



RECONCILIATION INSIGHTS

EDUCATION

The findings of the 2016 Australian Reconciliation Barometer¹ (the Barometer) survey reveal that racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is on the rise, and trust between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is low. Despite this, goodwill for reconciliation is strong. Most Australians continue to believe the relationship is important and that all Australians should learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

To build relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, what role do teachers, educators, parents, students, and the education sector have to play to achieve a reconciled, just and equitable Australia?

What the Barometer found:

Almost all Australians—both Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous—believe it is important to know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who believe it is **important** to know about **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures**.



Australians in the **general community** who believe it is **important** to know about **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures**.

Yet many Australians say they have a low level, or no knowledge at all, about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.



58%

of Australians say they have **low or no knowledge** at all about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **histories**



67%

of Australians say they have **low or no knowledge** at all about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **cultures**

¹ The Australian Reconciliation Barometer is a biennial, national research study, conducted by Reconciliation Australia since 2008. The Barometer measures attitudes, perceptions and behaviours towards reconciliation in both the general Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In 2016, the Barometer surveyed 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and 2277 Australians in the general community.

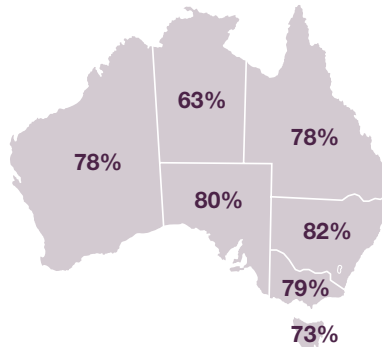
Australians who rely on school education or other research as their main source of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more likely to think the relationship is very important, compared to those who rely on media as their main source.



59% Australians who rely on **school education or other research** as their main source view the relationship as **very important**

44% Australians who rely on **media** as their main source view the relationship as **very important**

There is strong support across states and territories for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories to be a compulsory part of the school curriculum.



Think it is important for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories** to be a compulsory part of the **school curriculum**

Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are more likely to hold high trust for other Australians, compared to older generations.



56% of **18-39 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** Australians hold high or very **high trust** for **non-Indigenous Australians**

46% of **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** Australians across all ages hold high or very **high trust** for non-Indigenous Australians

Yet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are five times more likely to feel they, or a family member, have been racially discriminated against by school teachers and/or principals, compared to Australians in the general community.²



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who feel they, or a family member, have been racially discriminated against by **school teachers and/or principals**.

Australians in the **general community** who feel they, or a family member, have been racially discriminated against by **school teachers and/or principals**.

² During the twelve months prior to the survey, conducted from 14 July – 8 August 2016.

What does this mean?

Australians think it's important to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and show strong support for compulsory school curriculum standards in these areas. The Barometer also highlights that formal education settings foster improved attitudes toward reconciliation, when compared to the media. Formal education settings often provide more supportive learning environments to appropriately teach all Australians about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. This learning journey can involve both learning new information and 'unlearning' misinformation about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples learnt from unreliable and incorrect sources of information.

To support the learning of Australia's shared histories, the Australian Curriculum³ and the Early Years Learning Framework⁴ mandate learning priorities in areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and contributions. Similarly, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership has set professional standards to promote reconciliation.⁵

Parents, teachers, and educators have a role to play to shape better learning environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and contribute to closing the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous education outcomes. Barriers such as racism—in its direct, indirect, and institutional forms alike—have known impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' ability to access, attend, and achieve to their best potential at school.⁶

What can I do?

- Visit **ShareOurPride.org.au** to learn more about the histories, cultures and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative and advisory bodies, as well as relevant community services that are dedicated to supporting the needs and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education professionals. Consider engaging with the work of the **Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)** and, where they are in operation, Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (see **NSW AECG** in New South Wales, **VAEAI** in Victoria, **ATSIECG** in the Australian Capital Territory, and **SAAETCB** in South Australia).
- Promote a zero tolerance approach to racism in your school or early learning service by encouraging support of campaigns like **Racism. It Stops With Me** or the **Invisible Discriminator**.

Spotlight on:

Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning

Narragunnawali supports all schools and early learning services in Australia to develop environments that foster a higher level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. The *Narragunnawali* platform is free to access, and includes an extensive range of resources to support schools and early learning services in their reconciliation journey.

If you are a teacher, educator, parent, student, or motivated local community member, you can join the *Narragunnawali* community at narragunnawali.org.au.

Narragunnawali
Reconciliation in Schools
and Early Learning

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³ <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/crosscurriculumpriorities/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures/overview>.

⁴ https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf.

⁵ <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/illustrations-of-practice/detail?id=IOP00061>.

⁶ <http://www.aihw.gov.au/uploadedFiles/ClosingTheGap/Content/Publications/2011/ctgc-rs06.pdf>.

Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia is an independent, national not-for-profit organisation promoting reconciliation by building relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our vision – a just, equitable and reconciled Australia.

Our mission – to inspire and enable all Australians to contribute to the reconciliation of the nation.

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer (the Barometer) is a biennial, national research study that has been conducted by Reconciliation Australia since 2008.

This Insights document draws on the findings of the 2016 Barometer where 2277 Australians in the general community and 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were surveyed. Participants in both samples were recruited from a professional social research panel. Participants completed the survey between 14 July and 1 August 2016.

The general community sample of Australian residents was selected and weighted to be representative in terms of age, gender and location (state and urban/regional splits), as per data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census. The sample of 2277 is associated with a margin of error of +/-2.1% at the 95% confidence interval. This means that if a result of 50% is found, we can be 95% confident the real result is between 47.9% and 52.1%.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sample of 500 is associated with a margin of error of +/-4.4% at the 95% confidence interval.

The full Barometer, including comprehensive information about methodology, is available at reconciliation.org.au/resources

CONTACT

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Reconciliation Australia acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

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



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AUSTRALIA