

Reconciliation Film Club Planning Guide

Facilitating Culturally Safe and Respectful Screenings and Discussions

Before hosting a Reconciliation Film Club screening event, it is important for organisers and guests alike to have a foundational understanding of concepts of [Cultural Safety and Security](#), particularly with regard to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and content. There can sometimes be significant socio-emotional complexities involved in inter-personal and inter-cultural sharing, and it is not always culturally safe, fair, reasonable or appropriate to expect people's personal or cultural knowledge to be exchanged.

Below are some general guidelines around how to facilitate culturally safe and respectful film club screening sessions and pre-screening or post-screening discussions.

Building Relationships with Community

Building relationships and working together with your local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community is at the heart of reconciliation, and can support you in developing a deeper understanding of how to navigate culturally safe and respectful screening and discussion sessions in your local context.

Working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members should be built on trust, mutual respect and inclusiveness. Communication, collaboration and consultation are key to sustaining successful partnerships with your local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community. As with any relationship, it may take time to get to know each other and to create an atmosphere of safety and trust, in order for all parties to express views openly and honestly. The focus should be on building genuine, transformational relationships over time, rather than on rushing into less meaningful and sustainable 'transactional' relationships.

While the list below is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, it provides suggestions as to where you could seek cultural advice and information about others who might like to get involved with your film club activities:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within your organisation, partner organisations, or key stakeholder groups;
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils;
- Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (e.g. [NSW AECG](#), [VAEAI](#) in Victoria, [QIECC](#) in Queensland, [ACT ATSIECG](#) and [SAAETCB in South Australia](#));
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community liaison officers;
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations (e.g. [Aboriginal Medical Services](#))
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services (see [NATSILS](#))
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated businesses](#)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language and Culture Centres
- Elders Councils



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language and Culture Centres
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centres
- Native Title Representative Bodies

Evaluating Resources

The films featured on the film club platform have been recommended for their capacity to spark important reconciliation-related conversation and action. It is always worth considering how the films – and any accompanying resources that you are drawing on – can be engaged in a meaningful and appropriate way on a local level. Consider consulting the Narragunnawali [Evaluating Resources Guide](#) in carefully planning for and contextualising your film club activities.

Questions and Considerations

There are a number of matters to consider and respond to when involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in your film club activities, particularly in terms of pre-screening or post-screening discussions.

Some of these considerations include:

- There may be distinct cultural protocols about what stories and knowledge can and can't be shared by particular community members, and about when, where and with whom they can be shared.
- Personal narratives pertaining to traumatic issues and events can be very sensitive and even (re)traumatising to listen to or talk about.
- Experiences of forced separation from Country, culture and community mean it is important not to expect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to share details of the histories and cultures of your local area.
- Histories of colonial exploitation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultural knowledge may mean that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members could be sceptical or concerned about the potential consequences of sharing stories and information.
- Individuals feel uncomfortable with any expectation that they can or should speak on behalf of "all" Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, given the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and identities. Similarly, the complex concept of '[shame](#)' within some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures can make individual community members feel uncomfortable with being 'singled out' to share aspects of their cultural heritage or identity.
- Direct questioning may be an uncomfortable convention in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Learning and discussion activities that use questioning to promote vocal sharing may not be the most appropriate approach. Consult with your local community to consider whether other modes of sharing, such as written responses or imagery, may be more appropriate.
- There are certain time periods during which it may not be appropriate to contact or visit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and community organisations. Keep in mind

that supporting your organisation may not be the immediate or core business of individuals from your community, and they may have more urgent personal or cultural priorities, such as [Sorry Business](#).

Based on these types of considerations, it is important to ask yourself:

- Before introducing any new content or resources pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, have you carefully consulted with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members? Have you given the context of the prospective content or resources? Have you highlighted any potential sensitivities tied to the content or resources? Have people been encouraged to feel comfortable with not engaging, if they so choose?
- Before inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to speak in front of your film club audience, have you had a careful prior conversation about what kinds of stories or knowledge they are and are not prepared to share? Have you prepped guests with information about the context of the sharing session and examples of inquiry questions that are and are not appropriate?

Please remember that the above is only a guide and should not replace advice from your local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community. If, upon consulting with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, you find that their recommendations differ from those above, please actively value your community's advice accordingly.