

# Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

December 2023 - December 2025



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# Our RAP artwork

**Titled: Djilba Springtime (2017)**

**Artist: Jenny Knapp**



**Above: AISWA RAP Artist Jenny Knapp**

The story is of Djilba springtime season, when bilya waterways and lakes are full and djet wildflowers are in bloom, creating the colours of land on Noongar boodja Country.

The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) offices are situated in close proximity to Herdsman Lake. The lake, traditionally called Ngurgenboro is now known as Herdsman Lake.

AISWA would like to acknowledge that the land we work on is Wadjak Noongar boodja (Country) and that the Wadjak Noongar people are the Traditional Owners/Custodians who have a rich social, spiritual and historical connection to this country which is as strong today as it was in the past.

The artwork used on the cover page was created by the staff at the AISWA offices under the watchful guidance of Noongar artist Jenny Knapp. Jenny Knapp is an Aboriginal artist from the Nyungar Goreng language group in Gwovangerup and her wirrin (spirit) connection to the Menang people near Israelite Bay near Esperance in Great Southern region of Western Australia. She has been the Artist in residence at Notre Dame, Fremantle campus and a cultural teacher and a former nurse. Her love of art has taken her to various locations across Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities of WA telling the stories and knowledge of her artwork that comes with the colors of Nyungar land to it's six seasons.



# Message from the CEO of Reconciliation Australia

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**Karen Mundine**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Reconciliation Australia**

Reconciliation Australia commends the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of

relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia is part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

# Message from the Executive Director of AISWA

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**Mr Chris Massey**  
**Executive Director**  
**Association of Independent Schools**  
**of Western Australia**

I acknowledge the Wadjak peoples of the Noongar Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) is located. We pay our respects to the past and present Traditional Custodians of the nation. We recognise the rich and diverse cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the valuable contribution this diversity brings.

I am proud to present the AISWA 2023 – 2025 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Our Innovate RAP highlights AISWA's continued commitment to the guiding principles of the National Quality Framework, AITSL Standards, Australian Curriculum Cross Curriculum Priority, Early Years Learning Framework and the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration including that the rights and best interests of children are paramount and that Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued. AISWA's RAP has been developed on these guiding principles driving the development of the actions and deliverables within it. This RAP allows us to celebrate and build on current partnerships and establish new ones. It is a reflection of our belief that reconciliation along with cultural awareness, safety and responsiveness need to be embedded across the work we do at AISWA as well as in our work with education stakeholders.

Thank you to our RAP Working Group for their work in developing this Innovate RAP and the commitment of all AISWA staff in delivering on it.

# Our business

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The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia was established in 1962 as a non-profit organisation to support, represent and promote the interests of Independent Schools. AISWA is incorporated under the Industrial Relations Act. We are focused on supporting the success and sustainability of Independent Schools in Western Australia, and on providing high-quality education experiences and outcomes for students across the state.

AISWA operates out of a main office in Osborne Park on Wadjak Noongar Country, with a small number of employees working in regional areas. Staff regularly visit member schools, across many Countries, in all regions of Western Australia.

AISWA's constituent members include over 160 Independent Schools across Western Australia. As at the 2022 August Census, our member schools educate over 91,000 students accounting for just over 16% of Western Australian school enrolments. More than 2500 of these students are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, almost 3%. These schools employ over 7,800 teaching and over 5,900 support staff. In 2023 AISWA employs 80 people. There is one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee.

AISWA's core business is representation of schools, advocacy, professional learning, and mentoring.

AISWA currently has a range of initiatives and programs that aim to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and communities, as well as to embed First Nations perspectives and knowledge into the curriculum and learning experiences of all students. Some of the key areas of AISWA's work in this space include professional learning, the Future Footprints Program, resources, and partnerships and collaborations.

Overall, AISWA is committed to reconciliation and recognition of the importance of First Nations perspectives and knowledge in shaping a more inclusive and equitable education system in Western Australia.

# Our vision for reconciliation

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At AISWA, we believe in embracing and celebrating the rich cultures of First Nations peoples and promoting a greater understanding and awareness of their perspectives. Our RAP is a living document that reflects our ongoing dedication to reconciliation and building strong, respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We acknowledge the historical and ongoing impacts of colonisation, and recognise the need to take action to address the disparities that exist in Australia. By listening to and learning from the voices and experiences of First Nations people, we can work towards creating a more just and equitable society where everyone is respected and celebrated.

Our commitment to reconciliation is guided by best practices at the national and international level, including the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019), the Early Years Learning Framework (2023), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We believe that all children have the right to an education that supports their holistic development, helps them understand their rights and respect others' rights, and allows them to use their own language.

We also recognise the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples having the right to establish and control their own education systems, providing education in their own languages and cultural methods of teaching and learning. We embrace the diversity of our member schools and communities, including the 14 Aboriginal Independent Community Schools that we support, and believe that a diversity of students benefits everyone through a deeper understanding of each other's cultures and identities.

Overall, our vision for reconciliation is to create a more inclusive and equitable society where the rights, cultures, and histories of First Nations peoples are respected, celebrated, and preserved. We aim to continue to work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to achieve our shared goals and create a future for a unified Australia where everyone can participate fully in all aspects of life.



## Our RAP

This RAP is the first official Reconciliation Action Plan for AISWA, created by the RAP Working Group, in consultation with wider AISWA staff and senior leaders. Just as there is no one ethos of an Independent school, there is no one definition of reconciliation and what it means to each person. AISWA hopes all of its employees can engage with this our first RAP, and gain a deeper understanding of the rich and diverse cultures that exist within Australia's First Peoples over the next two years.

AISWA has a number of priorities in regard to reconciliation:

- to develop staff knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, experiences and achievements;
- to explore the meaning of reconciliation and the fact that the word means nothing unless accompanied by informed action, which often means hard work;
- to recognise the importance of building and maintaining relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community that enables change to reconciliation;

- to encourage values that reflect inclusion, acceptance and support through the organisation;
- ensuring that the spaces and events held at AISWA are culturally safe and inclusive for all.

Historically, education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has been used as instrument of oppression and exclusion, but we hope with a wide diversity of employees and member schools we can contribute across differences to a nation built on equity, inclusion, and harmonious relationships. AISWA sees it as a responsibility to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 60,000+ years of teaching can be respected and valued into the future, with meaningful participation in building an Australia to be proud of.

AISWA would like to thank the RAP Working Group for their efforts in creating this document, including the Aboriginal staff member who contributed. We also would like to thank Reconciliation Australia for their support and endorsement of this RAP.





# RAP members

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Name	Job Title	RAP Role
Kate Reitzenstein	Multilingual Literacy Consultant	RAP Committee Chair
Ana Palassis	Administrative Support Officer	RAP Advisor
Andrew Beck	Aboriginal Education Consultant	RAP Advisor
Chris Massey	Executive Director	RAP Leadership
Jan Clarke	Manager ICT & STEM	RAP Events
Jill Winning	Manager People and Culture	RAP Relationships
Mandy Marett	Senior Psychologist	RAP Events
Maree Whiteley	Primary Consultant	RAP Relationships
Sarah Kennedy	Registration and Compliance Consultant	RAP Policy
Sue Mulholland	Administrative Support Officer	RAP Awareness
Wendy Candy	Early Childhood Consultant	RAP Awareness
Wendy Gorman	Manager Early Childhood	RAP Policy

# Relationships

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Relationships are the foundation of reconciliation, as they allow individuals to understand and acknowledge the perspectives, experiences and histories of others, paving the way for healing, empathy, and unity in the nation.

AISWA will actively promote and build sustainable relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities to ensure cultural perspectives and approaches are acknowledged and represented in all service provision.

AISWA, as the peak body and a leader for Independent Schools, acknowledges the importance of engaging with and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, and we are committed to developing strong, culturally respectful, relationships based on mutual understanding and trust.

We will seek opportunities to collaborate with local communities to develop culturally appropriate programs and initiatives that meet the needs of young people. This can only be achieved with strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with whom we can work with and learn from. They are the experts, and have been educating and raising children in Australia for thousands of generations.

It is our view that strong relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians can contribute to moving forward with greater understanding for a united Australia.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	July, 2024	RAP Advisors
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	July, 2024	RAP Advisors
	Establish a relationship with Reconciliation WA to identify opportunities in preparation to implement the Innovate RAP.	September 2023	RAP Committee Chair
	Fostering relationships between largely First Nations schools and those in non-Indigenous communities to support two-way learning.	July, 2024	RAP Relationships
	Engaging with and utilising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research methodologies and education frameworks in our interactions with schools.	January, 2025	RAP Relationships
	Participate in formal stakeholder groups and committees.	February, 2024	RAP Committee Chair
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April, 2024, 2025	RAP Awareness
	Ensure all staff emails include the Reconciliation email banner for the weeks of and surrounding NRW and are visible in staff communications and external emails.	27 May - 3 June, 2024, 2025	RAP Events
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June, 2024, 2025	RAP Committee Chair

	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June, 2024, 2025	RAP Committee Chair
	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May - 3 June, 2024, 2025	RAP Committee Chair
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">NRW website</a> .	May 2024, 2025	RAP Committee Chair
	Promote our involvement in NRW internally, and through social media and other channels in support of reconciliation.	May 2024, 2025	RAP Events
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce through the AISWA Reconciliation Teams.	December 2023	RAP Awareness
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	September 2023	RAP Awareness
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	January 2024	RAP Relationships
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	December 2024	RAP Relationships
	Become a member of Reconciliation WA.	January 2024	RAP Leadership and RAP Chair
	Ensure representation from the RWG at Reconciliation WA's RING Meetings.	February, June, September, November 2024, 2025	RAP Policy
	Highlight reconciliation at all-staff meetings and large scale conferences, i.e. Briefing the Board Conference, Broome Conference.	April 2024, 2025	RAP Leadership

	Display our commitment to reconciliation through signage and artwork in our professional learning spaces. Including an Acknowledgment plaque in main reception.	February 2025	RAP Leadership, RAP Committee Chair
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	June 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Create a process for future policies to be reviewed by a First Nations person or group.	June 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	June 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	June 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Educate senior leaders and staff on the effects of racism through professional learning.	June 2024	Manager People and Culture



# Respect

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AISWA will embrace, promote and support meaningful relationships and cross-cultural understanding within the organisation, amongst its member schools, and in the wider community to ensure that the needs and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples become an integral element of our everyday activities. Respect for Australia's First Peoples fosters the empathy and ethical integrity needed to:

- provide culturally informed guidance;
- establish clear priorities;
- enable continued growth towards reconciliation;
- create culturally safe spaces to learn and grow.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	December, 2023	RAP Advisors
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	December 2024	RAP Advisors
	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural online learning course for our staff. Include this as part of staff onboarding.	February 2025	RAP Advisors
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members and key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	February 2025	RAP Policy
	Engage with local cultural experience and immersion opportunities for on-Country activities for AISWA staff.	December 2024	RAP Advisors
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2024	RAP Advisors
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. Ensure that staff are capable of including an Acknowledgement slide in their PowerPoints in a culturally safe way.	July 2024	RAP Advisors
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	February 2024, February 2025	RAP Committee Chair
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	January 2024	RAP Leadership

	Include an Acknowledgement of Country on the reverse side of printed AISWA business cards.	June 2025	RAP Committee Chair
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2024, 2025	RAP Events
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	June 2024, 2025	Manager People and Culture
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July, 2024, 2025	RAP Events
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July, 2024, 2025	RAP Events
Recognition of past Australian policies that have caused harm to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Investigate the feasibility of offering an alternative to the Australia Day public holiday for AISWA staff. Develop a strategy for implementation.	January 2025	RAP Leadership & Manager People and Culture
	Encourage AISWA staff to explore the <a href="#">Change It Ourselves</a> resources. to raise awareness and consider ways to take individual and organisational action.	January 2024	RAP Committee Chair
	Provide professional learning opportunities for member schools to learn about First Nation language loss and support and community-based language revitalisation efforts.	August 2024	RAP Relationships





# Opportunities

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AISWA's commitment to justice and equity in Australia is evident in its recognition of the need to afford all Australians the same opportunities and access, regardless of their background. The exchange of skills, knowledge, and perspectives between AISWA and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will only enrich both parties.

AISWA has the capacity to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and businesses. This can be achieved through a number of commitments:

- employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples;
- support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Business and Suppliers;
- representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Professional Learning;
- recommending Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educational and Cultural Services with Member School.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2023	Manager People and Culture
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	September 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	February 2025	Manager People and Culture
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	August 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	June 2024	Manager People and Culture
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	September 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	February 2024	RAP Committee Chair
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	December 2024	RAP Leadership
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	September 2024	RAP Leadership
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	March 2025	RAP Leadership

Support member schools to engage in reconciliation.	Encourage member schools to develop their own RAP via Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali platform.	January 2025	RAP Relationships
	Support relevant staff to become familiar with the Narragunnawali platform including the Professional Learning resources in order to support member schools including their alignment with guiding frameworks and principles.	January 2025	RAP Awareness
	Encourage staff to sign up to the Narragunnawali mailing list.	January 2025	RAP Relationships
	Provide professional learning opportunities for member schools about reconciliation.	January 2025	RAP Relationships

# Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	July 2025	RAP Committee Chair
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	August 2024	RAP Committee Chair
	Meet at least six times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	February, April, June, August, October, December, 2023, 2024, 2025	RAP Committee Chair
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	August 2024	RAP Committee Chair and RAP Leadership
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	August 2024	RAP Committee Chair
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	August 2024	RAP Committee Chair
	Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	August 2024	RAP Committee Chair

Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June 2024, 2025	RAP Committee Chair
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	RAP Committee Chair
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	RAP Committee Chair
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	February, May, July, September 2024, 2025	RAP Committee Chair
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	December 2023, 2024	RAP Committee Chair and RAP Leadership
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2024	RAP Committee Chair
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	August 2025	RAP Committee Chair
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	December 2024	RAP Committee Chair



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