



AAG
Australian
Association of
Gerontology



ATSIAAG
Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
Ageing Advisory Group

ATSIAAG Update – August 2019

Dear members of ATSIAAG, Friends of ATSIAAG and other friends

Since our last ATSIAAG Update earlier in the year, it's been a busy period for us as Co-Chairs of AAG's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing Advisory Group (ATSIAAG). As so much has happened we thought we would give you a summary of what ATSIAAG have been doing in the first half of 2019.

Sadly, we said farewell to Kathy Bell our AAG Senior Research and Policy Officer who retired to her farm at the end of January 2019. Kathy had worked with and supported the ATSIAAG for 18 months and gave the ATSIAAG Executive a great deal of support and assistance in promoting and highlighting issues in the aged care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander space.

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome Tom Voigt to AAG as a part-time Senior Research and Policy Officer whose focus includes the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander portfolio area. Tom joins us after having worked as State Manager (Victoria) for the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) with the Commonwealth government, as well as extensive experience in the health, aged care and disability sectors. We are enjoying working closely with Tom.

Here is a summary of key activities so far in 2019.

Firstly, we congratulate **Mark Elliott, former ATSIAAG Chair on his being awarded an Honorary Life Member of AAG** for his considerable contribution to the work and effort with the ATSIAAG Executive over the ten years. Mark continues to be actively involved and engaged with the ATSIAAG Executive and continues to support AAG across a number of different areas.

We began the year supporting **AAG in submitting its draft Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to Reconciliation Australia**. Feedback received from the first version was both positive and constructive and we have had several iterations since. ATSIAAG Executive recently reviewed the latest draft RAP, which is now going to the AAG Board for approval before being submitted to

Reconciliation Australia for approval hopefully prior to the AAG Conference. The RAP will further support and enhance AAG's commitment to work constructively and visibly to support the national reconciliation movement.

Following on from our very successful ATSIAG Workshop held in November 2018 at AAG's National Conference in Melbourne, we developed a report titled '**Appropriate Aged Care Needs Assessment for Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples**'. [Click here for to view the report](#)

For those who were present at the 2018 ATSIAG Workshop they will recall that the key focus and themes of the workshop included exploring;

1. Strategies to work towards more trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care assessors across all parts of Australia.
2. Strategies to work towards cultural competence in aged care assessment for non-Indigenous aged care assessors.
3. Strategies to develop and achieve uptake of culturally appropriate assessment tools.

We were pleased that **Graham, as ATSIAG Co-Chair, could launch the report at a forum jointly organised with the Healing Foundation focussed on 'Stolen Generation – Aged Care Needs' held in Melbourne on 5 June 2019.**

This Forum proved to be enormously successful and brought together 39 people including a number of Stolen Generation survivors with representatives from research institutes, the aged care and health sectors and State and Commonwealth government representatives to raise awareness and build towards a safer, more inclusive sector that considers issues such as family, kinship and culture.

We were very pleased to have been able to connect and partner with The Healing Foundation who are the national peak body in Australia, in supporting evidence-based programs, creating knowledge and promoting understanding of the historical legacy of trauma associated with Stolen Generation survivors.

We know from the recently released Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Report which was released in November 2018 that in 2014-15 there were an estimated 13,800 surviving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over who had been removed from their families and communities as a result of past government policies.

This group of people – the Stolen Generation survivors represent around 14%, or 1 in 7 of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over two-thirds of the estimated

20,900 Stolen Generation survivors. Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reveals the survivors of the Stolen Generations have been significantly more impacted in terms of health and welfare outcomes even compared to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders contemporaries, who are already facing greater challenges in Australia.

The evidence paints a picture of complex needs for the Stolen Generations who suffered profound childhood trauma when they were forcibly removed from their homes, isolated from family and culture and often institutionalised, abused and assaulted.

Following this forum both [AAG/ATSIAAG and The Healing Foundation released a Joint Statement/Communique](#) highlighting the need for urgent action and attention to support and assist Stolen Generation survivors in accessing and entering aged care. This Communique was distributed widely to relevant Ministers and government officials at the Commonwealth and State government level.

Following on from this forum, we have been working closely with The Healing Foundation in preparing a Forum Report which once completed will also be distributed widely to increase awareness and understanding around both the significant disadvantage as well as unique needs of Stolen Generation survivors. **We also plan to partner with the Healing Foundation in preparing a joint submission to the Royal Commission into Aged Care.**

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has also provided us with the opportunity to flag and highlight the needs as well as differences in need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering the aged care system. We have worked closely with Incite Information in putting together a separate **ATSIAAG submission to the Aged Care Royal Commission which we submitted in August 2019.** ATSIAAG Members and Friends of ATSIAAG Members were given the opportunity to comment and provide feedback on our 'draft' submission during July.

Both of us were fortunate to have met with members of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety in Broome and were given the opportunity to voice our respective perspectives around the interface between Aged Care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander needs.

In May 2019 **Mark Elliott conducted a very successful and well received half day Aboriginal cultural awareness training workshop for AAG Board Members and AAG staff members.** As a result of this session, a Cultural Awareness/Cultural Safety webinar for AAG members was held in early July 2019 with over 50 AAG members taking up the opportunity of learning more around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and looking at how best to work with service delivery agencies and aged care providers in making services more culturally safe and supportive.

Our focus is now turning to the 2019 AAG National Conference to be held in Sydney in November 2019. The ATSIAG Executive is now looking to focus its attention on the topic of 'Service Integration - what works best for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People' and look forward to seeing as many ATSIAG Members and Friends of ATSIAG Members at the pre-Conference ATSIAG Workshop on Tuesday 5 November 2019.

There are also quite a number of presentations being given at the AAG National Conference that have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus, so we also look forward to attending these presentations and meeting up ATSIAG Members at our 'Yarn-Up' space at the Conference.

Finally, Mark Elliott will be running a **three-hour Cultural Awareness/Cultural Safety workshop at the ATSIAG Pre-Conference Workshop on the morning of Tuesday 5th November in Sydney – [book early as it is likely to fill up](#)**. Mark has requested that any AAG members who have any suggestions around topics or anything that they would like to see included in the presentation are encouraged to drop us a line on – jamesbsaunders@aag.asn.au by 31 August 2019.

Thank you for your continued support in 2019, and we look forward to your ongoing support and engagement.

Best wishes,



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