

Let's talk...

Reconciliation



Reconciliation involves building positive, respectful relationships between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the benefit of all Australians.

To create positive change we need more people talking about the issues and getting involved. With National Reconciliation Week just around the corner, find out what you can do to contribute to reconciliation, and start walking the reconciliation talk.

National Reconciliation Week

[National Reconciliation Week](#) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements, and to contribute to building a reconciled Australia.



National Reconciliation Week started as the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation in 1993 and was supported by Australia's major religious groups. Under the guidance of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (now Reconciliation Australia), it evolved into the week-long celebration that it is today.

Every year, it is held between two significant milestones in Australia's history, May 27 and June 3. May 27 is the anniversary of the 1967 referendum in which more than 90 per cent of Australians voted 'Yes' to count Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the census and give the Australian Government the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The day before National Reconciliation Week, 26 May, is National Sorry Day, which was first held

in Sydney in 1998 and is now commemorated nationally to remember and honour the Stolen Generations. June 3 marks the historic 1992 Mabo decision in which the High Court of Australia recognised native title – the recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights over their lands did survive British colonisation.

The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2014 is *Let's Walk the Talk*, so Australians across the nation can start putting their words into action. There are many ways to celebrate National Reconciliation Week and to 'walk the talk' by contributing to the wider effort to build a reconciled Australia. You could invite a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander elder or person to speak at your organisation, community, university or school on the history of the First Australians in your local area, host a BBQ using native ingredients such as lemon myrtle or bush tomato, or host a film night to watch *The Sapphires*, *Bran Nue Day* or *Ten Canoes*. Whenever people come together and share conversations, reconciliation takes another step forward. So whatever you decide to do towards building a better Australia, [register your event on the National Reconciliation Week website](#), and be part of the action.

Did you know...

- Only **31%** of Australians say they know a lot about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures but **82%** of us want to know more¹.
- The Australian economy would be **\$24 billion** better off in 2031 if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experienced the same health, education and employment outcomes as other Australians².
- About **60%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in cities and major regional areas³.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians excel in numerous areas, not just sport. People such as [Professor Helen Milroy](#), Australia's first Aboriginal psychiatrist, and [ACT Minister Chris Bourke](#), who was also the first Aboriginal dentist, are just some of those who make outstanding and highly influential contributions to Australia in diverse areas.

Get involved...

Reconciliation is an ongoing process and there are many opportunities to get involved throughout the year.

- **13 February:** The [Anniversary of the Apology](#) to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in particular members of the Stolen Generations.
- **20 March** [National Close the Gap Day](#) calls for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equality.

¹ Australian Reconciliation Barometer 2012. Available from: <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/2012-Australian-Reconciliation-Barometer-Overview.pdf>

² Deloitte Access Economics *Economic benefits of closing the gap in Indigenous employment outcomes*. Available from: <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Economic-Benefits-of-Closing-the-gap-FINAL-REPORT-120214.pdf>

³ <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/latestProducts/3238.0.55.001Media%20Release1June%202011>

- **26 May:** [National Sorry Day](#) is a day of healing for the Stolen Generations, their families and communities.

- **27 May:** the anniversary of the 1967 referendum and the start of [National Reconciliation Week](#).

- **3 June:** [Mabo Day](#), when the High Court of Australia recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a special relationship to the land.



- **6 – 13 July:** [NAIDOC Week](#) is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the ongoing contributions they make to Australian society.
- **4 August:** [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day](#) encourages everyone to take pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their strengths and their connection to culture.
- **9 August:** The United Nations’ [International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples](#) is observed each year to promote and protect the rights of the world’s Indigenous Peoples.

Where to start...



[Organise an event for National Reconciliation Week](#) in your school, workplace, or community and register it on the website

Learn more about the important contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to Australia through the [Share our Pride website](#).

Involved with a school? Encourage them to get involved in our new [Reconciliation Australia Schools program](#).

Working? [Support your workplace to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan](#) or get involved with your workplace's RAP.

Connect with your [local State Reconciliation Council](#) and support reconciliation close to home.

Sign up to support [RECOGNISE](#)—the people's movement to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Constitution.

[Recommend an outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation or project](#) you know for the 2014 Indigenous Governance Awards.