

Australian social workers celebrate National Reconciliation Week 2020: In This Together

The AASW celebrates National Reconciliation Week during this week 27 May – 3 June and what has turned out to be a prophetic theme 'In This Together' and calls on all Australians to continue to work towards Reconciliation. It also marks 20 years since Australians marched en masse for Reconciliation in 2000, including the iconic march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge. AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board Director Linda Ford said, "This year, we have been living the theme for 2020 National Reconciliation Week 'In This Together' due to the COVID-19 response. This has been a time of incredible challenges and learnings, and we have seen, for the most part, the best of Australia. "The year of 2020 is likely to be remembered for the Coronavirus but throughout this, we should not lose sight of the long-term goals we have as an Australian nation. Goals which are about fairness, compassion, equality, justice and a happy life for all Australians. "As we celebrate National Reconciliation Week this year, we need to remember that it is not just about some of us, not just about Australians that live in cities or rural areas, the Australians that are rich and the ones that are struggling, the new Australians and the ones who can trace their history back to before the boats came. "The theme is about all Australians being 'In This Together'. As we have demonstrated in our response to COVID-19, we are able to come together for a common purpose. Let us come together for Reconciliation!" AASW National President, Christine Craik said, "Reconciliation is about building meaningful relationships and working together for a more just Australia, and this begins with learning more about the resilience and achievements of Indigenous Australians. This resilience is a lesson for all of us in the current environment. "For social workers, National Reconciliation Week is also about learning from the past and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to address the structural disadvantage and discrimination they face in all facets of their lives, which is an ongoing consequence of colonisation. This includes advocating for Australian governments to listen to Indigenous voices and embrace a constitutionally enshrined First Nations voice to parliament." The AASW continues to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing into social work as a fundamental component of decolonising social work practice in this country. The Association is currently working on its Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-2022.

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