Australia celebrates National Reconciliation Week

Hundreds of celebrations across Australia and growing public support for constitutional change to recognise Australia’s First Peoples indicate a renewed national commitment to reconciliation. National Reconciliation Week will be launched simultaneously at two sites, on Monday 27 May on the Cairns Esplanade and in Melbourne’s Federation Square.

The Melbourne launch, MCed by comedians Meshel Laurie and Kevin Kropinyeri will feature a diverse array of talent including Reconciliation Australia’s Dr Tom Calma AO and Ms Melinda Cilento; Miranda Tapsell, star of the recent hit movie The Sapphires; Jeanette Powell, Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Minister; Mr Robert Doyle, Melbourne Lord Mayor, and Yorta Yorta leader Monica Morgan.

The Cairns launch, MCed by Aboriginal hip-hop star, Naomi Wenitong of The Last Kinection, will feature Cairns Region Mayor Bob Manning; Reconciliation Australia CEO Leah Armstrong; Queensland reconciliation Patron, Jackie Huggins and daughter of native title pioneer Eddie Koiki Mabo, Ms Gail Mabo. Councillor Manning will launch the Cairns and Regional Council’s Reconciliation Action Plan.

One highlight of the week will be the launch of the Journey to Recognition, Australia’s largest ever relay across the whole continent to build momentum for recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Constitution.

In Napranum Cape York the local men’s group will hold a two day camp; in Darwin the Larrakia Nation will host the inaugural World Indigenous Network Conference; the Australian Indigenous Surfing Titles will be held at Victoria’s Bells Beach; Sydney’s Hyde Park will see a commemoration of the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans; a 19 year old Wakka Wakka ADFA student will deliver the Australian Defence Force’s inaugural NRW Key Note Address in Canberra; some of the original “Sapphires” will join the public for a Reconciliation Breakfast in Adelaide and the Fremantle Dockers will play in special Aboriginal-designed jerseys in their Reconciliation Week game against the Adelaide Crows.

For a full schedule of NRW activities click here.

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is celebrated across Australia each year between 27 May and 3 June. The dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey:

- **May 27 marks the anniversary of** the 1967 referendum in which over 90 per cent of Australians vote to give the Commonwealth the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognise them in the national census.
- **On 3 June, 1992, the High Court of Australia delivered its landmark Mabo decision** which legally recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a special relationship to the land—that existed prior to colonisation and still exists today. This recognition paved the way for land rights called Native Title.

Please note that vision and photographs of the simultaneous launches will be available on Monday after the events have concluded. For Melbourne vision contact Karen Mundine: 0401 119 998

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