

## Celebrate Indigenous languages on International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, says AASW: 9 August 2019

On the eve of International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (IDOWIP), we reflect on the strength and resilience of Indigenous peoples in Australia, and across the world, celebrating what has been achieved while recognising how much more needs to be done. Linda Ford, AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative director said, "Days like the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples are an important time to appreciate the progress made and how far Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have come given the devastating impacts that colonisation has and continues to have on communities. "Due to the strength and perseverance of Indigenous voices calling for justice, the Australian community is starting to comprehend the legacies of racism, colonialism and structural oppression. Australia Day protests are getting larger each year and we have seen a cultural shift from new generations who are looking towards Reconciliation. "We now have a Minister for Indigenous Affairs who is actually Indigenous. It was a long time coming, but we did get there. This progress would not have been possible without generations of Indigenous resistance and advocacy," she said. Furthermore, this year is the United Nations' Year of Indigenous Languages. On IDOWIP we also celebrate the richness and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and recognise the incredible work being done across communities to keep so many languages and dialects alive in the face of centuries of cultural genocide. AASW National President Christine Craik said, "On this day, the AASW renews its calls on the Morrison Government to establish a Voice to Parliament as described in the Uluru Statement from The Heart, as well as working with Indigenous communities in partnership and collaboration, at every step in the Closing the Gap strategy." "Governments need to begin the process of Reconciliation by listening to Indigenous voices acknowledging repeated calls for sovereignty and treaty. Reconciliation is not possible without challenging the structural barriers that continue to oppress Indigenous peoples and have formed the basis of so many of our systems and institutions." As social workers, we continue to reflect on the past, present and future and celebrate how in the face of such great adversity, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have persevered, and remain the oldest continuing culture in the world. The AASW Conference 2019 will feature Prof. Tom Calma AO, Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia, as a Keynote Speaker. In line with its theme Challenging Inequality, the conference will have a strong focus on Indigenous issues and Reconciliation, and will celebrate this year's UN-declared International Year of Indigenous Languages in key elements of the program. Find out more on the AASW Conference 2019 website. ENDS Linda Ford is available for interview. You can also listen to the AASW's podcast where Candice Butler, Branch Management Committee member of Queensland Branch is interviewed for IDOWIP.

### Contacts

Angela Yin  
03 9320 1005  
mailto: media@asw.asn.au