021	Chief Executive Officer



GOVERNANCE

In order to ensure the effective implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan, ISS Australia is committed to tracking our progress against the plan.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4.1 Establish and maintain an effective Reconciliation Working Group to drive application of the RAP.	4.1.1 Form RWG and appoint Chairperson	March 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	4.1.2 Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG	May 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
	4.1.3 Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG	May 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	4.1.4 Set regular meetings	May 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair



GOVERNANCE CONT.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4.2 Build support for our Reconciliation Action Plan	4.2.1 Define required resources to implement the RAP	April 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	4.2.2 Engage Senior Leaders in the delivery of RAP Commitments	April 2021	Chief Executive Officer
	4.2.3 Define systems to track and report on our RAP activities	April 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
4.3 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings	4.3.1 Complete annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire	September 2021	Reconciliation Working Group Chair
	4.3.2 Report on RAP at AGM and Board Meetings	October 2021 and quarterly board meetings	Chief Executive Officer
	4.3.3 Report on progress of RAP implementation in Annual Report	November 2021	Chief Executive Officer
4.4 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	4.4.1 Register with Reconciliation Australia to begin developing our next RAP	December 2021	Chief Executive Officer / Reconciliation Working Group Chair

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