

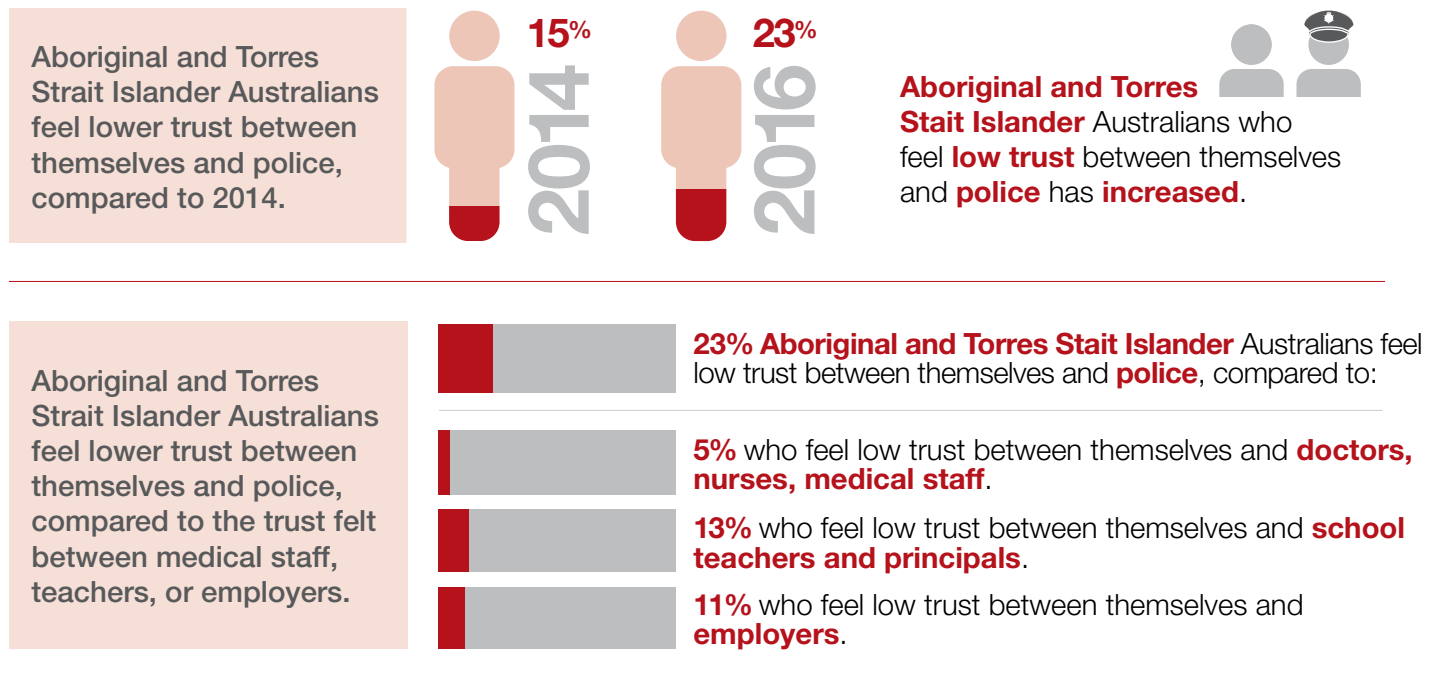


RECONCILIATION INSIGHTS JUSTICE

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. In particular, trust between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and police is low. Despite this, most Australians continue to believe the relationship is important.

To build relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, what role do police, courts, law officials, and the justice sector have to play to achieve a reconciled, just and equitable Australia?

What the Barometer found:



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.

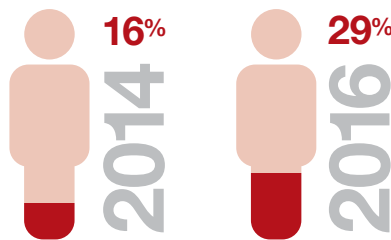
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are less likely to feel they can be true to their culture or personal beliefs in interactions with police and courts, compared to Australians in the general community.



47% **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** Australians feel they can always be **true to their culture or personal beliefs** in their interactions with police and courts

68% Australians in the **general community** feel they can always be **true to their culture or personal beliefs** in their interactions with police and courts

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians increasingly feel they, or a family member, have been racially discriminated against by police, compared to 2014.²



The number of **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** Australians who feel they, or a family member, have been **racially discriminated against by police** has **increased**.

Over a third of Australians are still unsure, or do not accept a number of key facts about Australia's past institutional prejudices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Australians unsure or do not accept that Government policy enabled Aboriginal children to be removed from their families without permission until the 1970s as a fact.



Australians unsure or do not accept that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people did not have full voting rights throughout Australia until the 1960s as a fact.



Australians unsure or do not accept that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were subject to mass killings, incarceration, forced removal from land and restricted movement throughout the 1800s as a fact.



Australians unsure or do not accept Government policy in the 1900s dictated where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians could live and be employed as a fact.



Australians unsure or do not accept Australia was owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at the time of colonisation in 1770 as a fact.

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

What does this mean?

Trust between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and police is lower compared to trust felt between medical staff, teachers and employers, and is only decreasing. Furthermore, almost a third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people report experiences of racism in interactions with police in a 12 month period, which highlights both the frequency of discrimination, and the frequency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' interactions with police.

Twenty-five years on from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are now 13 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous people. It is evident that past institutional prejudices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play out in the present day situation. Australia is repeating some of the wrongs of the past, indicating that urgent and well-considered action is needed.

Meanwhile, almost a third of Australians are unsure or do not accept past institutional prejudices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as facts. Accepting our history is a crucial part of ensuring past wrongs are never repeated again. All Australians need to take action to increase their knowledge and understanding of the past, and of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Whilst these misunderstandings remain, the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians will be characterised by low trust and high prejudice.

What can I do?

- **Watch** how the community of Bourke is tackling youth imprisonment through a justice reinvestment approach on ABC's Four Corners episode, *Backing Bourke*.
- Promote a zero tolerance approach to racism in your workplace by encouraging support of campaigns like **Racism. It Stops With Me** or the **Invisible Discriminator**.
- Visit **[ShareOurPride.org.au](https://shareourpride.org.au)** to learn more about our shared history and the continuing impacts of colonisation today.

Spotlight on:

The Change the Record Campaign

The Change the Record Campaign is a coalition of leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, human rights, legal, and community organisations calling for urgent and coordinated national action to close the gap in imprisonment rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Campaign is also committed to cutting the disproportionate rates of violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly women and children.

The Change the Record Coalition's **Blueprint for Change** reiterates that changing the record on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' imprisonment rates and experience of violence requires federal leadership and a national approach to drive coordinated action across the country. Sign up to show your support today by visiting **changetherecord.org.au**.



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

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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