

REFLECT Reconciliation Action Plan

SEPTEMBER 2018 TO SEPTEMBER 2019



COVER ARTWORK

Waterways Dreaming | 2018

Artist & copyright: Trevor, Barkindji



'Growing up being on the rivers was a big thing for me and my family. We would spend a lot of time on the river fishing and camping. The water was always full of life but we would only take what we needed. The Rainbow Serpent is the creator and protector of the waterways.'

The artwork has been supplied by The Torch, a project which provides support to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria through art, cultural and arts vocational programs. By embracing program participants as artists rather than offenders, The Torch provides an avenue to change. www.thetorch.org.au

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands in which we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present.

The Australian Evaluation Society is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.



Message from the AES President and CEO

The Australian Evaluation Society (AES) is committed to strengthening and building First Nation peoples' evaluation capacity in culturally safe evaluation theory, practice and use. We will work with our members to ensure that there is a strong community of First Nations evaluators and that evaluations are culturally safe in both process and product. We are committed to leading the evaluation community on reconciliation.

The AES is pleased to launch this Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan which is the result of more than a year of collaborative work by the Cultural Capacity and Diversity Committee (CCDC), and the Board. We encourage all AES members to actively engage with the initiatives and activities presented in this Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, as we work together to improve evaluation's engagement, respect for and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Lyn Alderman PRESIDENT | **Bill Wallace** CEO

Our Business

The Australian Evaluation Society (AES) exists to improve the theory, practice and use of evaluation in Australia.

We are a professional association and membership is open to people and organisations who are interested in evaluation and are prepared to accept and practice according to the AES Code of Ethics. Our members include evaluation practitioners, managers, teachers and students, commissioners of evaluation, and other interested individuals. We have approximately 940 members involved in all aspects of evaluation and performance measurement. Our members represent diverse professional sectors and areas of evaluation practice and meet regularly through regional networks, special interest groups, discussion groups and an annual conference.

Our organisational priorities are:

→ **Cultural capacity**

To strengthen and build capacity in culturally safe evaluation theory, practice and use

→ **Influence**

To promote the use of evaluation and evaluative thinking by agencies and organisations

→ **Professionalisation**

To strengthen the capacity and professionalism of the evaluation sector

→ **Relevance**

To strengthen the value proposition of AES membership

→ **Organisational stability**

To maintain good governance and broaden our revenue base.

Our legal structure is an Australian Public Company and we are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. A board of directors provides overall governance and strategic direction and is legally responsible for all decisions and activities. The board is accountable to the AES's membership. The Constitution mandates that at least two members of the board are First Nations people.

The Board delegates management to a CEO who supports the Board and is responsible for all operations, including a national office based in Melbourne. The office and operations are supported by two full-time staff members, a CEO and a Membership and Events Officer, as well as contractors who assist with roles, including website development and desktop publishing. AES regional operations, including a seminar program, are supported by volunteer member Regional Network committees. From time to time, members also form special interest groups for the purpose of pursuing specific interests which contribute to our overall aims.

Our main business areas are membership services, publications (including a peer-reviewed journal), an annual international evaluation conference, professional learning activities, awards for excellence in evaluation (including a First Nations evaluation award) and discrete short-term projects. The AES staff are responsible for delivering the core service areas, assisted by volunteer committees and working groups of members. Currently there are no AES staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Fourteen of our members have identified themselves as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Our aim through the RAP is to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership of the AES, as well engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples when contracting out work.

Our RAP Vision

Australia respects, recognises and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history, past and present, their sovereignty, and their right to determine their own future.

The impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is understood, and owned, by all of us. Through a process of healing, we come together as one to build a better future.

We aim to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evaluators living and working in Australia as well as other First Nations people to participate in strengthening the knowledge base of the evaluation sector to further build on talents and capacity in evaluation with First Nations people and communities.

We aim to support, promote and build on culturally safe evaluation practices with AES members and broader evaluation communities to build and strengthen partnerships in working with First Nations evaluators and communities.

Our RAP

Our RAP is a deliberate recognition of our history, acknowledging the hurt and trauma of the past, in order to heal and find a positive and constructive way forward as an inclusive organisation; one that recognises the unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

To reflect this, we have developed a Constitution which recognises First Nations peoples:

‘The AES aims to be inclusive of the diverse communities that make up its membership. It aims to be inclusive of members’ nations, backgrounds, genders and abilities. One way that this inclusiveness is implemented is that the AES board at any given time shall include, to the extent available, representatives of the groups that make up the AES community, and have representation from First Nations peoples.’

We recognise the unique position and contributions of First Nations peoples in Australia, New Zealand and the many nation-states of the wider Australasian-Pacific region. To that end, as a society, and in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect, the AES supports and affirms the rights of First Nations peoples as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.’

The AES Board was involved in the development of the RAP and will champion it internally. Our RAP Working Group consists of members of the Cultural Capacity and Diversity Committee and the CEO. The group includes four Aboriginal people and two First Nations people from the Pacific. Three members of the group also sit on our board.

The journey

In 2015 our members changed the constitution to guarantee that at least two members of the Board are First Nations people. To meet this mandate, we currently have one appointed First Nations person from Aotearoa New Zealand and two member-elected Aboriginal Board members.

Commencing 2016, Board and staff members have participated in an annual two-day workshop entitled ‘Cultural Respect and Safety – Engaging Respectfully with Aboriginal Australians’.

In order to build evaluation capacity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, during the past ten years we have supported more than fifty Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander emerging evaluators to attend and participate in our annual international evaluation conference. One participant reflected that:

‘The support provided by AES to attend the Brisbane conference has been invaluable in building my knowledge and capacity to better capture change and impact

in Aboriginal communities that my organisation works with. The participatory approaches to community development and evaluation reinforces my belief that by working with Aboriginal communities we are empowering them to create a better future based on their terms and agenda. The conference has provided me with a wide range of tools that I am currently using in my work. I strongly recommend it to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working with Indigenous communities.'

We have altered our Conference Support Grant Committee (which assesses applications from emerging First Nation evaluators and community members with an interest in evaluation), so that all the members of that committee are now Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or First Nations people, and have a set term of three years, with the option of another three years (six in total). First Nations Board members support the Conference Support Grant recipients at every conference.

To support our strategy and advise the board and members, we have established a Cultural Capacity and Diversity Committee whose members are all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people or other First Nations people. Acting on their advice:

- It is now mandatory that at least one member of the Awards working group is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.
- We have reconstituted the Indigenous Awards assessment panel (which assesses applications from evaluators who have completed evaluations in or with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other First Nations communities), so that all the members of that committee are now Aboriginal or other First Nations people, and have

a set term of three years, with the option of another three years.

- We have established a membership category for First Nations people at an affordable rate.
- We have created the ability for members to self-identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people or other First Nations people on our membership database.
- We have introduced cultural protocols for the start of every AES meeting or event (i.e. Acknowledgement of Country).
- We have dedicated time and resources for our First Nations Board members to meet with their colleagues internationally in other sister societies, to further our joint efforts in Indigenous evaluation. Initial work has started with Ma te Rae (the Māori Evaluation Association) and EvalIndigenous (an international organisation to 'advance the contribution of Indigenous evaluation to global evaluation practice').
- We commemorate NAIDOC week and National Reconciliation Week each year.

The following pages outline the four pillars that underpin AES's Reflect RAP. These pillars are:

1. Relationships

2. Respect

3. Opportunities, and

4. Governance and Tracking.





Relationships

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Action 1 RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting		
RWG, which includes representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP	September 2018	Chair, RWG
RWG meets at least twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation	September 2018 & September 2019	CEO
Establish Terms of Reference for the RWG	September 2018	Chair, RWG
Action 2 Build internal and external relationships		
Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey	September 2019	CEO
Develop a list of RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey that includes member organisations registered with AES	September 2019	CEO
Investigate opportunities to build partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations and promote their services on AES website	September 2019	Chair, RWG
Action 3 Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)		
Encourage our staff to attend a NRW event in Melbourne	May 2019	CEO
Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff	May 2019	CEO
Ensure our RWG participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW	May 2019	Chair, RWG
Action 4 Raise internal awareness of our RAP		
Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness amongst all staff and AES members across the organisation about our RAP commitments	November 2018	AES President
Develop and implement a plan to engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP	November 2018	CEO
Engage our senior leaders in the delivery of RAP outcomes	November 2018	AES President



Respect

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Action 5 Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development		
Develop a business case for increasing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements within our organisation	May 2019	Chair, CCDC
Capture data and measure our staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievement	May 2019	CEO
Conduct a review of cultural awareness training needs within our organisation	May 2019	Chair, CCDC
Communicate and encourage staff to use Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride online tool to all staff	November 2018	CEO
Develop and distribute a calendar to AES members to celebrate and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance	November 2018	CEO
Action 6 Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week		
Raise awareness and share information amongst our members of the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities	July 2019	Chair, RWG
Introduce our members to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events happening in our regions, through our website	July 2019	CEO
Ensure RAP Working Group participates in an external NAIDOC Week event	July 2019	Chair, RWG
Action 7 Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols		
Explore who the Traditional Owners are of the lands and waters in our local area – Perth, Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Darwin, Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart	May 2019	Chairs, regional committees
Scope and develop a list of local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our organisations sphere of influence	May 2019	Chairs, regional committees
Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols)	September 2019	Chair, RWG; CEO



Opportunities

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Action 8 Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment		
Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation	September 2019	CEO
Identify current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and development opportunities	August 2019	CEO
Action 9 Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity		
Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses	October 2018	Chair, RWG
Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses for our annual Conference and professional development workshops	November 2018	CEO
Action 10 Contribute to the learning and development, and career pathways of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evaluators		
Investigate an internal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional mentoring network for emerging evaluators	May 2019	Chair, CCDC
Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander potential employment pathways (e.g. traineeships or internships) for emerging evaluators with external evaluation firms and businesses	September 2019	Chair, CCDC
Continue to build on and support Conference Support Grants for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander emerging evaluators	September 2019	CEO



Governance and Tracking

DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Action 11 Build support for the RAP		
Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation	September 2018	Chair, RWG: CEO
Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities	November 2018	Chair, RWG; CEO
Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia	September 2019	Chair, RWG
Action 12 Review and Refresh RAP		
Review and refresh RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements	June 2019	Chair, RWG
Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal review and endorsement	June 2019	Chair, RWG

Background artwork: **Spiritual Country** 2018 | Artist & copyright: Trevor, Barkindji





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AUSTRALIAN
EVALUATION
SOCIETY
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