



Photo: Matthew Vasilescu/OxfamAus

Reconciliation Action Plan

"A fair world in which people control their own lives, their basic rights are achieved and the environment is sustained."

For a just world without poverty. *Oxfam Australia Strategic Plan 2007 - 2013*

October 2007

Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

“In recognition of the disadvantage faced by Indigenous Australians, Oxfam Australia affirms the special place and identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as First Australians, recognises their culture, history and diversity, and supports Indigenous Australians to achieve their potential on a basis of equity and respect.”

For a just world without poverty. Oxfam Australia Strategic Plan 2007 - 2013

About Oxfam Australia

Oxfam Australia is an independent, not-for-profit, secular, community-based international development agency. We are a member of Oxfam International, a global confederation of 13 Oxfams that work together to fight poverty and injustice in more than 100 countries around the world. Oxfam Australia works in partnership with local communities across 27 countries using a rights-based approach to overcome poverty and injustice.

Oxfam Australia exists to contribute to:

- a fairer world;
- overcoming poverty and injustice;
- challenging and changing the structural causes of poverty;
- empowering people to control their lives and achieve their human rights;
- long-term change and sustainability.

Oxfam Australia's Strategic Plan 2007 – 2013

In our original Reconciliation Action Plan June 2006, we committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their issues would be identified as a priority for our next Strategic Plan. “For a just world without poverty”, our Strategic Plan for 2007 – 2013, includes the following commitments:

Central Commitments

With partners and allies, we will act in solidarity with people living in poverty, especially women, to achieve their rights and assert their dignity as full citizens.

We will support them to hold governments, corporations and international organisations (including Oxfam) to account for their responsibilities. We will work to change global and national rules that perpetuate poverty, insecurity and inequality.

Our Approach to Reconciliation

“We will implement our Reconciliation Action Plan. This is a statement of intent that outlines our commitment to work towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and a better future for us all.”

For a just world without poverty. Oxfam Australia Strategic Plan 2007 - 2013

Oxfam Australia is working for true reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other Australians. Reconciliation cannot be achieved while the huge disparity in health, wellbeing and life chances between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other Australians continues to exist. We join with other organisations across the Australian community to help close the gaps in life expectancy and opportunities. We believe this should be a national priority for governments at all levels, as well as for Australian society as a whole.

We are committed to working in a respectful way with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to assist them to gain greater control over their own affairs, to voice their own issues and determine priorities and policy on all issues relevant to their futures.

We will support local, national and international organisations and social movements of active citizens to demand justice, particularly gender justice, and to change ideas and beliefs, policies and practices to achieve improvements in people's lives.

Organisational Change Goals

Oxfam Australia's Organisational Change Goals commit us, as an organisation, to live out our values in our daily work. “For a just world without poverty” commits OAus to implementing its Reconciliation Action Plan.

This Reconciliation Action Plan describes the specific activities that Oxfam Australia will undertake to ensure that cultural awareness, support and respect for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is enacted in our everyday working life and practices.

Strategic Issues

Essential Services: The health of Indigenous Australians is comparable to that of poor people in developing countries including Mozambique and Bangladesh. Our challenge is to hold governments to

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers should be aware that this document may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

account for ensuring the equitable delivery of essential services.

Indigenous Rights in Australia: The rights of Indigenous Australians have been progressively eroded over the last ten years. The majority of Indigenous Australians continue to live in poverty across urban, rural and remote locations. Indigenous-controlled organisations and representative institutions have been dismantled or downgraded; land right regimes have been weakened and Indigenous policy overall is increasingly characterised by a punitive paternalism. Our challenge is to develop more effective ways to support Indigenous Australians in their quest for justice.

Our Geographic Focus

Poverty in Australia is as harsh and real as it is in developing countries; Australia's Indigenous population – approximately 500,000 people – is the most disadvantaged group in the country in terms of income, unemployment, imprisonment, child protection, health and wellbeing, life expectancy and education.

As an Australian agency, Oxfam Australia has a particular responsibility to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to exercise their rights to basic social services, sustainable livelihoods, a strong voice and cultural diversity in our own country. Over the life of this plan Oxfam Australia will focus on contributing to improved health outcomes for Indigenous Australians, supporting young Indigenous Australians and reinforcing Indigenous self determination.

Administering and Reporting on our Reconciliation Action Plan

Issues impacting on reconciliation and Indigenous Peoples cut across the spectrum of Oxfam Australia's work.

Oxfam Australia management will be accountable for Oxfam's reconciliation initiatives and will seek guidance and direction from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group. The Reference Group provides the wisdom of experience and knowledge to build Oxfam's understanding of reconciliation, current and emerging realities, needs and directions facing Indigenous Australians. The Reference Group also provides advice and appropriate assistance on specific issues of concern to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Program and to Oxfam Australia.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Program will be responsible for leading and advising on the implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan across the organisation, while specific operational processes and

outputs will be the responsibility of the relevant Oxfam Australia units.

Oxfam Australia will produce a public annual report on progress against this Reconciliation Action Plan.

Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live, on average, 17 years less than other Australians. There are solutions but these require political will, financial resources and action. To generate this action, we will campaign to **Close the Gap** in Indigenous health in Australia. In collaboration with other groups, we developed the Close the Gap campaign in response to the call from Tom Calma (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and Acting Race Discrimination Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission), to close the gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Australians within one generation. As a non-Indigenous organisation, our particular responsibility is to educate and influence non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians on these vital human rights concerns.

Abbreviations Used In This Report:

Full Name	Abbreviation
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Program	ATSIP Program
Australian National University	ANU
Community Aid Abroad (now known as Oxfam Australia)	CAA
Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research	CAEPR
Diplomacy Training Program	DTP
Gulf Regional Health Service	GRHS
Human Resources	HR
Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission	HREOC
International Programs Section	IPS
Learning and Development Unit	L&D Unit
National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee	NAIDOC
Oxfam Australia	OAus
Oxfam International Youth Partnerships	OIYP
Organisational Development	OD
Public Policy and Outreach Section	PPO
Reconciliation Action Plan	RAP
University of New South Wales	UNSW

Key Reconciliation Result Area 1: Promoting cross-cultural awareness, communication and competence

Key Reconciliation Objective: Oxfam Australia is a more informed and responsive organisation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, issues and aspirations

Strategy: Promote cultural awareness of Oxfam Australia employees across all program areas

Activities	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance indicators	Achievements to date
Establish informal network of staff working on Reconciliation within OAus	ATSIP Program	September 2007	Reconciliation Network active	Approved by Management Team
Investigate establishing International Indigenous Peoples network within Oxfam International	Executive Director Director PPO ATSIP Program	June 2008	Internal report June 2008	Communication begun with other Oxfams
Reconciliation initiatives incorporated into Strategic Plans across OAus	All areas	June 2008	Reconciliation initiatives are identified in Strategic Plans of all relevant units in OAus	Reconciliation initiatives incorporated in OAus, ATSIP Program and HR Strategic Plans 2007 - 2013
Develop program of learning events, seminars and formal cross-cultural training workshops for OAus staff & volunteers	ATSIP Program	Adopted and ongoing	Number of seminars held annually Numbers attending	Nov 2006 – July 2007 Five seminars held: Indigenous Cultural & Intellectual Property Rights Close the Gap Campaign 40 th anniversary of 1967 Referendum ATSIP Program in the Gulf of Carpentaria Asia-Pacific Indigenous Peoples Conference
Work to improve public understanding of and support for the rights of Indigenous peoples, in Australia and internationally	ATSIP Program Advocacy Unit Diplomacy Training Program, UNSW HREOC	Adopted and ongoing	Number of Human Rights trainings held Investigate establishing Indigenous Human Rights Network in Australia Development of human rights educational materials specifically for use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their organisations	Feb 2007 Human Rights training for Indigenous Advocates, 5 day course, UNSW March – August 2007 Consultant appointed to undertake national scoping study Working agreement signed with DTP to develop human rights educational materials June 2007 OAus speakers discuss Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues at public forums at community, state and national levels

Activities	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance indicators	Achievements to date
Develop cultural protocols	ATSIP Program	September 2007 Adopted and ongoing	Cultural Protocols developed and endorsed Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country protocols established for OAus gatherings	Draft cultural protocols prepared and awaiting approval Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country Protocols approved and enacted
Cultural awareness training provided for all staff	ATSIP Program L & D Unit HR	Adopted and ongoing	Cultural training included in OAus Induction Number of cultural awareness trainings delivered annually	Expressions of Interest requested and budget allocated to employ cultural awareness trainers for Induction Dec 2007 two day cultural awareness training for Campaign Unit staff Normanton staff developing cultural training materials for local use
Permanent signage acknowledging Traditional Owners	ATSIP Program	May 07	Permanent sign acknowledging the Traditional Owners installed	Installed on front of new building prior to opening May 2007
Culturally appropriate artwork permanently displayed in foyer of Oxfam building	ATSIP Program Koorie Heritage Trust	August 07	Glass panels featuring Koori possum skin cloak designs installed in foyer	Unveiled August 2007 Artists: Lee Darroch, Treahna Hamm and Maree Clarke. Panels produced by Wathaurong Glass and Arts
Develop communications which promote reconciliation	All areas	Ongoing	Increase OAus communications promoting reconciliation	Communications include public talks, media releases, opinion pieces, ATSIP Program brochure and banners, website, Oxfam News, Oxfam Update, Activist Newsletter
Celebrate important dates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People eg Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week	ATSIP Program	Ongoing	Number of events held annually Number of events supported Number of events publicised	May 2007 40 th anniversary of 1967 Referendum GRHS hosted NAIDOC Week events for Mt Isa and Normanton Support for NAIDOC Week activities in Melbourne Website links to NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week

Key Reconciliation Result Area 2: Employment Strategies

Key Reconciliation Objective: A culturally safe and supportive work environment

Strategy: Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and partners

Activities	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance indicators	Achievements to date
Review employment policies and strategies to improve employment experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People	ATSIP Program HR	Adopted and ongoing	Increased satisfaction levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	Diversity Policy approved August 2007 Recruitment Strategy August 2007 Customary Leave provisions Leave for Religious/Cultural Purposes
Develop HR & OD processes and tools to support staff working in remote areas of Australia	ATSIP Program HR	Adopted and ongoing	Ways of Working document for remote staff HR to visit remote staff on regular basis	Ways of Working document developed collaboratively with GRHS staff Nov 2006 Director HR & OD attends planning meetings in Gulf
Ensure OAus financial management processes support Indigenous community needs	ATSIP Program Finance	Adopted and ongoing	Finance processes reviewed	ATSIP Program Officer dedicated to assisting GRHS to improve finance and reporting skills
Create mentoring and support options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	ATSIP Program HR GRHS	Adopted and ongoing	Uptake of opportunities for mentoring and professional/personal development	Counselling strategies in place for all staff and families All staff encouraged to seek mentors Adult Learning Co-ordinator for GRHS Indigenous staff discussing benefits of forming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network
Engage Indigenous consultants where appropriate	ATSIP Program HR	Adopted and ongoing	Indigenous consultant list developed and regularly updated Number of Indigenous consultants employed	Indigenous consultant list available to all staff on intranet Sept 2007 Eight Indigenous consultants employed for six major projects since Nov 2006
All ATSIP Program and GRHS job vacancies include the statement: "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply"	ATSIP Program HR	Adopted and ongoing	Adopted as standard practice by HR	Eleven out of fourteen ATSIP Program staff are Indigenous Australians.

Activities	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance indicators	Achievements to date
Secondment and volunteer opportunities	ATSIP Program Other unit managers	Ongoing as opportunity arises	Number of secondments and number volunteers engaged	Volunteers for OIYP Preparation meeting Volunteers for OIYP Kaleidoscope Event Close the Gap Campaign
Capacity building workshops with partners eg Media, Monitoring and Evaluation, Marketing	ATSIP Program Other unit managers	Ongoing in response to partner demand	Number of workshops requested and number held	Partner Support and Evaluation has ongoing budget

Key Reconciliation Result Area 3: Develop more effective ways to support Indigenous Australians in their quest for justice and increased health, wellbeing and life opportunities.

Key Reconciliation Objective: As an Australian agency, Oxfam Australia has a particular responsibility to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to exercise their rights to basic social services, sustainable livelihoods, a strong voice and cultural diversity in our own country.

Strategy: Oxfam Australia will focus on contributing to improved health outcomes for Indigenous Australians, supporting young Indigenous Australians and reinforcing Indigenous self-determination.

Activities	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance indicators	Achievements to date
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Program	Executive Director OAus Board PPO ATSIP Program GRHS	Adopted and ongoing	ATSIP Program continues to be a growing area of OAus work Regular evaluation of ATSI Program undertaken	OAus/CAA has worked in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People for over 30 years ATSIP Program focuses on three thematic areas: health and wellbeing, youth and self-determination Six full time staff in Melbourne head office including 3 Indigenous staff Nine staff in GRHS, supported by OAus and Department of Health and Ageing, all staff are Indigenous Australians ATSIP Program and Partner Reflection held March 2007 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group
Close the Gap Campaign	PPO Campaigns ATSIP Program Advocacy Unit Indigenous partner organisations	Adopted and ongoing	Major Campaign focus for 2007 and ongoing	Bringing together both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, the Close the Gap campaign will work with all Australian Governments to commit to a plan of action to achieve equitable access to primary health care for Indigenous Australians within 10 years and to close the gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Australians within 25 years.
Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people engaged in Oxfam's International Youth Partnerships Program	ATSIP Program OIYP Program	Adopted and ongoing	Full time employee in ATSI Program to support Indigenous Australian participants and to input Indigenous content across programs and resources	Project Officer dedicated to this program since 2006 15 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participated in OIYP Kaleidoscope event in October 2007, with many more involved as support people, facilitators and presenters.

Activities	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance indicators	Achievements to date
Engage in advocacy to influence government policy on Indigenous issues	PPO Director Advocacy Unit ATSIP Program	Adopted and ongoing	Retention and improvement in the rights of Indigenous Australians through legislative and public policy. Increased 'policy space' for Indigenous organisations in part created through Oxfam Australia's advocacy work.	Close the Gap campaign contributes to ALP commitment to Close the Gap within a generation and initial funding allocation of \$261 million if elected. Contributes to Federal Government increasing of Indigenous health funding by \$30 million per annum for next 4 years. Close The Gap campaign creates increased policy space for Indigenous agencies, notably NACCHO other Indigenous health sector agencies.
Commission research on key issues impacting on Indigenous Australians	PPO Director Advocacy Unit ATSIP Program	Adopted and ongoing	Number of research pieces commissioned	Research on the link between individual land tenure and home ownership in northern Australia commissioned through CAEPR at ANU in 2006. Research on Indigenous Health comparisons across Australia, the United States, Canada and New Zealand commissioned through Telethon Institute in 2007. Research on aspects of the Commonwealth Intervention in the Northern Territory commissioned through CAEPR at ANU in 2007.
Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group	Reference Group Executive Director Management Team	Adopted and ongoing	Membership to take into account diversity in age, gender, area of expertise and national coverage Number of meetings held Attendance at meetings	Indigenous Australia Program Reference Group established 2004 Membership refreshed and increased 2007 Expanded role as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group for whole of Oxfam Australia 2007 Meetings set for next 12 months
Where appropriate and consistent with program strategies, Oxfam Australia will work to advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples	Director PPO Director IPS Relevant Unit Managers	Ongoing	Regional Programs working with Indigenous Peoples on human rights issues	Focus on rights of Indigenous Peoples across a number of Oxfam programs
To live out our values in our daily work	All areas	Adopted and ongoing	Adopted as Organisational Change Goal, OAus Strategic Plan 2007 -2013	This Reconciliation Action Plan delivers the specific activities that OAus will undertake to deliver on this Organisational Goal in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

