

National Reconciliation Week

Let's Talk Recognition



Reconciliation
AUSTRALIA

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27 May – 3 June

National Reconciliation Week Guide for Churches

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) and the *Week of Prayer for Reconciliation* are held each year between 27 May and 3 June. These dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey—the anniversaries of the successful 1967 referendum and the Mabo decision.

As an initiative of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (now Reconciliation Australia), the *Week of Prayer for Reconciliation* started in 1993 and continues to receive strong support from faith communities. The weeklong event has been celebrated nationally across the general community since 1996 when it evolved into *NRW*.

The week is an opportunity to show leadership; to support and practice reconciliation; and to build strong and respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples in your church and your community.

This *NRW Guide for Churches* provides useful information and ideas on how to get involved in the national reconciliation movement during *the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation*.

What can you do during Week of Prayer for Reconciliation?

Join the thousands of churches around Australia who are holding a service for reconciliation during *Week of Prayer for Reconciliation*, preceded or followed by a morning or afternoon tea.

Here are some ideas to make your service and morning or afternoon tea a great way to build and maintain strong and respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples in your church community:

- 1) Incorporate songs, prayers, readings and liturgy that focus on reconciliation, creation and justice. There are plenty of resources out there, and we encourage you to consult amongst your church or ask your diocese or state body about resources for your church. As a starting point, TEAR Australia has some great worship resources, which can be found [here](#).
- 2) Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from your church's ministries and community:
 - Consult amongst your church or ask your diocese or state body about how you can invite Indigenous Ministry groups to your service or event.
 - Ask an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Christian leader from your church's Indigenous Ministry to preach or give a liturgy at your service for reconciliation.

- Send an invitation to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.
 - Put out an open invitation to the whole community, with a particular note that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are welcome.
- 3) Include a collection for a local not-for-profit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program or organisation; or a national organisation that delivers programs that helps close the gap and improves social and economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

There are a lot of organisations out there, and we encourage you to do your own research, but you could start by consulting amongst your church or asking your diocese or state body if there are any organisations in particular that would be appropriate; check out World Vision Australia's Indigenous programs [here](#); or check out [this link](#) for some other ideas.

- 4) If it is appropriate, include an Acknowledgment of Country during your service or event. There are a few different ways that this can be done respectfully, so consult amongst your church or ask your diocese or state body if there is an acknowledgement statement used by your church.

The [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission](#) and the National Council of Churches in Australia put forward the following example:

“We hereby acknowledge that we are located on the land of the (insert name of local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander group; or use the term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’) peoples whom God chose to be the ancient custodians of this place and through the (insert name of local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander group; or use the term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’) peoples God sustained the life, spirit and promise of this land which we celebrate today.”

Here is another example:

“We wish to honour Almighty God as sovereign over all the earth. To state that all people are important to God and have historically been given custodianship of certain land. Accordingly we wish to pay due respect to the original custodians of this land on which we meet (the (insert the name of local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander group if you know it) people). We acknowledge the vital contributions that Indigenous peoples of Australia have made and still make to the nation that we share.”

- 5) Register your service for reconciliation and morning or afternoon tea (or other event) [here](#) to be part of the national movement for reconciliation and so we can promote your event on our website.

What Next?

Wondering how you can keep the momentum going after *Week of Prayer for Reconciliation*? Continue to show your support for reconciliation with the following actions.

- **Show your support for recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution.** *Recognise* is the national campaign for constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Become a supporter by signing up [here](#).

This guide has been developed with the help of the wonderful people from World Vision Australia's Church Partnerships team; Canberra Baptist Church and the South Australian Council of Churches.

- **Engage with Reconciliation Australia.** Get your church and your diocese or state body involved by signing up to Reconciliation Australia's mailing list to receive great resources that will support your ministry along your reconciliation journey. Find out more [here](#). You can also become a supporter of Reconciliation Australia on our social media platforms. Like us on Facebook [here](#) and keep up to date on Twitter [here](#).
- **Become a World Vision Australia Church Partner.** World Vision Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan, Australia Program and Church Partnerships program are helping to drive reconciliation in churches across the country. Becoming a World Vision church partner gives your church the opportunity to work towards building strong and respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities; and contribute to closing the gap and improving social and economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through their 'Australia Program' Indigenous initiatives. Find out more [here](#).
- **Volunteer for your local community.** Volunteering at a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander group/organisation is a great way to build relationships between your organisation and your local community. Indigenous Community Volunteers can also assist with larger scale volunteering projects. Find out more [here](#).

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