

# Reconciliation News

Stories about Australia's journey to equality and unity

## Recognition

What next for constitutional reform?

## Karen Mundine

Meet the woman spearheading reconciliation

## Indigenous style

Top End fashions hot off the catwalk – and more

## ROB COLLINS

*THE WRONG GIRL* STAR  
OPENS UP ABOUT HIS TIWI  
ROOTS AND ACTING FAME



ISSUE NO. 38

October 2017



RECONCILIATION  
AUSTRALIA

***Reconciliation News*** is a national magazine produced by Reconciliation Australia twice a year. Its aim is to inform and inspire readers with stories relevant to the process of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

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

Reconciliation Australia is an independent, not-for-profit organisation promoting reconciliation by building relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Visit [reconciliation.org.au](http://reconciliation.org.au) to find out more.

### Cover image:

Logie Award-winning Indigenous actor Rob Collins from hit television drama *The Wrong Girl*.

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# RECONCILIATION RECAP

## SIX MONTHS IN REVIEW

**3 September**

Cross-country walk for justice



Clinton Pryor's 5500-kilometre walk across Australia came to an end with his arrival at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra. The Majuk, Balardung, Jika and Yulparitja man set off from Western Australia almost a year ago in protest of the forced closure of Aboriginal communities. Clinton's journey saw him visit Aboriginal communities in some of the most remote parts of Australia, and meet politicians in Canberra to call for justice for Indigenous people across the country.



**6 August**

Leaders respond to Referendum Council report

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten responded to the recommendations of the Referendum Council's final report in their speeches at Garma cultural festival in north-east Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. Mr Turnbull said the recommendations were being considered by Cabinet but warned that Australians are "constitutionally conservative". Mr Shorten said Labor fully supported the recommendations for a constitutionally enshrined voice, a truth-telling process and treaties between Indigenous people and Australian governments.



**2–9 July**

NAIDOC Week  
#OurLanguagesMatter

The theme of NAIDOC Week 2017 – Our Languages Matter – aimed to celebrate the unique and essential role that Indigenous languages play in cultural identity. The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census revealed that one in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians said they speak an Indigenous language at home, with 150 languages reported. Many of those languages are at risk of being lost as Elders pass on.



**26 May**

**Release of historic Uluru Statement from the Heart**

*"In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future." – Uluru Statement from the Heart (26 May)*

The Referendum Council released an historic statement at Uluru, calling for the establishment of a 'First Nations Voice' in the Australian Constitution. As well as rejecting the notion of symbolic recognition, the Uluru Statement from the Heart recommended the establishment of a 'Makarrata Commission' that would oversee agreement-making and truth-telling between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The council's final report was released on 30 June 2017 [see pp. 8-10 for more details].



**23 May**

**Plan for healing Stolen Generations**

The Healing Foundation released an 'action plan for healing' to mark the 20th anniversary of the landmark *Bringing Them Home* report into forced child removals.

The new report – *Bringing Them Home 20 Years On* – highlights the negative impact of Australia's failure to implement the recommendations from the 'Stolen Children' National Inquiry. It also outlines how we can actively support healing for Stolen Generations and their descendants.

**26 June**

**First Aboriginal woman in Cricket World Cup**



Ashleigh Gardner became the first Aboriginal woman to represent Australia in the Cricket World Cup when the team played their first game of the tournament against the West Indies in England. Gardner is a proud Muruwari woman from northern NSW and was only 19 years old at the time of selection. Earlier in 2017 she became only the second Indigenous woman to play for Australia, and the first to do so since Faith Thomas in 1958.



**27 May – 3 June**

**Milestone anniversaries celebrated**

National Reconciliation Week marked two extra special anniversaries this year. May 27 marked 50 years since the 1967 referendum, which saw more than 90 per cent of Australians vote to give the Commonwealth the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognise them in the national census. June 3 was the 25th anniversary of the Mabo decision, which paved the way for Native Title.



# CEO COLUMN

**It is a great pleasure to write my first column for Reconciliation News as CEO of Reconciliation Australia.**



The past six months since the last edition was released have been very eventful.

One of the highlights for me was attending

this year's Garma festival with a group of incredible women from some of Australia's leading corporate, non-profit and community organisations. It was a special privilege for us to be welcomed and hosted by Djapirri Mununggirritj, a Yolngu elder and Reconciliation Australia board member.

The festival, held on the land of the Gumatj people, Gulkula in the Northern Territory, from 2 to 8 August, is described as "the Indigenous equivalent of the World Economic Forum". It is a platform for the discussion of economic challenges and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and for preserving and maintaining culture.

An important contribution that Reconciliation Australia makes to the Garma festival each year is bringing together a Garma Women's Group. In doing so, we create a rare opportunity

for influential women from around the country to come together, develop connections and have important conversations about Australia's reconciliation journey.

We have been in touch with the group participants in the weeks since the festival and I am thrilled to report that many are making plans for further action in support of the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Another significant event within the past six months has been the release of the Referendum Council's final report. The recommendations put forward in the report have been cause for significant consideration and reflection about recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution.

The Referendum Council, which was tasked with determining if and how constitutional change should take shape, conducted extensive consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of its work. These consultations were significant because they were designed and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians themselves – the

people at the heart of the matter – regarding their perspectives on constitutional recognition.

The consultations revealed a number of key issues important to Australia's First Peoples, including a voice to parliament, agreement-making and truth-telling about our history.

Reconciliation Australia has long advocated for genuine reform that is based on the participation and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Accordingly, we support the aspirations outlined in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

In this next phase of the journey, Reconciliation Australia will work closely with government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, educators, businesses and the wider community to progress this longstanding issue.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Reconciliation News* and thank you for being part of our national reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
CEO, Reconciliation Australia



## GARMA WOMEN'S GROUP 2017:

L-R back: Indu Balachanbram (NCIE), Yvette Manolas (Woodside), Karen Wood (BHP Foundation), Jocelyn Grant (First Australians' Capital), Andrea Mason (NYP Women's Council), Emily Carter (Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre), Sarah Ryan (Woodside), Judy Slatyer (Australian Red Cross), Julie Kantor (Annamila Foundation), Melinda Ciento (Reconciliation Australia), Lynn Kraus (Ernst & Young) and Shelley Roberts (Compass Group). L-R middle: Alison Creagh CSC (Australian War Memorial), Christine Bartlett (The Smith Family), Hannah Ciento, Romilly Madew (Green Building Association), Robi Stanton (Turner International), Djapirri Mununggirritj (Reconciliation Australia), Cathie Armour (ASIC), Nicola Wakefield Evans (Lendlease), Holly Kramer (Woolworths) and Natasha Jayaratne (Reconciliation Australia). L-R front: Nicole Bowman (Reconciliation Australia), Karen Mundine (Reconciliation Australia) and Monica Lindemann (Reconciliation Australia).

# CALENDAR

## SPECIAL DAYS

**10**  
December

Human Rights Day

**26**  
January

Australia Day/  
Invasion Day/  
Survival Day

**13**  
February

National  
Apology Day

**16**  
March

National Close  
the Gap Day

**21**  
March

Harmony Day

## EVENTS

### A Change is Gonna Come – resistance exhibition

**When:** Until 30 January 2018

**Where:** First Australians Focus Gallery, National Museum of Australia, Canberra

**Price:** Free

**Info:** [nma.gov.au](http://nma.gov.au)

### Songlines – Tracking the Seven Sisters

**When:** Until 25 February 2018

**Where:** National Museum of Australia, Canberra

**Price:** \$15 adult, \$12 Museum Friends or concession, \$7 child, \$40 family plus booking fee

**Info:** [nma.gov.au](http://nma.gov.au)

### Namatjira Story

**When:** 1 to 30 October 2017

**Where:** Queensland Art Gallery – Gallery of Modern Art, South Brisbane

**Price:** Free

**Info:** [qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/indigenous-australian-collection](http://qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/indigenous-australian-collection)

### Gondwana Indigenous Children's Choir and the Vienna Boys' Choir perform Songs of My Country

**When:** 10 October 2017 from 7:00pm to 10:30pm

**Where:** Sydney Opera House, Sydney

**Price:** \$36 plus booking fee

**Info:** [gondwana.org.au/whats-on](http://gondwana.org.au/whats-on)

### Gondwana Indigenous Children's Choir and the Vienna Boys' Choir perform Songs of My Country

**When:** 13 October 2017 from 7:00pm to 10:30pm

**Where:** Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns

**Price:** \$36 plus booking fee

**Info:** [gondwana.org.au/whats-on](http://gondwana.org.au/whats-on)

### Festival of Mosman – Ancient Whale Dreaming Ceremony

**When:** Saturday 21 October 2017 from 5.00am to 8.00am

**Where:** Balmoral Beach, Sydney

**Price:** Free

**Info:** [festivalofmosman.net](http://festivalofmosman.net)

### Welcoming Place – Indigenous Plant Use

**When:** 26 October 2017 from 10:30am to 12:30pm

**Where:** Deception Bay Library, Deception Bay

**Price:** Free

**Info:** [moretonbay.qld.gov.au](http://moretonbay.qld.gov.au)

### The 3 Rivers Festival

**When:** 19 November 2017

**Where:** Moama Sports Club, Moama

**Price:** Free

**Info:** [facebook.com/3riversfestival](https://facebook.com/3riversfestival)

### Unfinished Business – Stories from Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with Disabilities

**When:** 30 November 2017 to 20 January 2018

**Where:** Tuggeranong Arts Centre, Canberra

**Price:** Free

**Info:** [unfinishedbusiness.net.au](http://unfinishedbusiness.net.au)

### The Koorie Art Show 2017

**When:** 9 December 2017 to 11 February 2018

**Where:** Level 1, Yarra Building, Federation Square, Melbourne

**Price:** Free

**Info:** [koorieheritagetrust.com.au](http://koorieheritagetrust.com.au)





# THE JOURNEY TO CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION

Over the past 26 years Reconciliation Australia and its forebear, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, have worked to promote greater understanding, equality and unity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

During this time, Reconciliation Australia developed a five-dimensional framework for reconciliation. The framework is informed by a review of reconciliation in Australia and internationally. It provides a contemporary definition of 'reconciliation' that serves to guide our work, and a measure by which we can assess our progress towards a just and equitable Australia.

**SEEKING RECOGNITION:**  
Recognise supporters watch on as Yolngu dancers perform at the Garma festival in 2013.



## The five inter-related dimensions that contribute equally to national reconciliation are:

- **Race relations:** All Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, creating stronger relationships based on trust and respect.
- **Equality and equity:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participate equally in a range of life opportunities and enjoy the same wellbeing as other Australians.
- **Institutional integrity:** The active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures.
- **Unity:** An Australian society that values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as a proud part of our shared national identity.
- **Historical acceptance:** All Australians understand our nation's history and accept the enduring impact of past events and policies on the First Peoples of Australia.

Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution, our nation's founding document, is an action that will contribute to progress across the five dimensions of reconciliation. It is an action Reconciliation Australia is compelled to support. The importance of recognition was described poignantly by Indigenous leader and 1978 Australian of the Year Galarrwuy Yunupingu:

*"Recognise us for who we are, and not who you want us to be. Let us be who we are – Aboriginal people in a modern world – and be proud of us. Acknowledge that we have survived the worst that the past had thrown at us, and we are here with our songs, our ceremonies, our land, our language and our people – our full identity. What a gift this is that we can give you, if you choose to accept us in a meaningful way."*

For the past five years, Reconciliation Australia has overseen the Recognise campaign in advocating for meaningful constitutional recognition of Australia's First Peoples. The five-year government-funded campaign aimed to highlight the absence of any reference to First Peoples in the constitution, and raise awareness of the need for change.

In this time, the campaign attracted support from more than 300,000 Australians, held more than 365 events and travelled more than 39,000 kilometres. It was backed by more than 180 partner organisations, including some of the largest sporting and business groups in the country, and increased awareness of advocacy for constitutional reform from 30 per cent to 76 per cent of Australians. None of this would have been achieved without the dedication and effort of Recognise supporters.

While the campaign has made a significant contribution to the journey towards constitutional recognition, it was not the first to do so – nor will it be the last. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have long struggled for constitutional recognition. As far back as Yorta Yorta elder William Cooper's letter to King George VI (1937), the Yirrkala Bark Petitions (1963), the Larrakia Petition (1972) and the Barunga Statement (1988), First Peoples have sought a fair place in our country. \* Our recent political leaders have also consistently expressed a desire for constitutional reform and to correct the original omission of First Peoples from our constitution. From Prime Minister Gough Whitlam in 1972, who spoke of

the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to take "their rightful place in this nation", to Prime Minister John Howard in 2007, who promised a referendum seeking to amend the constitution to "recognise the special status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first peoples of our nation"; our recent political leaders have all have advocated change and redress. These promising intentions never came to pass. They nevertheless confirm that constitutional recognition is longstanding and unfinished business for the nation. \*\*

More recently, the journey was taken up again with the appointment of the 2012 Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians (on whose recommendation the Recognise campaign was created), the 2014 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Act of Recognition Review Panel, and the 2015 Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Then, in December 2015, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten established the Referendum Council to consult specifically with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about their views on meaningful recognition. The council embarked on

\* 'Rom Watangu – The Law of the Land', *The Monthly*, July 2016.

\*\* *Referendum Council Final Report*, 30 June 2017.



#### POLITICAL RESPONSE:

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull walk to stage at Garma Festival 2017 to give their responses to the Referendum Council's report. Copyright of the Yothu Yindi Foundation.

a series of 12 dialogues across the country, culminating in the National Constitutional Convention at Uluru in May 2017.

The dialogues engaged 1200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates – an average of 100 delegates from each regional dialogue – in order to reach a consensus as to the views and priorities of Indigenous peoples. This is the most proportionately significant consultation process that has ever been undertaken with First Peoples regarding constitutional reform, and this is why their voices must be heard. On 30 June 2017, the council handed its report to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. It carried just two recommendations: 1. That a referendum be held to provide in the Australian Constitution for a representative body that gives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Nations a voice to the Commonwealth Parliament. 2. That an extra-constitutional Declaration of Recognition be enacted by legislation passed by all Australian parliaments, ideally on the same day, to articulate a symbolic statement of recognition to unify Australians.

The dialogues also revealed that there are two additional matters of great importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These are unrelated to constitutional reform, but fundamental to national reconciliation. They are: a process for agreement-making, or treaty, and the facilitation of local and regional truth-telling. Reconciliation Australia strongly supports the recommendations of the council and will continue to support meaningful constitutional recognition of Australia's First Peoples in the years ahead, building on the great work of the Recognise campaigners and all those who preceded them. We also support truth-telling as a means of truly understanding and accepting our history, and healing the hurt that remains for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Without undertaking this work, we cannot achieve national reconciliation, nor realise our aspiration for a just and equitable Australia. At the same time, the movement for constitutional recognition will continue.

To our Recognise supporters: we are deeply grateful for your time, energy, donations and efforts, which have been integral to changing attitudes across the country and advancing reconciliation to

where it's at today. At the same time, we ask you to stay with us because your support will also be vital on the next part of the reconciliation journey. Our focus right now is on creating a concrete plan of action for this next stage, together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and leadership, and we will keep you informed of these developments as they evolve. The government is yet to respond to the Referendum Council's report – and we will be steadfast in holding them to account.

As Mr W Wanungmurra, signatory to the Yirrkala Petition, so clearly expressed on its 50th anniversary in 2013: "If there's no place for Aboriginal rights in the constitution, there's no place for our rights outside of it. We are the first people of this continent and we need to be recognised in the body of the constitution." \*\*\* It is now up to this generation to make it happen.

\*\*\* 'Yirrkala bark petitions: A turning point in recognition of Indigenous rights', ABC News, 10 July 2013. Mr Wanungmurra passed away in August 2015.






## “EVERYONE NEEDS AN ANCHOR IN THIS LIFE”

**ON SCREEN:** Rob Collins stars opposite Jessica Marais in television drama *The Wrong Girl*.

**Rob Collins is back at home in Darwin after wrapping up filming on the latest season of *The Wrong Girl*. He opens up about his Tiwi roots, playing non-Indigenous roles and the importance of family.**

When Rob Collins accepted the Silver Logie Award for best new talent earlier this year, he spoke in the language of his ancestors from the Tiwi Islands, north of Darwin. His words were broadcast onto the television screens of more than 1.7 million viewers, who watched on as Australian television's highest honours were handed out. It was an important gesture for Collins to make in front of a whopping national audience, given the critical need to preserve Indigenous languages that are in danger of dying out.





“That’s what it means to me to be Tiwi, and to be able to speak my language. We lose that, we lose everything.”

Language and the revival of Indigenous languages have been an important theme for Collins, who starts in Ten’s hit television drama *The Wrong Girl*, in both his personal life and career. His mother is a Wurrumiyanga woman from the south-eastern tip of Bathurst Island, which is one of two inhabited islands in the Tiwi Islands group (the other is Melville). He spent a lot of time on the Tiwis when he was growing up and even went to school there for a while. His uncles, aunties and cousins still live there, so he tries to visit a few times a year. Being able to speak Tiwi is not just about being able to communicate, Collins explains. It is an integral part of his identity.

“Everyone needs an anchor in this life. Something safe, familiar, that reminds you who you are, and that you’re connected to something bigger than yourself. Something that defines and uplifts you and marks your place in the world,” he says.

“That’s what it means to me to be Tiwi, and to be able to speak my language. We lose that, we lose everything.”

Indigenous languages that are still spoken today are at risk of being lost as elders pass away. The need to protect, preserve and strengthen traditional languages is something that Collins feels “personally and acutely”.

“I really fear our elders are dying at a faster rate than the preservation of language can keep up with,” he says.

“Being a dad, I want to pass the language on to my children, and the thought of them losing that connection actually turns my stomach.”

Collins plays Waruu West in ABC TV’s *Cleverman*, a critically acclaimed sci-fi drama where the Aboriginal characters speak Gumbaynggirr (NSW mid-north coast) and Bundjalung (northern NSW) languages. *Cleverman* broke ground in terms of diversity on Australia television by featuring an 80 per cent Indigenous cast. Set in a dystopian future, *Cleverman* follows the story



**BREAKTHROUGH:**

Rob Collins in his first television role as *Cleverman's* Waruu.

*"All actors struggle to a greater or lesser degree, but there's no denying Indigenous actors have a particular set of experiences tied to their culture."*

of an Indigenous superhero and a persecuted mythological race who must live in hiding from the government. It has been well received not only in Australia but also the US, and was nominated alongside Beyoncé's visual album *Lemonade* for a prestigious Peabody Award for electronic media.

While Collins is proud of the platform that *Cleverman* gives to Indigenous languages and characters, he also feels strongly about the importance of seeing Indigenous actors in non-Indigenous roles.

"It's important creatively for actors to play diverse roles, but I think it's more important that what you see on screen should be just as diverse as what you see on the street," he says.

"That, in turn, is important because the film and TV industry has huge sway in influencing our collective social conscience."

In *The Wrong Girl*, Collins plays charming TV chef Jack Winters – a non-Indigenous character. Getting to star alongside Australian television sweetheart Jessica Marais was part of the allure of the job, but "what really sealed the deal" was the opportunity to play a non-stereotypical role.

"The opportunity to audition for a role that didn't box me as Indigenous was important for me. More opportunities like that should be given to our mob," Collins says.

"Saying I want the same casting opportunities as non-Indigenous actors doesn't rule out the fact that as an Indigenous actor I'm part of a unique group of artists that had to overcome significant hurdles to get to where they got," he continues.

"All actors struggle to a greater or lesser degree, but there's no denying Indigenous actors have a particular set of experiences tied to their culture."

It was only four years ago that Collins graduated from the National Institute of Dramatic Arts at the relatively advanced age of 33. Prior to successfully auditioning for the prestigious acting school at the suggestion of a director he met while acting in a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Darwin, Collins had thought of acting as "just for fun" and had "no thought of making a serious career out of it". Soon after completing his studies, Collins landed the role of Mufasa in the stage adaption of Disney's *The Lion King*. And his career has "snowballed" since then.

"There's definitely more folk recognising me since *The Wrong Girl*, I guess because network telly has that reach. But I actually have never had that feeling that I've 'arrived'," he says.

"I think it's probably because success in this industry can be a fleeting thing, and something I feel I have to constantly work at."

Despite his achievements, memories of tougher times are not far beneath the surface. Collins recalls the sacrifices his wife, Laetitia Lemke, and their three children made so that he could pursue his dreams. He describes the time they came to see him on stage in *The Lion King* as simultaneously the most exciting, memorable and proud moment of his career, because it was proof their efforts were all worth it.

"It had been such a hard slog to get to that point. Uprooting my family, tearing my kids out of their community and friend groups, having my wife put her career on hold for me – it all culminated in that moment," he says.

"We were together, and we felt for the first time that we were going to be okay."

# SHOULD WE CHANGE THE DATE OF AUSTRALIA DAY?

**Public debate about changing the date of Australia Day has intensified in recent months, as three local government councils moved to change the way they mark the occasion. *Reconciliation News* considers the arguments as to why 26 January is not an appropriate date to celebrate, if Australia Day is to be an occasion that all Australians can accept and enjoy.**

## INTRODUCTION

Each year, the Australia Day holiday raises complex questions about our country's national identity. This year has been no different.

In August, the City of Darebin Council and Yarra Council both voted within the space of a week to end the formal celebration of Australia Day on 26 January. Then in September, a third Melbourne council – Moreland – voted in favour of dropping all references to Australia Day and joined the push to change the date of our national celebration.

These moves followed the City of Fremantle's 2016 decision to cancel its Australia Day fireworks display, in favour of a more 'culturally inclusive' celebration to be held on 28 January. Likewise, Flinders Island Council has celebrated Australia Day on an alternative date for several years.

At the heart of the matter is an ongoing debate about the meaning of our national day. Like all national days, the way Australia Day is celebrated and the significance attached to it have changed considerably over time. In fact, it wasn't until 1994 that 26 January became a national public holiday. A look back at the historical facts – and what they continue to represent – helps shed light on why the date remains divisive.

## HISTORY

Arthur Phillip arrived at Sydney Cove and raised the national flag of the United Kingdom on 26 January 1788. In doing so, he founded the settler colony of NSW and, at the same time, commenced the dispossession and marginalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The tradition of noticing 26 January began a few decades later, in the early 1800s, but only in NSW. It was referred to by various names in the following years, including First Landing Day and Foundation Day. Other colonies – namely South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania (then Van Diemen's Land) – celebrated their own colonial foundations, which took place on other dates.

It took another century before the states and territories agreed to a common name and timing of celebrations. In 1935, the occasion became known as 'Australia Day' and festivities were held on a long weekend, including the nearest Monday to 26 January. In other words, the public holiday was usually held on dates close to 26 January rather than on 26 January itself.

Opposition to the national festivities emerged within the next few years and spiked at various times in the following decades. In 1938, on the 150th anniversary of Arthur Phillip's arrival, the Aborigines Progressive Association held a Day of





**PROTEST:**  
People taking part  
in the Invasion Day  
march in Melbourne  
on January 26, 2017.

Mourning and Protest. “On this day the white people are rejoicing,” Aboriginal civil rights activist Jack Patten told attendees. “But we, as Aborigines, have no reason to rejoice on Australia’s 150th birthday.” One of the most significant protests was held in 1988 – on the bicentennial year of the arrival of the First Fleet – when 40,000 people participated in an ‘Invasion Day’ march to raise awareness that “white Australia has a black history”.

Despite ongoing contention, all states and territories in 1994 endorsed the celebration of Australia Day as a national public holiday to be held on 26 January. It has been celebrated on that day ever since, with festivities including citizenship ceremonies, outdoor concerts and fireworks.

## WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DATE?

National days the world over are generally considered as occasions of celebration. In Australia, our national day is promoted as a time to reflect on the nation’s achievements and what makes us proud to be Australian. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians wish to celebrate the values and freedoms that Australians enjoy but do not feel that 26 January is an appropriate date to do so.

The historical events of 26 January mean that many Australians – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous – perceive it as date that marks the commencement of a long history of violence and trauma. As the history books indicate, 26 January festivities were initiated to mark the arrival of the first British settlers and the establishment of a British colony on

the east coast of Australia.

This history involves a period of conflict that continued up to the 1960s, as well as government policies of assimilation and separation that saw many people removed from their traditional lands and culture. For First Australians, a national celebration on 26 January is inappropriate because the history that underpins it is simply too painful.

Broader Australia has a poor understanding of the history of 26 January, which helps to explain why not everyone views the celebration of this date as problematic. Seven in 10 voters say Australia Day is important to them but a majority of the population can’t accurately name the event it commemorates, according to a poll conducted earlier this year by market research company Review Partners. When a representative sample of voters was asked to identify the historical event marked on Australia Day from a list of six possible alternatives, only 43 per cent

**A DIFFERENT DATE:**

A poster advertising Australia Day celebrations on 30 July 1915. (Credit: Australian War Memorial)



correctly named the landing of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove in 1788. One in five said Australia Day commemorated the discovery of Australia by Captain Cook while one in six said it was the anniversary of Federation. Smaller proportions said the national day marked the date of a treaty with Indigenous people (7 per cent), the date Australia stopped being a colony of Great Britain (6 per cent) or the date of an important battle in World War I (2 per cent).

Acknowledging the varied perceptions of the date, the Australia Day Council has attempted since the early 1990s to reframe Australia Day as an occasion where we can “celebrate and mourn at the same time”. “We respect the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who consider 26 January as a day of mourning, or a day to mark the survival of their ongoing history, traditions and cultures,” says council CEO Chris Kirby. “We also aspire to an Australia Day that can increasingly recognise... the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the traditional custodians of our beautiful lands and waterways, and their centrality to the great Australian story.” The council has made efforts to ensure its programs promote a spirit of reconciliation, including the introduction of Australia Day Dawn – ‘a moment of reflection before celebration’. Despite these gestures, it remains impossible for Australia Day to serve as an inclusive national occasion as long as it is held on a date that some Australians celebrate while others grieve.

## THE NEED FOR A UNIFYING NATIONAL DAY

The reconciliation movement is about recognising and healing the past, and committing to a better future. Reconciliation Australia believes that our national day cannot be cohesive and a matter of pride for all Australians if it reminds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of invasion, dispossession and loss of culture. Reconciliation Australia co-chair Professor Tom Calma says it is important for Australia to engage in dialogue about the history of 26 January and what the date continues to signify.

“It’s not about trying to lay guilt on individuals but it’s about trying to make sure that our future, our children and Australians generally, have an understanding of the history of Australia,” Calma says.

“Australia’s history didn’t start in 1788 but it goes on well beyond that. And there’s a lot to recognise and celebrate. But also there’s a lot in our history that’s very dark, that we need to expose to ensure that these sort of atrocities never happen again.”

While Reconciliation Australia advocates the need for an alternative date for Australia’s national day of unity, Calma says it is essential that any change to Australia’s national day must be unifying and supported by the majority of Australians.

“We support any actions that will raise awareness and discussion amongst the community to look at what this day means on the 26th of January to a whole range of people,” Calma says.

“We’re particularly interested in making sure that whatever happens, this is about unification of Australia and not dividing us as a society. So having a conversation is very important at this stage.”





# HIGH ACHIEVERS

## CULTURAL IMMERSION:

A Boon Wurrung man conducts a smoking ceremony at Middle Park Primary School.

## NATIONAL AWARDS CELEBRATE CLASSROOM RECONCILIATION

Singing songs in First Nations languages, learning to tackle racism and blogging about the use of Indigenous practices in the classroom are among the host of reconciliation actions to be celebrated as part of the

inaugural Narragunnawali Awards for schools and early learning services. Reconciliation Australia, in partnership with BHP Billiton, this year launched a biennial national awards program to celebrate reconciliation excellence in the education sector. The awards build on Reconciliation Australia's work, through its Narragunnawali education program, to help schools and early learning services foster a higher level of knowledge and

pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education experts will decide the winners of two awards: one for an outstanding school and one for an outstanding early learning service. This year's finalists for the school award are Middle Park Primary School (Melbourne), Queanbeyan Public School (Queanbeyan) and St Virgil's College (Hobart).



**TAKING SHAPE:**  
Children at Middle Park Primary School make formations to represent the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

The early learning service award finalists are Balnarring Pre-School (Mornington Peninsula), Explore and Develop Penrith South (Western Sydney) and Uranquinty Preschool (Wagga Wagga). The achievements of the finalists include involving the broader community in reconciliation, leading on reconciliation in regional settings, and ensuring that non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people share leadership on reconciliation initiatives.

Applicants were asked to submit their 'reconciliation story' and evidence the nomination had been endorsed by the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. In its application, Middle Park Primary School underscored the three-week immersion program it held for all students, with the help of Aunty Carolyn Briggs of the Boon Wurrung people. Anne Spackman, a member of the school's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, says the school and the wider community are on a journey together to build a strong and long-lasting relationship with the Boonwurrong people, and "the land we live and learn on."

"During the immersion program all students learnt basic Boon Wurrung words," Spackman says.

"Continuing from this we have had Boon Wurrung signs made and put around our school. For example our boys toilet door now has a sign on it reading 'yan yan' (boy), and our LOTE room door has a sign on it reading 'wurrung' (language)."

Uranquinty Preschool was one of the finalists to incorporate initiatives relating to race relations into its work on reconciliation. Director Louise Grigg said that changes to student understanding and behaviour were evidence of the success of the early learning service's anti-racism efforts.

"[We are] building an awareness of racism and implementing strategies that will deal with racism when it occurs," Grigg says.

"The impact is that the children are beginning to recognise when people are treated unfairly."

Sharon Davis says she was most impressed by the applicants that demonstrated a willingness to work on race relations.

"Putting an end to racism is less about cultural awareness and more about becoming racially literate," she says.

Davis, a member of the judging panel, says it is important for both students and educators to learn about putting anti-racism into practice.

"Starting to talk about racism and anti-racism at a young age is really important," she says.

"And it's also important for teachers to make sure they're racially literate at school."

To be eligible to apply for the awards, schools and early learning services must have commenced or completed a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The Narragunnawali program supports schools and early learning services to develop their own RAPs, which help build strong relationships, respect and opportunities in classrooms and communities.



The Narragunnawali program also consists of a platform that offers a wide range of free resources that help teachers and educators bring reconciliation into the classroom. More than 1500 schools and early learning services – equivalent to eight per cent of schools and early learning services nationwide – are current users of the platform. Ms Davis said the Narragunnawali program provides “a really fantastic framework” that supports schools to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and implement reconciliation initiatives.

Members of the judging panel will conduct a site visit at each of the finalist schools and early learning services in October. The site visits will involve consultations with members of the executive and the RAP Working Group, members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and other stakeholders.

The major prize for each award-winner will be a fully funded event, where the community will be invited to celebrate the achievements of the winning school and early learning service. The event will be planned in collaboration with the award-winners and could include an award presentation ceremony, performances, catering and creative workshops.

Davis says she looks forward to recognising the accomplishments of the winners and is eager to see the competition grow in years to come.

“It sets a good precedent for the awards to come because this is the first year, and I think as the word gets out there hopefully the ball keeps rolling and it gets bigger and better,” she says.

**The 2017 Narragunnawali Award winners will be announced in October, after this edition of Reconciliation News has gone to press.**

**Visit [reconciliation.org.au](http://reconciliation.org.au) for more details.**

## JUDGING CRITERIA

Applicants are assessed on the level of integrity, intensity and innovation they apply to the following criteria:



**Relationships** — the nominated school or early learning service has strengthened relationships between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the classroom, around the school or early learning service and with the community to achieve exceptional outcomes towards advancing reconciliation.



**Respect** — the nominated school or early learning service has fostered a high level of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions in the classroom, around the school or early learning service and with the community to achieve exceptional outcomes towards advancing reconciliation.



**Opportunities** — the nominated school or early learning service has effectively established or extended opportunities for staff, students, children, families and community members to achieve exceptional outcomes towards advancing reconciliation in the classroom, around the school or early learning service, and with the community.



# BREAKING BARRIERS

## BRIGHT SPARKIE PAVES WAY FOR WOMEN IN MINING

As a young woman growing up on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, becoming an award-winning tradesperson wasn't what Sharee Yamashita had in mind for her future. But in her early 20s, stories of a female cousin's work as a diesel fitter piqued Yamashita's interest. Not one to shy away from a challenge, it was the idea of succeeding in a 'non-traditional' industry that motivated her to apply for an electrical apprenticeship at Rio Tinto's Weipa operations on Western Cape York.

"If you were to ask me 10 years ago what I would be when I finished school, I definitely would not have said 'an electrician'," Yamashita says.

"I saw the ad in *The Bulletin* and I knew my cousin had gone and done the same program as well.

"She inspired me. And so did the challenges, I suppose, of being in a male-dominated industry."

When Yamashita started her apprenticeship, she had never laid hands on the tools she now uses on a daily basis. She had to develop a high standard of physical fitness to be able to work outdoors for long periods of time, on platforms and using heavy machinery. Despite feeling intimidated and out her element, Yamashita was determined to make it work.

"So in the first year we had to build a tool trolley," she recalls.

"It was the first time I picked up an oxy cutter, the first time I picked up a grinder, the first time I welded."

"It was really daunting... [but] I just gave everything a go. And if your tradesmen see that you're willing to learn, they're also willing to teach you."

**ON SITE:** Sharee Yamashita at work at Rio Tinto's Weipa operations on Western Cape York. (Credit: SBS)

Fast forward four years to 2017 and Yamashita has completed her apprenticeship, secured a full-time position as a female electrician with Rio Tinto in Weipa, and won the 'NAIDOC Apprentice of the Year' title. Yamashita believes the award is testament not only to her excellence as an electrician but also the challenges she has overcome to get where she is today. When Yamashita was 17, she and her partner had a baby daughter who is now eight years old. Some people in her community expressed disapproval about her becoming a mother at such a young age. At first she felt "a bit crap" about the reaction – but ultimately it hardened her resolve to succeed.

"Growing up on TI [Thursday Island], shame is a big issue," she says.

"I suppose all the negativity and judgmental comments just kind of pushed me, made me determined and made me hungry.



*"If you were to ask me 10 years ago what I would be when I finished school, I definitely would not have said 'an electrician'," Yamashita says.*



"And I suppose I wanted to also make sure that my daughter has a good life as well."

After having her daughter, Yamashita completed her schooling by correspondence, thanks in part to her mother's insistence.

"I was back in Cairns living with a relative and there was no way that I was gonna just quit school," she says.

"Mum wouldn't let me."

Having to spend significant chunks of time away from her family was one of the toughest aspects of completing the apprenticeship, Yamashita says. She was required to attend TAFE in Cairns for several months a year, while her partner and daughter remained in Weipa.

"I struggled. I just got homesick. I was missing the family more than anything," she says.

"I suppose I just kept telling myself that it's worth it."

Luckily, Yamashita and her partner have a wonderful support network in Weipa, including her dad and brother, and a group of friends and colleagues who she says have been integral to her success.

Winning the NAIDOC Apprentice of the Year title means that Yamashita has been catapulted into the position of role model for young women, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who

are considering a career in 'non-traditional' industries. The softly spoken yet quietly confident Yamashita says her success "still hasn't really sunk in, to be honest". But she is proud of what she's achieved and hopes that her journey can serve as inspiration to other women thinking of pursuing a trade.

"I'd love to see how my story makes a difference to someone else's life," she says.

Every now and then Yamashita gets the chance to return to Thursday Island to visit her mother, three of her sisters and extended family. Employment options are limited back home, so she feels that pursuing a career on the mainland is the best way for her to provide a bright future for her daughter.

"Home is always gonna be home. But, yeah, here in Weipa there are heaps of opportunities for job employment," she says.

"I know for me that was the best option."

Yamashita's employer, Rio Tinto, has an 'Elevate' Reconciliation Action Plan, which is the highest phase achievable in Reconciliation Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan program. The plan sets targets across areas such as Indigenous employment, education and training.

In Weipa, Rio Tinto operates under three Aboriginal agreements: the Western Cape Communities Co-existence Agreement, the Ely

Bauxite Mining Project Agreement and the Weipa Township Agreement. These agreements outline formal consultation processes between the company and Traditional Owners, and their aspirations to work together to create long-term mutual value. The Chair of the Ely Bauxite Mining Project Agreement Coordination Committee, Linda McLachlan, says relationships between community and business are key to realising reconciliation.

"The intent behind reconciliation isn't something we can achieve individually," she says.

"It's a movement where communities actively work together towards a better future for everyone."

McLachlan says Yamashita's story should serve as an example of the possibilities that are created by gaining a trade.

"Trade qualifications open doors to different careers," she says.

"[Yamashita] overcame many challenges and is a great role model for our local communities here in Cape York."

As for what's next, Yamashita says she is focused for now on honing her skills and gaining more experience. She has been invited to tell her story at schools and public events, and looks forward to doing what she can to help other young women chase their dreams.



**ALL SMILES:**  
Reconciliation Australia CEO Karen Mundine with board member Djapirri Mununggirritj, a friend and board member Kirstie Parker on a ferry after the February board meeting in Hobart.

## IN CONVERSATION: KAREN MUNDINE

Karen Mundine has been involved in reconciliation for several decades, culminating in her appointment as CEO of Reconciliation Australia earlier this year. Ms Mundine is from the Bundjalung Nation of northern NSW. She was formerly the Deputy CEO of Reconciliation Australia and brings to the role more than 20 years' experience in community engagement, public advocacy, communications and social marketing campaigns. She has held senior public affairs and communications roles with federal government departments including Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Foreign Affairs and Trade. Over the course of her career she has been instrumental in some of Australia's watershed national events including the Apology to the Stolen Generations, Centenary of Federation commemorations, Corroboree 2000 and the 1997 Australian Reconciliation Convention. *Reconciliation News* sits

down for a chat with Ms Mundine to find out more about the achievements and motivations of the woman who now heads up Australia's lead body on reconciliation.

*You've played a key role in events of major national significance, including the Apology to the Stolen Generations, the Centenary of Federation commemorations, Corroboree 2000 and the 1997 Australian Reconciliation Convention. What do you consider to be your greatest achievement?*

Working with the Stolen Generation on the Apology, because it was such an intense personal experience. Every single Aboriginal person has been affected by policies of forced removal in some way. None of my family were taken away but there was always that threat, and they lived with that threat. And that had intergenerational effects.

Being involved in the Apology, being able to work really closely with members of the Stolen Generation, I just feel very privileged to have been actually able to help them... It just brought things home for me a little bit, in terms of who I was raised to be and what was important and how I could use these skills that I had to actually effect change in a tangible way.

*What was it like to be in Parliament House on the day of the Apology?*

I had been up since before dawn, running around doing work. I had been doing media training with members of the Stolen Generations to prepare them to be able to present and talk through their stories without it becoming a painful reliving of their experiences. It had been an exhausting couple of weeks. I remember that on the actual day, the people I had been working with



and looking after, I got them to where they needed to be in VIP area, and I ended up sitting in one of the galleries by myself. It was almost like I was in my own little bubble. I could see journalists and some friends in the press gallery, members of my family in the opposite gallery. And these people I had been working with so closely, whose stories I was so privileged to hear, were out on the floor. For me it was a very surreal moment of quietness just before Prime Minister Kevin Rudd started to speak.

*On a personal level, what makes you passionate about reconciliation?*

I was raised in a family where we were always taught to be the best that we could regardless of what that was. But also with an understanding that we had opportunities that other members of our families didn't, that other people didn't. And part of the deal of being given these opportunities is you have a duty to give back. So a really strong sense of social justice. And so it was about we're off to university, you've got your skills, now what are you going to do with it. And that makes me passionate about these things. That spirit is intrinsic to who we are as Australians. I want to make the place better for myself, my friends, my family, my nephews and nieces.

*Going forward, what do you see as the key challenges to progress on reconciliation?*

An ongoing challenge for us is not being too disheartened by the setbacks. I think we have a strong network and amazing community of people who are all about change and who want to see change, but it's not everyone. We still have to work to convince others. And that will sometimes create hurdles for us... but I guess the challenge for the moment is not to be disheartened by that. It's too easy to give up and walk away. People have been fighting for social justice and civil rights for hundreds of years. If my forbears could stick it out then so can we.

*What do you consider to be the country's most significant accomplishment in terms of reconciliation in the past few decades?*

I have been fortunate to work in this space during many important national events, but I don't think there's a single biggest achievement. In 26 years of reconciliation, we've had the Stolen Generations report, we've had conversations around constitutional reform, we've had not only the High Court's native title decision but also native title legislation has been introduced. Reconciliation Australia now

has more than 900 Reconciliation Action Plans in place. Organisations big and small are putting their hands up to say 'we want to do something'. It's not only up to governments. People are taking responsibility in their everyday lives – in schools and sporting clubs. So the take-home message for me is that reconciliation isn't a single moment. There isn't a silver bullet. I think there have been lots of small steps, some big strides, some unfortunate backward steps. Sometimes they're moments that don't seem especially significant but they all contribute to this bigger goal. But I do feel that we have made progress.

*You sound very positive about the future. Is that fair to say?*

I am very positive. There are distractions that sometimes set us back but that's also part of being a democracy. We have to have these conversations. Even if they're hard, even if some people don't agree with us. If we are to be truly reconciled, then we need to have conversations.

**LEADING THE WAY:**

Karen Mundine at Old Parliament House, where Reconciliation Australia's Canberra office is located.





# STYLE



**'Waves' top, \$120, and shorts, \$190**  
[magpiegoose.com](http://magpiegoose.com)  
 Phecia Daylight in Palngun Wurnangat Aboriginal Corporation (Wadeye) 'waves' print by Leonie Melpi. Photo by Rhett Hammerton.



**'Kulkanemkenh' earrings, \$55**  
[etsy.com/au/people/injalakarts](http://etsy.com/au/people/injalakarts)  
 This item is handmade and one of a kind. Patterns and colours may vary.



**'Barramundi and Waterlily' shirt, \$99**  
[etsy.com/au/people/injalakarts](http://etsy.com/au/people/injalakarts)



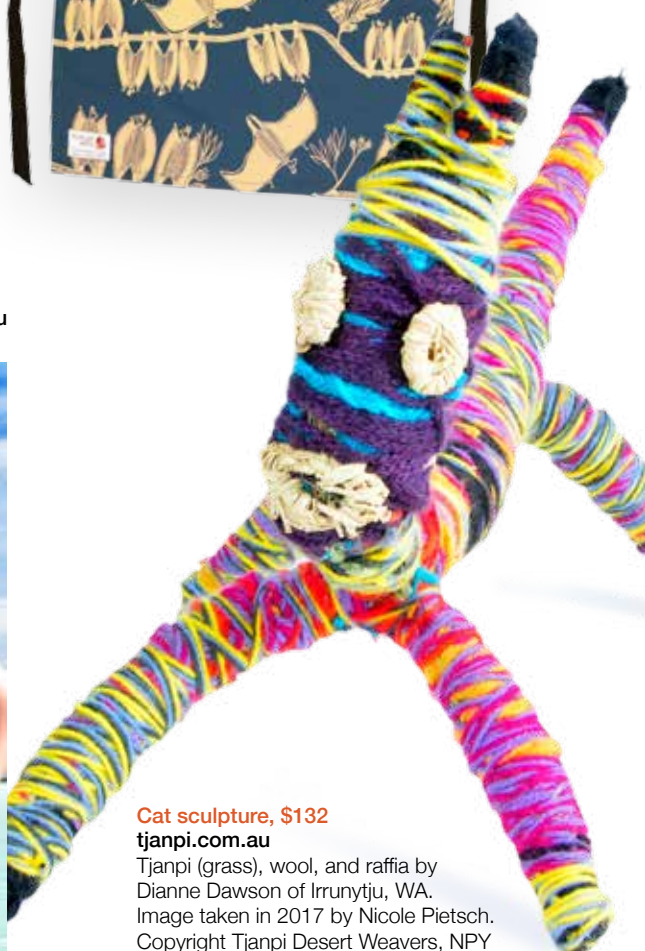
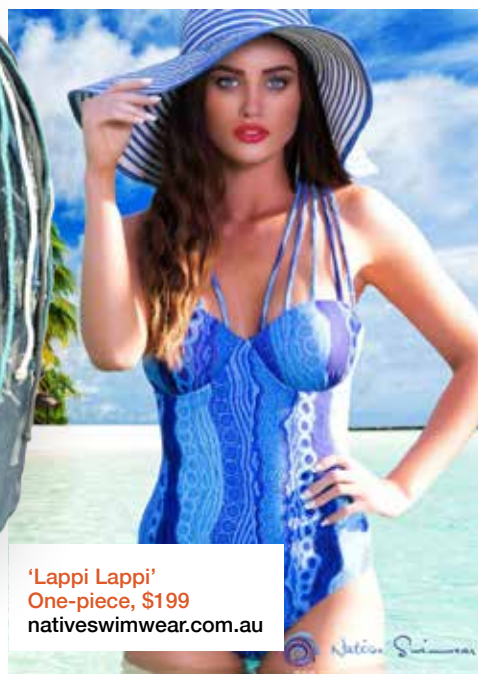
**'Fruit bats' apron, \$89**  
[etsy.com/au/people/injalakarts](http://etsy.com/au/people/injalakarts)



**Mugs, \$11.90 each**  
[betterworldarts.com.au](http://betterworldarts.com.au)



**'Lappi Lappi' One-piece, \$199**  
[nativeswimwear.com.au](http://nativeswimwear.com.au)



**Cat sculpture, \$132**  
[tjanpi.com.au](http://tjanpi.com.au)  
 Tjanpi (grass), wool, and raffia by Dianne Dawson of Irrunytju, WA. Image taken in 2017 by Nicole Pietsch. Copyright Tjanpi Desert Weavers, NPY Women's Council.



(L) 'Pukamani pole' top, \$110,  
'Magpie geese' shorts, \$190,  
(R) 'Jilamara' skirt, \$170,  
'Magpie geese' top, \$120  
[magpiegoose.com](http://magpiegoose.com)

Marita Perdjert in Tiwi Design's  
'pukamani pole' print top  
by Bede Tungatalum, and  
Babbarra Design's Murnubarr  
Karrolka (flying magpie geese)  
print shorts by Dora Diaguma;  
and Patsy Tchinbruru in magpie  
geese top, and Tiwi Design's  
Jilamara design skirt by Jean  
Baptiste Apuatimi. Photo by  
Maggie McGowan.



'Mimih Spirits' shirt, \$99  
[etsy.com/au/people/injalakarts](http://etsy.com/au/people/injalakarts)



Basket, \$198  
[tjanpi.com.au](http://tjanpi.com.au)

Tjanpi (grass) and raffia by Nancy Jackson of  
Warakurna, WA. Image taken in 2017 by Nicole  
Pietsch. Copyright Tjanpi Desert Weavers, NPY  
Women's Council.

Clutch bag, \$39.70  
[betterworldarts.com.au](http://betterworldarts.com.au)



Cushion cover, \$34  
[betterworldarts.com.au](http://betterworldarts.com.au)



Colour enhancing  
shampoo and conditioner, \$28.95  
[dilkaraessenceofaustralia.com.au](http://dilkaraessenceofaustralia.com.au)



'Snake Vine' kaftan, \$399  
(price may change)  
[nativeswimwearsaustralia.com.au](http://nativeswimwearsaustralia.com.au)



Seed necklace and bracelet, \$95  
[tjanpi.com.au](http://tjanpi.com.au)  
Ininti seeds, quandong, and gumnuts by Eva  
Dixon. Image taken in 2017 by Nicole Pietsch.  
Copyright Tjanpi Desert Weavers,  
NPY Women's Council.

'Wakih' top, \$120  
[magpiegoose.com](http://magpiegoose.com)  
Phelecia Daylight in Injalak Arts 'wakih'  
(fresh water prawn) print by Reuben  
Manakgu. Photo by Rhett Hammerton.



# 10 IMPORTANT BOOKS ON INDIGENOUS CULTURES, HISTORIES AND POLITICS

*Reconciliation News* has put together a list of some of the most significant and influential books on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and politics.



## **Because a White Man'll Never Do It (1973)**

By Kevin Gilbert

Kevin Gilbert's powerful expose of past and present race relations in Australia is an alarming story of land theft, human rights abuse, slavery, inequality and

paternalism. Today considered a classic, the book paints a disturbing image of the impact of the colonisation of Australia and the ongoing problems faced by Aboriginal people.

Written with the hope of provoking a galvanisation of his people, Gilbert makes a plea that white Australia leave black Australia alone. Demonstrating his vision for justice and equality, Gilbert's arguments are still significant and relevant in 21st century Australia.



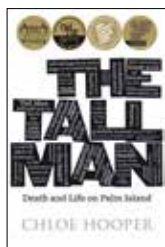
## **Australians: Origins to Eureka (2009)**

By Thomas Keneally

In this widely acclaimed volume, best-selling author Thomas Keneally brings to life the vast range of characters who have formed our national story. Convicts

and Aboriginal people, settlers and soldiers, patriots and reformers, bushrangers and gold seekers, it is from their lives and their stories that he has woven a vibrant history to do full justice to the rich and colourful nature of our unique national character.

Were the first European mothers whores or matriarchs? How did this often cruel and brutal penal experiment lead to a coherent civil society? Tom Keneally brings to life the high and the low, the convict and the free of early Australian society.



## **The Tall Man: Death and Life on Palm Island (2009)**

By Chloe Hooper

*The Tall Man* tells a true story that took place on Palm Island, the tropical paradise where one morning Cameron Doomadgee swore at a policeman and 40 minutes

later lay dead in a watch-house cell. It is the story of that policeman, the tall, enigmatic Christopher Hurley who chose to work in some of the toughest and wildest places in Australia, and of the struggle to bring him to trial.



## **Black Politics (2009)**

By Sarah Maddison

Based on original interviews with influential Aboriginal leaders including Mick Dodson, Tom Calma, Alison Anderson, Jackie Huggins, Warren Mundine and Larissa Behrendt, *Black Politics* seeks to

understand why Aboriginal communities find it so difficult to be heard, get support, and organise internally.

Sarah Maddison identifies the tensions that lie at the heart of all Aboriginal politics, arguing that until Australian governments come to grips with this complexity they will continue to make bad policy with disastrous consequences for Aboriginal people.





### Am I Black Enough for You? (2012)

By Anita Heiss

Anita Heiss, successful author and passionate

campaigner for Aboriginal literacy, was born a member of the Wiradjuri nation of central New South Wales, but was raised in the suburbs of Sydney and educated at the local Catholic school. She is Aboriginal – however, this does not mean she likes to go barefoot. And please don't ask her to camp in the desert.

In this deeply personal memoir, Heiss gives a first-hand account of her experiences as a woman with an Aboriginal mother and Austrian father, and explains the development of her activist consciousness. Read her story and ask: what does it take for someone to be black enough for you?



### Treading Lightly: The Hidden Wisdom of the World's Oldest People (2006)

By Karl-Erik Sveiby and Tex Skuthorpe

Aboriginal people taught themselves thousands of years ago how to live sustainably in Australia's fragile landscape. A Scandinavian knowledge management professor meets an Aboriginal cultural custodian and dares to ask the simple but vital question: what can we learn from the traditional Aboriginal lifestyle to create a sustainable society in modern Australia? *Treading Lightly* takes us on a unique journey into traditional Aboriginal life and culture, and offers a powerful and original model for building sustainable organisations, communities and ecologies.



### Talking to my Country (2016)

By Stan Grant

In July 2015, as the debate over Adam Goodes being booed at

AFL games raged and got ever more heated and ugly, Stan Grant – one of Australia's leading journalists – wrote a short but powerful piece for *The Guardian* that went viral, not only in Australia but right around the world. His was a personal, passionate and powerful response to racism in Australia and the sorrow, shame, anger and hardship of being an Indigenous man.

*Talking to my Country* is not just about race, or about Indigenous people, but about all of us, our shared identity. Grant might not have all the answers but he wants us to keep on asking the question: how can we be better?



### Dark Emu (2014)

By Bruce Pascoe

*Dark Emu* argues for a reconsideration of the 'hunter-gatherer' tag for pre-colonial

Aboriginal Australians and attempts to rebut the colonial myths that have worked to justify dispossession. Accomplished author Bruce Pascoe provides compelling evidence from the diaries of early explorers that suggests that systems of food production and land management have been blatantly understated in modern retellings of early Aboriginal history, and that a new look at Australia's past is required.



### Forgotten War (2013)

By Henry Reynolds

Australia is dotted with memorials to soldiers who fought in wars

overseas. Why are there no official memorials or commemorations of the wars that were fought on Australian soil between Aboriginal people and white colonists?

*Forgotten War* gives a systematic account of what caused the frontier wars between white colonists and Aboriginal people, how many people died and whether the colonists themselves saw frontier conflict as a form of warfare. This powerful book argues that there can be no reconciliation without acknowledging the wars fought on our own soil.



### Carpentaria (2006)

By Alex Wright

*Carpentaria* is an epic novel set in the Gulf country of north-western Queensland. Its

portrait of family life in the precariously settled coastal town of Desperance centres on the powerful Phantom family, leader of the Westend Pricklebush people, and its battles with old Joseph Midnight's renegade Eastend mob on the one hand, and the white officials of Uptown and the neighbouring Gurfurrit mine on the other.

*Carpentaria* was rejected by every major publisher in Australia before it was published by the small literary house Giramondo. It went on to win Australia's most prestigious literary prize, the Miles Franklin Award.

# Reconciliation Film Club



## Join the Reconciliation Film Club

**Reconciliation Australia, NITV and SBS have proudly partnered to launch the Reconciliation Film Club, an online platform that supports organisations to host screenings of a curated selection of Indigenous documentaries from Australia's leading Indigenous filmmakers.**

Hosting a screening in your organisation or community is an opportunity to bring people together to develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous people's perspectives and histories, ignite conversation and spark change. It's also a great platform to engage staff more actively in your organisation's RAP plan.

The Reconciliation Film Club website hosts downloadable screening kits, discussion guides, and features articles and ideas to support a successful event.

For more info about the documentaries and to book a screening, visit:

**[sbs.com.au/reconciliationfilmclub](https://sbs.com.au/reconciliationfilmclub)**

