



# RECONCILIATION INSIGHTS

## MEDIA

**The findings of the 2016 Australian Reconciliation Barometer<sup>1</sup> (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, 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 media, and individuals who consume media, have to play to achieve a reconciled, just and equitable Australia?

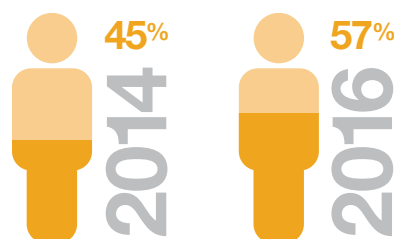
### What the Barometer found:

Few Australians believe the media portrays Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians positively.



**10%** Australians who believe the media portrays Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians **positively**

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians now believe the media portrays them negatively, compared to 2014.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who believe the media portrays them **negatively**

<sup>1</sup> 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.

Twice as many Australians say the media is their main source of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, compared to those who say school education or other research is their main source.



**34%** Australians in the general community say their main source of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is the **media**



**16%** Australians in the general community say their main source of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is **school education or other research**

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



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



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

Australians who disagree that a colonial legacy is the cause of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage today are three times more likely to agree Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are responsible for their own disadvantages.



**63%** Australians who **disagree** that a colonial legacy is the cause of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage today also believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are responsible for their own disadvantage.

**18%** Australians who **agree** that a colonial legacy is the cause of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage today also believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are responsible for their own disadvantage.

## What does this mean?

Few Australians think the stories they hear about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the media portray them positively, yet a large portion of Australians rely on the media as their main source of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This situation creates major barriers for reconciliation, resulting in fewer people who believe the relationship is important, and contributing to a misunderstanding about the causes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage.

This situation can also create opportunities for reconciliation. Many Australians are using the media as a way to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures. With a large audience to draw upon, media outlets, as well as individuals through social media, have the power to raise awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures by promoting more positive stories about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strength, diversity and leadership.

## What can I do?

- Engage critically with mainstream media, and consider expanding your sources to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander print, TV or radio media (such as the **Koori Mail**, **National Indigenous Times**, **NITV** and the **National Indigenous Radio Service**) to enhance your awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.
- Shine a light on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success, by sharing stories about **NAIDOC Week**, the **Indigenous Governance Awards** or other celebrations focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievements.
- Like Reconciliation Australia's **Facebook** or **Twitter** page, or sign up to the **mailing list** to receive regular updates and stories about how everyday Australians are contributing to reconciliation.
- Watch six well-known Australians challenge their preconceptions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on **SBS's First Contact, Season 2**.

## Spotlight on:

### **NITV: Little J and Big Cuz, children's animation**

NITV series Little J & Big Cuz which launched in April 2017, is an animated kids show that features Aboriginal Australians positively. The program explores themes of identity, connection to country, traditional knowledge and cultural practises.

Featuring the talented voices of Miranda Tapsell (Little J), Deborah Mailman (Big Cuz) and Aaron Fa'aso (Old Dog), the Indigenous animation is for all children. The cartoon follows the adventures of two Aboriginal children who live with their grandmother in the country.

"This is such a gorgeous little gem of a show and really exciting for all of us involved. I think in terms of its reach it's got amazing potential," Mailman said.

"It will be invaluable for Indigenous children to have this representation on the small screen".

The show is supported by resources for parents, carers and educators providing information about the transition to school and options for including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge, understanding and skills in early learning and primary teaching programs.

The series is a joint project of the Australian Council for Educational Research, Ned Lander Media, NITV, Screen Australia, Film Victoria, Screen Tasmania, the Australian Children's Television Foundation and SNAICC – National Voice for our Children.



## 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](http://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