

# Reconciliation News

Stories about Australia's journey to equality and unity

**Luke Pearson**  
talks IndigenousX

**Bangarra**  
**Dance Theatre**  
turns 30!

**Preserving**  
**the songs of**  
Arrernte women

**TREATIES:**  
**THE MOMENTUM**  
**IS BUILDING**

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**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.

## CONTACT US



[reconciliation.org.au](http://reconciliation.org.au)



[enquiries@reconciliation.org.au](mailto:enquiries@reconciliation.org.au)



02 6273 9200

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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:

Bangarra Dance Theatre's Tyrel Dulvarie.  
Image by Daniel Boud.

# CONTENTS

## FEATURES

### 8 Bangarra turns 30!

To mark its 30-year anniversary, Bangarra Dance Theatre has just completed a triumphant four-month national tour.

### 10 Treaties: the momentum is building

As the Uluru Statement from the Heart records, treaty-making is a key aspiration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

### 12 The Arrernte Women's Project: Songs to Live By

Rachel Perkins pens a moving essay on her journey to record the sacred songs of Arrernte women in Central Australia.

### 14 Tackling tokenism: top tips and key questions

Steps to tackle 'tokenism' and the reconciliation paralysis it causes.

### 16 Empowering the Yawuru Community

Broome's Nyamba Buru Yawuru are helping to build an inclusive and sustainable future for Yawuru people.

### 20 NRMA Insurance Billboards: Promoting safety and respect

A new NRMA Insurance project will see more NSW drivers know whose Country they're driving on.

### 21 Breaking the language barrier

Language preservation and revitalisation is connected to reconciliation and there are ways for everyone to get involved.

### 22 Twelve social media accounts to follow

Learn something new or challenge yourself on your morning scroll with our list of social media platforms to follow.

### 24 Books to read

Tuck into our list of must reads, from poetry to children's books and novels from award-winning Aboriginal writers.

## REGULARS

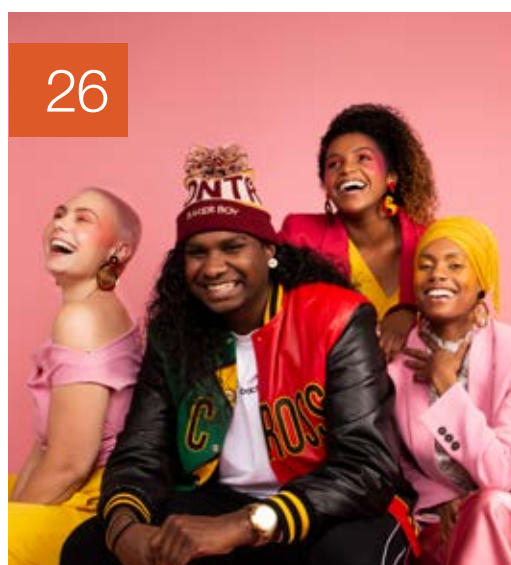
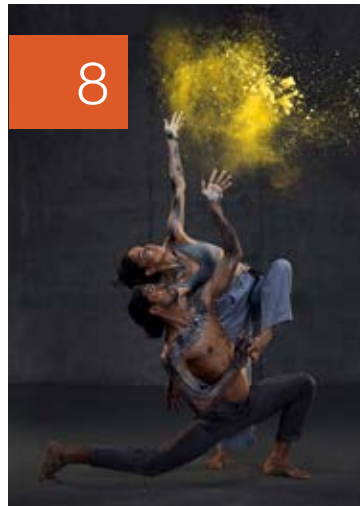
### 4 Reconciliation Recap

### 6 From the CEO

### 7 Calendar

### 18 In Conversation

### 26 Style



# RECONCILIATION RECAP

## SIX MONTHS IN REVIEW

**27 May – 3 June 2019**  
**National Reconciliation Week**



Support for National Reconciliation Week (NRW) continues to grow and this year was no exception.

From the 'Dreamtime at the G' AFL game to community barbecues and comedy nights, hundreds of events around the country were held, helping to bring more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians together. NRW was even celebrated in the Middle East region by the Australian Defence Force!

The theme *Grounded in Truth: Walk Together with Courage* was all about inspiring Australians to be brave and inquisitive about our shared history. Recognising that truth telling is essential for coming to terms with Australia's fractured past, the theme aimed to

encourage honest conversations to promote healing, and strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

Reconciliation Australia would like to thank everyone who enthusiastically supported NRW, especially state reconciliation groups who go above and beyond every year. A special shout out must also go to Jeremy Marou, from the band Busby Marou, for voicing our NRW animation.

We look forward to celebrating again next year, when we mark the 20th anniversary of Corroboree 2000 and the Sydney Harbour Bridge Walks.

*The Merindas perform at The Long Walk.*  
Image by Wayne Quilliam.

**30 May 2019**  
**Collingwood Football Club**  
**RAP launch**

Reconciliation Australia CEO Karen Mundine spoke at the launch of the Collingwood Football Club's Stretch 2019-2021 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). She congratulated the Club on its undertaking to ensure 100 per cent of staff, players and the Board complete face-to-face cultural awareness training.

"The Club's array of RAP promises means it will continue to lead reconciliation action, not only in the AFL, but in the broader Australian community," Ms Mundine said.

Ms Mundine also spoke about the importance of truth telling in knowing Australia's story. She referred to Collingwood's history noting it had existed for 127 years; played more grand finals than any other club; has the equal highest number of premierships; and its club song is the oldest of any, dating back to 1906.

**7 June 2019**  
**The Final Quarter**



*The Final Quarter* film made its debut to sold-out audiences at the *Sydney Film Festival* on 7 June. It was also aired on Channel 10 and WIN on 17 July, where it was watched by almost one million Australians.

The film tells the story about the treatment of AFL legend Adam Goodes in his final seasons with the Sydney Swans. Directed by Ian Darling and produced by Shark Island Productions, *The Final Quarter* uses only chronological archival footage to expose the latent racism, the deaf ear of conservative commentators, the mob mentality and the largely scurrilous media coverage.

Education resources including school curriculum, screening and study guides will be made freely available to every school and registered sporting club in Australia that wishes to screen the film. For more information and to register your interest, visit [thefinalquarterfilm.com.au](http://thefinalquarterfilm.com.au).

*Adam Goodes, image courtesy of Morne de Klerk and Getty images.*

## 7 – 14 July 2019

### NAIDOC Week 2019



Once again NAIDOC Week was a brilliant Australia-wide celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements.

The striking poster, *Awaken*, designed by Kurna and Narungga woman Charmaine Mumbulla, carried the theme – *Voice. Treaty. Truth. Let's work together*, echoing three key elements from the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

One of the highlights of the Week was the Awards Ceremony, this year held in the 2019 focus city, Canberra, on the land of the Nggunawal and Ngambri peoples. The black-tie event is always the best ticket in town and provided a stellar lineup of musicians and performers.

Hosted by media personalities Sean Choolburra and Elaine Crombie, the Awards recognised 10 outstanding high achievers including *Female Elder of the Year*, Thelma Weston; *Male Elder of the Year* Greg Little; *Artist of the Year* Elma Gada Kris; *Youth of the Year* Mi-Kaisha Masella; *Apprentice of the Year* Ganur Maynard and *Sportsperson of the Year* Shantelle Thompson.

*David Williams performs at the 2019 National NAIDOC Awards.*  
Image by Joseph Mayers.

## 1 August 2019

### The Australian Dream

Directed by Daniel Gordon, *The Australian Dream*, like *The Final Quarter*, is a powerful film that explores the reasons for the concerted booing of dual Brownlow medallist, Adam Goodes in his final years as an AFL footballer.

Adam tells his side of the story, with narration provided by writer Stan Grant and other opinions from several of Adam's critical media commentators. The film shows that this regrettable sporting episode was a stark example of the racial divide in Australia.

At its premiere at the *Melbourne Film Festival*, the film received a sustained standing ovation and precipitated intense debate in the wider community.

*Canberra Times* movie reviewer Sandra Hall says the film "takes a more lateral approach, using Goodes' experience as an analogy for white Australia's conflicted attitude towards the dispossession of the nation's First Peoples."



## 2 - 5 August 2019

### The Garma Festival

Reconciliation Australia was once again pleased to host a women's group at the annual *Garma Festival* in North East Arnhem Land.

Held on Yolngu Country and managed by the Yothu Yindi Foundation, *The Garma Festival* is a rich, cultural exchange that brings together business leaders, international political leaders, intellectuals, academics and journalists to discuss the most pressing issues facing Australia.

The Reconciliation Australia women's group – which included a range of leaders from not-for-profit, government and corporate organisations – attended talks on issues such as constitutional reform, which was a key theme of *Garma Festival* talks. Participants also engaged in Yolngu cultural activities including a women's dawn crying ceremony, star gazing, basket weaving and ceremonial dancing in the Bunggul.

**The Garma Festival will next be held from 31 July – 3 August 2020.**  
**Visit [yvf.com.au](http://yvf.com.au) for more information.**

*L-R: Libby Ferrari, Melinda Cilento, Aisha Whan and Diana David are welcomed to Country by Yolngu Elder and Reconciliation Australia Board Member, Djapirri Mununggirritj.*

# FROM THE CEO



Already it's October and I'm all too aware of just what a big year we're planning for in 2020. I can't say too much at this stage, but we're hoping to make the 20th anniversary of Corroboree 2000 and the Sydney Harbour Bridge Walks an occasion of celebration.

As a precursor to any proposed referendum in this term of Parliament, 2020 will also provide abundant opportunities for Australians to again show their support for the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Watch this space!

In this jam-packed edition of *Reconciliation News* you'll find a wealth of interesting reading, including Rachel Perkins' moving essay, *Songs to Live By*, about the preservation of Arrernte women's songs. As the International Year of Indigenous Languages draws to a close, Rachel reveals why these culture lines are so important to preserve. You too can get involved with

the revitalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, and we've listed a few ways to get you started in *Breaking the Language Barrier*.

If you've ever been concerned that your actions around reconciliation are 'tokenistic', our *Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education* team have come up with some great tips and questions to ask yourself before you engage with a reconciliation activity. It's all about asking smaller, more targeted questions that really get to the heart of what your intentions and attitude are.

If you're keen to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, we've got you covered with our top 12 social media accounts to follow, from the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to the beloved Purple House (a past Indigenous Governance Award winner) who provide kidney dialysis in the most remote parts of Australia.

Dr Harry Hobbs from the University of Technology Sydney provides a timely update on the various treaties being negotiated between state governments and local Aboriginal communities. While the Federal Government has set their timetable for recognition, the states have already gone much further down the treaty track.

We speak to Gamilaroi man and founder of *IndigenousX*, Luke Pearson about truth telling, reconciliation and sovereignty and his responses are typically insightful. NRMA Insurance shows how they've used their RAP to create a project that aligns with their core business, promotes reconciliation and allows them to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. That's the beauty of the RAP program – the framework helps organisations to create meaningful actions that are also aligned with their strategic direction.

And you'll be truly inspired by Indigenous Governance Award joint-winners, Nyamba Buru Yawuru, who are working to build an inclusive and sustainable future for Yawuru people near Broome, WA.

Finally, our reviewed books and the enticing items on our style pages would, dare I say it, make wonderful Christmas gifts!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen'.

**Karen Mundine**  
**Chief Executive,**  
**Reconciliation Australia**



# CALENDAR

## SPECIAL DAYS

**10**  
December 2019

Human Rights Day

**26**  
January 2020

Australia Day/  
Invasion Day/  
Survival Day

**13**  
February 2020

12th anniversary  
of the National  
Apology

**19**  
March 2020

National Close  
the Gap Day

**21**  
March 2020

Harmony Day

## EVENTS

### I, Object (Indigenous cultural objects)

**When:** 3 August 2019 - 21 June 2020  
**Where:** GOMA, Queensland Art Gallery  
**Price:** Free  
**Info:** [qagoma.qld.gov.au](http://qagoma.qld.gov.au)

### National Reconciliation Action Plan Conference 2019: Walking Together, Working Together

**When:** 23 – 25 October 2019  
**Where:** RAC Arena, Perth, WA  
**Price:** \$600  
**Info:** [reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans](http://reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans)

### Evolution: Torres Strait Masks

**When:** 26 October 2019 - 2 February 2020  
**Where:** Museum of Geraldton, Geraldton WA  
**Price:** Free  
**Info:** [museum.wa.gov.au](http://museum.wa.gov.au)

### Dying to Yarn

**When:** 1 November 2019  
**Where:** Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre  
**Price:** \$199 Early Bird, \$249 General  
**Info:** [makedyingdeadly.health.qld.gov.au](http://makedyingdeadly.health.qld.gov.au)

### For Country, for Nation (AWM travelling exhibition)

**When:** 29 November 2019 - 9 February 2020  
**Where:** Tweed Regional Gallery  
**Price:** Free  
**Info:** [artgallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au](http://artgallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au)

### Converge: First Nations Media National Conference

**When:** 27-29 November 2019  
**Where:** Double Tree by Hilton, Alice Springs  
**Price:** \$330: Two days; \$220: One day  
**Info:** [firstnationsmedia.org.au/events/converge/alicesprings](http://firstnationsmedia.org.au/events/converge/alicesprings)

### Rainbow Serpent Festival

**When:** 24-27 January 2020  
**Where:** Lexton, Victoria  
**Price:** \$420  
**Info:** [rainbowserpent.net](http://rainbowserpent.net)

### Yabun Festival

**When:** 26 January 2020  
**Where:** Victoria Park, Camperdown, NSW  
**Price:** Free  
**Info:** [facebook.com/YabunFestival](https://facebook.com/YabunFestival)

### Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) Legal Workshop

**When:** 19-21 February 2020  
**Where:** Fraser Suites, 10 Adelaide Terrace, Perth  
**Price:** Free  
**Info:** [stacey.little@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:stacey.little@aiatsis.gov.au)

### Reconciliation in Construction Summit

**When:** 19 March 2020  
**Where:** ICC Sydney  
**Price:** Free  
**Info:** [sydneybuildexpo.com](http://sydneybuildexpo.com)

### Parrtjima – A Festival of Light

**When:** 3-12 April 2020  
**Where:** Alice Springs Desert Park and Todd Mall, Mparntwe (Alice Springs), NT  
**Price:** Free  
**Info:** [parrtjimaaustralia.com.au](http://parrtjimaaustralia.com.au)

### Boomerang Festival at Bluesfest

**When:** 10-12 April 2020  
**Where:** Byron Bay, NSW  
**Price:** \$85 to \$420  
**Info:** [bluesfest.com.au/boomerang](http://bluesfest.com.au/boomerang)



# BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE TURNS 30!

Bangarra company.  
Image by Daniel Boud.

**To mark its 30-year anniversary, Bangarra Dance Theatre has just completed a triumphant four-month national tour featuring the landmark work *Bangarra: 30 years of sixty-five thousand*.**

The three-part program comprised a re-staging of Frances Rings' monumental *Unaipon* (*Clan*, 2004), *Stamping Ground* by acclaimed Czech choreographer Jiří Kylián, and a powerful collection of dance stories – *to make fire* – from the company's 30-year history curated by Bangarra Artistic Director, Stephen Page and Head of Design, Jacob Nash.

*Unaipon* explores the remarkable journey of David Unaipon (the man on the \$50 note) from the shores of Lake Alexandrina within the Ngarrindjeri nation, and his passion for science and the great philosophies and cultures of the world. Choreographer Frances Rings used her unique language to present a rich dance portrait of the man who made the connection between aerodynamics and the flight pattern of the boomerang, and between his own cultural traditions and those of all men.

Jiří Kylián's *Stamping Ground* featured the work of an international guest artist for the first time in the company's history. In 1980, Kylián, then Artistic Director for the Nederlands Dans Theater, attended a gathering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clans on Groote Eylandt in the Gulf of Carpentaria. His experience led to the creation of one of his defining ballets which was last performed in Australia by Nederlands Dans Theater in 1986.

Rounding out the triple treat was *to make fire* which draws on stories and songlines from all over Australia. It celebrates the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, embracing the diversity and inspiration that comes from their connection to Country.

*It's this inherent connection to the land and people that gives Bangarra its storytelling authenticity.*

As the title of the program implies, Bangarra may be 30 years old, but its dance technique is forged from over 65,000 years of culture, embodied with contemporary movement. Each dancer has a proud Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, from various locations across the country.

The performances of this celebratory work showcased the same passionate storytelling, rich artistry and deep community connections that have made Bangarra the premier Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing arts company in Australia.

Bangarra has always maintained close relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, with its repertoire created on Country and stories gathered from respected community Elders.

It's this inherent connection to the land and people that gives Bangarra its storytelling authenticity appreciated by audiences from Newcastle to New York.

In a final highlight this year, in partnership with Carriageworks in Sydney, Bangarra will present *Knowledge Ground: 30 years of sixty-five thousand*, a free walk-through exhibition from 4 to 14 December. The exhibition will celebrate and share the 30 years of Bangarra's vital connection to Country and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance theatre stories.

Visitors will navigate a series of thematic worlds, created with unique elements from Bangarra's productions – including set, costumes, artefacts, AV projection, language recordings and film footage of the Bangarra dancers.

Each world explores the themes that are central to Bangarra's work – Country, language, kinship, social, history – providing opportunities for visitors to connect to the song, dance and stories that Bangarra has been sharing with audiences for the last 30 years.

*Knowledge Ground* at Carriageworks will coincide with the launch of an all-new digital platform housing Bangarra's award-winning work, stories, songlines, and continual relationships with family and communities. This archive will continue to expand as Bangarra enters its fourth decade, enabling online visitors from around the world to discover the company's work.

As Bangarra embarks on its fourth decade of dance, it can be proud that over the past 30 years it has become, as *Time Out* magazine commented, "one of the true wonders of Australian culture."

**Visit [bangarra.com.au](http://bangarra.com.au) to learn more about Bangarra's performances and education programs.**



Rika Hamaguchi. Image by Daniel Boud.



Natarsha Bamblett Richmond FC, Shane Edwards Richmond FC, Jill Gallagher Treaty Advancement Commissioner, Jake Long Essendon FC, Courtney Ugle Essendon FC. Image courtesy of Richmond FC.

## TREATIES: THE MOMENTUM IS BUILDING

The following is an extract from an article by Dr Harry Hobbs first published in the online publication Inside Story. The full text can be accessed at [insidestory.org.au](http://insidestory.org.au).

When Queensland deputy premier Jackie Trad announced a conversation about treaty-making in July this year, her state joined Victoria and the Northern Territory in initiating formal agreement-making processes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

These are significant developments: as the Uluru Statement from the Heart records, treaty-making is a key aspiration of Indigenous Australians.

The deputy premier's announcement also reflected the growing divide between the major parties. While the federal Coalition has ruled out not only a constitutionally entrenched voice to parliament but also a treaty process, Labor states and territories are listening and acting.

Indigenous leaders have long argued that the quest for bipartisan support is not necessarily beneficial to their

interests, but one-sided support also carries its risks. If treaties come to be associated only with the Labor side of politics, there is a danger that any process or agreement struck by Labor governments will last only as long as the parliamentary term in which that party governs.

Treaties are accepted globally as a means of reaching a settlement between Indigenous peoples and those who have colonised their lands. They have been struck in the United States and New Zealand, and are still being negotiated in Canada. But no treaty was signed between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the British Crown at first contact or in the early years of Australia's European settlement.

Treaties are formal instruments reached through a process of respectful negotiation in which both sides accept a series of responsibilities.

In particular, treaties acknowledge that Indigenous peoples were prior owners and occupiers of the land and, as such, retain a right to self-government. At a minimum, a treaty recognises or establishes structures of culturally appropriate governance and a means of decision-making and control.

Progress has been made in Australia, though only at state and territory levels. Each case has been challenging, and some have been more successful than others.

### Queensland:

Sensibly, the negotiations announced in July will not begin for several years. Experience shows that it is important that both the government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are fully prepared before formal talks begin.

For Indigenous nations, this means having a clear sense of what a treaty

## *Treaties are accepted globally as a means of reaching a settlement between Indigenous peoples and those who have colonised their lands.*

might mean for their communities, as well as a broad consensus on a negotiating position. For the government, it is equally important that non-Indigenous Queenslanders understand what a treaty is and what its potential impact will be.

Reflecting these preliminary steps, a treaty working group will lead consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, allowing them to discuss and reach agreement on what a treaty might contain. These steps follow similar processes in Victoria and the Northern Territory.

### **Victoria:**

Although the state Labor government committed to entering treaty negotiations in 2016, Aboriginal Victorians felt that they weren't ready. An Aboriginal Treaty Working Group and a Treaty Advancement Commission were established to maintain momentum and keep Victorians informed. Around 7,500 Aboriginal Victorians were consulted or engaged with directly through this process.

The result was the creation of a First Peoples' Assembly, whose members will be elected this year.

The assembly will not negotiate treaties. Instead, as set out in legislation, it will administer a self-determination fund to support treaty negotiations and will work with the government to develop a treaty framework to guide negotiations between Indigenous nations and the state. Once that framework has been developed, treaty negotiations will commence. Significantly, the First Peoples' Assembly will continue to serve as a standing representative body of Aboriginal Victorians – a Voice to the Victorian Parliament.

### **Northern Territory:**

In June 2018, the chief minister and representatives of the four Aboriginal Land Councils signed a memorandum of understanding committing the parties to a process of consultation. The signing took place at the *Barunga Festival*, 30 years after prime minister Bob Hawke's promise that Australia would enter into a treaty with Indigenous peoples.

The Barunga Agreement is intended to initiate a consultation process that will lead to a treaty negotiation framework. The signatories also agreed to several guiding principles, including that Aboriginal Territorians never ceded sovereignty of their lands, seas and waters, and that a treaty should benefit all Territorians.

### **South Australia:**

In December 2016, the SA Labor government announced that it would commence treaty negotiations with three Indigenous nations whose traditional lands sit within state boundaries. In September 2017, the first explicitly recognisable treaty discussions in Australia commenced between South Australia and the Ngarrindjeri Nation.

However, after the government lost office in 2018, the new Liberal premier, Steven Marshall, announced that his government would abandon the process.

### **Western Australia:**

The settlement reached by the Noongar people and the Western Australian Liberal-National government was negotiated as part of a native title claim, but its size and scope mean that it qualifies as Australia's first treaty.

Several parliamentarians recognised this at the time. After he was notified that the Noongar people had voted to

accept the settlement, premier Colin Barnett issued a statement noting that the "breakthrough agreement [was an] extraordinary act of self-determination by Aboriginal people ... provid[ing] them with a real opportunity for independence".

Later, the deputy opposition leader, Roger Cook, explained in parliament that, "by its very nature, the Noongar agreement is in fact a classic treaty."

The Noongar Settlement covers around 200,000 square kilometres and covers rights, obligations and opportunities relating to land, resources, governance, finance and cultural heritage. It recognises the Noongar people as a distinct community, establishes a limited form of self-governance, and provides funding for its operation.

However, the Noongar Settlement has yet to take effect due to objections by some Noongar people.

The state and territory treaty processes have their challenges, but they are valuable and should continue. As the Noongar Settlement demonstrates, innovative agreements can secure important outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In propelling the debate forward, these processes are also building pressure on other governments within Australia.

**Dr Harry Hobbs is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the University of Technology Sydney.**



*Dr Harry Hobbs. Image by Anna Kucera.*



Rachel Perkins. Image by Meg White.

# THE ARRERNTE WOMEN'S PROJECT: SONGS TO LIVE BY

By Rachel Perkins

We have called our camp the Arrernte Women's Project. Red sandy earth stretches for thousands of kilometres beyond us, in all directions. It is this vast desert that wrapped its great arms around us and protected us for so long. Yet, even in the desert heart, with a language that is still defined as "healthy" because it has 2500 speakers, our culture is faltering. That is why, at our humble camp, Arrernte women have gathered to do something about it.

Our continent was once alive with song. In hundreds of languages, the Dreaming, which recounts how the world was created, was delivered in song. There were also environmental songs to bring forth abundant supplies of plants and animals. There were songs to heal the sick, songs to make a person fall in love, songs to turn boys into men, and songs just for entertainment.

The Arrernte ladies have come to our camp to record what remains in their living memory of these songs. About a hundred Arrernte women have visited the camp in our first four weeks. In line with a weekly schedule, they arrive in groups specific to their areas of land or "estates" within the broader Arrernte territory. They paint up their family members, erect the sacred symbols of their *Altyerre* (Dreamings), and their ancient songs rise into the night sky with the embers from the fire. Everything is meticulously recorded by our all-female camera crew. The senior ladies carefully discuss who will guard these recordings into the future, to ensure that they are kept from reckless or inappropriate individuals. These women are our professors, and there are very few Arrernte women who still hold this knowledge.

Agnes Abbott is one such woman. Born under the blue sky of the Simpson Desert and brought up on cattle stations, she now lives just outside Alice Springs in an infamous town camp called Hidden Valley. Through all that has been wrought on her world, Agnes has retained an encyclopaedic knowledge of women's law.

Another leader among the women is MK Turner. She was born and grew up in the bush, and still remembers seeing the first white man arrive in her Country. Eventually she was taken to the mission, and now deftly melds her Catholicism with her adherence to the *Altyerre*. Her environmental knowledge is vast, and she has written a number of books on this and other subjects. She also requires extra time at the camp to record the many powerful songs held in her memory.



*Our continent was once alive with song. In hundreds of languages, the Dreaming, which recounts how the world was created, was delivered in song.*

MK Turner. Image by Meg White.

Planning for the Arrernte Women's Project began in earnest months earlier. In attempting to make a comprehensive record of Arrernte women's songs, we first made a database of all of those that had been recorded and archived. I began my research at the Alice Springs Public Library with a particular book in mind: *Songs of Central Australia* by TGH Strehlow.

*Songs of Central Australia* comprises men's sacred songs, fully transcribed, annotated and poetically interpreted. Strehlow also recorded performances accompanying these songs on beautiful 16-millimetre film. As I am a woman working within the restrictions of my culture, the contents of *Songs of Central Australia* are largely closed to me. To protect myself from the men-only material in the book, I went to the contents page only, to see if there was anything about women's songs.

And, how wonderful, there it was: six pages right at the end! Excitedly, I turned to the women's section. But what was closed to me now was equally closed to Strehlow when it came to women's knowledge.

We then turned to our great memory vault, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra. In the mid '90s MK Turner, with the esteemed linguist Jenny Green, had the foresight to record Arrernte songs, with a small grant from this institution. We copied these songs onto 200 data sticks, and had labels professionally printed onto each of them: *Arrelhe – kenhe*

(Women's). They became a foundation on which to build our collection.

In the weeks leading up to the camp, we gave copies of these recordings to the direct descendants of the singers. On the recording we could hear quiet voices speaking at first in Arrernte, laughing and talking. Next came the songs, unfolding around us in the dark room, one after the other. First we heard their grandmother singing with other women. And then, in a much later recording, their mother. "We are rich," Margy said, and she and her sisters tried to hide the tears that flowed.

As the camp's work progressed, enthusiasm spread and more recordings surfaced. Heather Laughton revealed that she had two biscuit tins containing reel-to-reel recordings that her mother, Ada Sylvia Laughton, had created in the 1960s.

Another woman, Marilyn Cavanagh, found a cassette tape that she thought might have her grandmother singing on it. Once digitised, it revealed her grandmother singing a significant Dreaming song that is part of Alice Springs.

Finally, in the very last week of the camp, the ladies from the area with which my family is connected arrived. I had only just met these ladies, so could not be too familiar with them. They spoke to each other in Arrernte, and the other women gathered around them. I could only understand a few words. What I did understand amid their conversation was

the word "dormitories". My heart sank. They recounted that as girls they had been taken into the dormitories by the nuns. As a result, if there were songs, they hadn't learned them. The women left the camp soon after as there was nothing for them to do and not much to say. It was like when somebody dies. Nothing can be done but to miss them.

In the last week, Agnes Abbott invited Hetti and me to join the dancers for one of her songs, as a way of thanking us for our work. Her smile, and her assessment of our "good dancing", was a beautiful reward. Afterwards, with the body paint still showing under her tracksuit, Hetti said in a matter-of-fact way that it had taken her until she was 50 years old, but that it was one of the greatest days of her life.

There were dozens of emotional moments over those weeks. People were expressing how their culture and songs connected them to their land and to their identity. Said one woman who had only just learned her local Dreaming song, "Now no one can tell us we are not from here."

**The AIATSIS aims to record at-risk songs and languages before it's too late.**

**Contact [foundation@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:foundation@aiatsis.gov.au) to assist or donate.**

*This is an extract of an essay first published in The Monthly which can be read at [themonthly.com.au/magazine/july-2016](http://themonthly.com.au/magazine/july-2016).*

# TACKLING TOKENISM: TOP TIPS AND KEY QUESTIONS

**Nothing can quite throw a spanner in the works of genuine reconciliation like the threat of ‘tokenism’.**

Tokenism is the act of making an effort on behalf of under-represented groups for purely symbolic reasons. It’s a word that halts conversations in its tracks, ultimately stopping people from taking action for fear of being perceived as culturally inappropriate, ignorant, or out of touch.

While tokenism is cited by many, it is understood by few. As a result, it’s taken on connotations of almost mythic proportions in the minds of people trying to do the right thing.

We’re here to dispel the myths and look at some simple steps to help tackle tokenism and put a stop to the reconciliation paralysis it causes.

*Reconciliation is not a ‘tick-a-box’ process, and requires individuals and communities to have meaningful and localised visions.*

## **STEP ONE: IT’S ALL ABOUT THE ATTITUDE**

The first thing to understand about tokenism is that an action itself cannot be tokenistic without first being formed on a tokenistic attitude or intent.

If you make a decision and your intent is genuine, it is very unlikely that your actions to follow will be tokenistic.

In fact, Wiradjuri educator Cara Shipp advocates that the best way to prevent tokenism is to remove it from your vocabulary altogether. She argues that rather than asking yourself straight out, “Am I being tokenistic?”, it’s more productive to ask yourself a few smaller, more targeted questions that get to the heart of what your intentions and attitudes are.



Reconciliation Australia asked Auntie Violet Sheridan, a Ngunnawal Elder, to do a Welcome to Country at the launch of National Reconciliation Week in 2018, as a way of showing respect to the local Aboriginal community. Image by Sean Davey.

*Tokenism halts conversations in its tracks, ultimately stopping people from taking action for fear of being perceived as culturally inappropriate.*

## STEP TWO: GET QUESTIONING

It's important to recognise that tokenism first and foremost comes from insincere intentions. So, ask yourself, what sort of attitude have you used in your approach to a particular activity?

The *Narragunnawali: Education in Reconciliation* team at Reconciliation Australia has compiled some appropriate questions you can ask yourself to clear up once and for all whether your intentions are insincere.

When implementing a reconciliation action, consider:

**“Why am I doing this?”** Do you have a genuine reason for implementing the activity, and how does this connect with your vision for reconciliation? Remember that reconciliation is not a ‘tick-a-box’ process, and requires individuals and communities to have meaningful and localised visions for their participation in the process.

**“What’s the context?”** Has the activity been critically evaluated and contextualised? Remember that given the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures across Australia, the relevance of an activity can be context-specific.

**“Where can I collaborate?”** Has the activity been developed in collaboration with your local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community? Remember that communication is key to sustaining successful partnerships and to shaping respectful reconciliation activities.

**“Is this culturally safe?”** Have you considered the cultural ways in which this activity may affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people differently than non-Indigenous people? Remember that there may be a number of complexities in sharing in the reconciliation context, and so ensuring the cultural safety of reconciliation resources or activities is paramount.

**“Is this respectful?”** Have you paid attention to appropriate, inclusive and respectful language or terminology? Remember that language is important and can impact on attitudes, understandings and relationships in very real ways.

## STEP 3: REFLECT AND GET INSPIRED

If your answers to these questions are ‘yes,’ then there is a good chance that you are on track with tackling tokenism and taking action towards reconciliation in a thoughtful way.

Inspiring real-world examples of organisations that have overcome the threat of tokenism to create meaningful reconciliation pathways can be found in the schools and early learning services nominated in the 2019 *Narragunnawali Awards*.

The awards program is an opportunity to learn from schools and early learning services that have shown genuine and thoughtful intentions towards building reconciliation.

**Looking to learn more? Consider engaging with the ‘Tackling Tokenism’ professional learning resource on Reconciliation Australia’s Narragunnawali platform:** [narragunnawali.org.au/professional-learning/40/tackling-tokenism](http://narragunnawali.org.au/professional-learning/40/tackling-tokenism).

**Looking for inspiration? Head to** [narragunnawali.org.au/awards](http://narragunnawali.org.au/awards).





# NYAMBA BURU YAWURU: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

*Nyamba Buru Yawuru  
CEO Peter Yu. Image by  
Jillian Mundy.*

**Nyamba Buru Yawuru (NBY)'s drive to protect Yawuru Country and their community received the recognition it deserved in 2006, when the Federal Court determined that the Yawuru people were the Native Title holders of approximately 530,000 hectares of lands and waters.**

After NBY's Native Title win, they were able to negotiate Yawuru agreements with the Western Australian Government, providing NBY with the opportunity to influence the values-driven development of Broome.

Values are also integral to the way NBY conducts its business and defines its success. The cultural values, practices and missions that underpin the work by NBY centre around the Yawuru philosophy of 'Mabu Liyan' or 'good spirit'.

Mabu Liyan is translated through the interconnectedness between the individual and their Country, culture and community. It is this understanding of wellbeing and respect that links Yawuru's commitments to its communal native title rights, and its goal to succeed in a competitive global economy.

"It's about the wellbeing of yourself; the relationship with your family; the community and making sure you fulfil the obligation to look after Country," CEO of NBY Mr Peter Yu said. "It's inclusive, supportive and committed to the principles of sustainability and community cohesion."

*Good governance is something that keeps evolving as your organisation keeps growing and taking on challenges in a modern global environment.*

*This high proportion of Yawuru people showing leadership and making decisions for the benefit of their community is empowering.*

NBY are a not-for-profit company owned by the Yawuru Native Title holders through a corporate group structure. The organisation is responsible for investing and managing the tangible and non-tangible assets of the community, developing the economic foundation for the cultural and social growth and sustainability of the Yawuru people.

In 2018, NBY's strong leadership, governance and strategic direction saw them named joint winners (Category A) in Reconciliation Australia's 2018 Indigenous Governance Awards (IGA).

Mr Yu said winning the award was significant recognition of the work done over the past few years to increase their community's capacity.

"Good governance is something we have prioritised to ensure that our directors are confident and capable within their roles," he said. "It also helps to upskill our community members and support younger people into the future as they move into positions of greater responsibility."

NBY has approximately 120 employees, around 90 of whom are Aboriginal providing younger Yolngu people with positive leadership examples.

"There is no doubt that this high proportion of Yawuru people showing leadership and making decisions for the benefit of their community is empowering and indicates increasing performance and governance capacity for Indigenous people," Mr Yu said.

When asked what advice NBY could provide to any future IGA applicants, Mr Yu said that ensuring good governance takes time and commitment.

"It's about due diligence and an industrious approach towards looking at efficiency, a harmonious workplace and growth in productivity," he said. "Good governance is something that keeps evolving as your organisation keeps growing and taking on challenges in a modern global environment."

**For information on the Indigenous Governance Program and Awards, visit**  
[reconciliation.org.au/indigenous-governance-program](http://reconciliation.org.au/indigenous-governance-program).



*L-R: Yawuru Country Managers, Pius Gregory and Ronald Wade with IGA Judge, Eddie Cubillo. Image by Jillian Mundy.*



*L-R: IGA Judge Glenda Humes; NBY Cultural Coordinator, Di Appleby; NBY Chairperson, Cara Peek; PBC Chair, Thomas 'Unda' Edgar; NBY CEO Peter Yu and IGA Judge Adrian Brahim. Image by Jillian Mundy.*



Luke Pearson. Image supplied.

## IN CONVERSATION: LUKE PEARSON

Luke Pearson is a Gamilaroi man who set up IndigenousX in 2012 believing there was a need to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media representation in Australia. Over the past seven years, through its social media and online presence, IndigenousX has raised awareness of countless issues, programs, stories, perspectives and organisations.

*Can you tell me about the purpose of IndigenousX?*

IndigenousX exists to provide a platform for Indigenous people that is not inhibited by the limitations and expectations of traditional media spaces. We do not ask or expect our contributors to speak on behalf of all Indigenous people, or to solve the world's problems with a sound bite or platitudes, or to limit their opinions to the tropes, stereotypes or expectations of non-Indigenous audiences. This is our purpose, and is key to our success.

We have carved out a space in the wider media landscape that is Indigenous led, doesn't cater to the news cycle, and allows Indigenous people to be themselves on their own terms. Our challenge now is to grow that space for new types of content, and create opportunities for more contributors to join the conversation.

*As a strong advocate for your people, your opinion pieces don't pull punches but often cleverly employ some ironic humour. Who are you mainly hoping to reach?*

I am usually writing for other Indigenous people, and for myself. At times I might be speaking directly to white audiences, but even then I am writing for those Indigenous people watching the dialogue.

A lot of the content we write is to save time for other Indigenous people who are tired of having to respond to the countless racist stereotypes, myths and blatant lies that we regularly encounter within the colony – we had no science, we were primitive, we all get all the free things etc. I often employ humour because when you're unpacking things that are so blatantly illogical it is hard not to laugh at the ideas, even though the acts these ideas often justify are no cause for laughter.

## *A desire for justice or advocating for something as essential and obvious as telling the truth should be innate in all of us.*

*Where does your passion for justice and truth telling come from?*

From my parents, mostly, but I honestly have no idea how anyone can grow up in this country and not see how racism has shaped every aspect of it, and continues to. I simply can't relate to a world view that blames Aboriginal people, migrants, or 'PC gone mad' for the myriad ills that plague Australia. A desire for justice or advocating for something as essential and obvious as telling the truth should be innate in all of us, and I don't understand how we live in a world where this is seen as contentious or controversial.

*Some of your articles indicate that you're not keen on the word 'reconciliation'. Why is that?*

As I have mentioned before, it's just not a word that is in my daily vocabulary. And when I hear a lot of people talking about it, I can see images of bridge walks and black hands shaking white hands dancing through their minds, and that just doesn't do it for me. I think too many white Australians engage with reconciliation because as a term it feels less threatening than words like justice, sovereignty, anti-racism, even though these are the concepts that reconciliation is meant to mean.

*We like to say that the while the Uluru Statement from the Heart may have been denied, it is not dead. What is your view?*

Much like treaty, it will live on as long as there are people fighting for it. I don't think the Liberal party will ever engage with it with any substance, despite their rhetoric, and I'm not entirely confident that the Labor party would do it justice given the chance either... if either of them ever do, it will not be out of goodwill on their part, but because the nation demands it.

The history of Indigenous rights and Indigenous advancements shows that it is never given freely but rather that Indigenous people have had to drag the powers that be kicking and screaming into a more equitable nation, and every time we do they lie eternally in wait ready to drag us right back.

*What do you see as the main impediment to Australia coming to terms with its true history? Is it lack of political leadership, embarrassment, latent racism or just apathy? Alternatively, what could actually bring it about?*

That list seems about right... I'd only add that dominant media organisations being more than happy to provide countless opportunities to the absolute worst people to promote ignorance and incite racism probably doesn't help much either. They say you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink, and I imagine it is even harder to get it to drink water when it's already happily guzzling down the kool-aid.

That said, there are more and more people waking up and wanting to hear the truth, and learning how to speak the truth, and as long as that keeps happening I will always have hope. We just have to keep speaking the truth, in different ways to different people, and hope that in time the tide shifts.

*Who or what do you pin your hopes on to provide the momentum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to attain their desired sovereignty?*

We already have our sovereignty, but we lack the power to fully express it in light of an ongoing forced occupation in the form of the Australian nation state. I don't pin my hopes on a white saviour, or a black saviour for that matter, to change that. Our history shows us that the strength of our communities and our cultures has always been collective strength, not that of individuals.

We are strongest together, and with that strength comes strategy, capacity building and opportunity.

*You're not a great fan of National Reconciliation Week, but wouldn't you agree that it provides a useful platform for honest discussions?*

I've done alright at having honest discussions on other weeks, but if others find it creates opportunities for them to have those convos then that's awesome. My concerns have more been about how many Indigenous staff members and community members are expected to perform unpaid, unrecognised and unappreciated labour, exploit their own social and cultural capital, and placate white egos in order to allow organisations to make the appearance they give a shit while not actually doing anything.

Too many organisations want the celebration but don't want to do the work, and like I tell my kids, "If you want dessert you need to eat your veggies first!"

*What would it take to achieve real progress in the key closing the gap targets for Indigenous health, education, employment and housing?*

A sincere desire to do so, coupled with adequate resourcing, policy frameworks, and accountability for those responsible for achieving it.



# RESPECT AND ROAD SAFETY AT FOREFRONT FOR LATEST NRMA INSURANCE BILLBOARDS

*A billboard outside Singleton (Wonnarua Country). Image courtesy of Insurance Australia Group.*

**By Rob Corrigan**

Have you ever been on a road trip and wondered whose Country you're travelling on? Unless you're acutely familiar with the AIATSIS map of Aboriginal Australia, or live in that area yourself, it can be difficult to immediately know who the local Aboriginal people or Traditional Owners are.

NRMA Insurance is attempting to address this issue across NSW, with its latest billboard road safety messaging. Prior to 2019 NAIDOC Week, three billboards were installed that acknowledge First Nations peoples: one in Sydney's Heathcote area, home to the Dharawal nation; another outside Singleton acknowledging the Wonnarua people; and a third near Dubbo in Wiradjuri Country.

Created for the dual purpose of promoting road safety and acknowledging Country, each prominent billboard features artwork by an Aboriginal artist from the area. The initiative was executed by NRMA Insurance's parent company, Insurance Australia Group (IAG), in collaboration with the Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative, the respective local councils and Aboriginal Land Councils of each region. By the end of October, a further seven billboards are expected to be installed in other parts of NSW.

IAG undertook this special project as part of its third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), an Elevate RAP. IAG Manager of Indigenous Engagement, Mr Lee Hinton said IAG's consultative and collaborative approach saw the initiative become a reality in less than a year.

"In early 2019, a member of our communications team was listening to a conversation on Wendy Harmer's ABC radio show, which involved a conversation around billboards," Mr Hinton explained. "Our communications and marketing team thought that creating billboards acknowledging Country would be a great idea and they approached me about a way to make this happen.

"I initially created a list of around 15 sites in NSW that might be suitable, based on traffic volumes and prominence of a billboard site," he said. "This was reduced to three in key areas we wished to target – one in the Sydney Metro area, one in the Hunter Valley and one in Wiradjuri Country.

"We respectfully approached the Aboriginal Land Councils in each location to seek their support for the idea, and that consultative approach made it smooth sailing," Mr Hinton said.

"IAG then engaged Boomalli to find artists with genuine connections to each Country.

"Those artists submitted a series of potential artworks for the project, with the final selections being purchased from the artists by IAG to be used exclusively for these billboards."

The billboards are a practical example of how a RAP action can promote reconciliation and advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, whilst at the same time align with the core business of the respective RAP partner. Both IAG and NRMA Insurance promote driver safety as a part of their regular operations, but by involving local Aboriginal people in delivering their message, they have produced a product that will stimulate positive conversations amongst drivers and their passengers throughout NSW.

Mr Hinton is optimistic that the same approach could work in other sectors.

"I think there is broad scope for different companies to do something similar, acknowledging their local community in a way that also aligns with their core business," he said. "This is especially so for major corporates with employees who can gain a real sense of pride in this process and the outcome."

# BREAKING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

*Desharni from Indulkana Anangu School exploring the Pitjantjatjara language using the Living First Language Platform. Image courtesy of the ALNF.*

**With 2019 being the International Year of Indigenous Languages, we're encouraging Australians to reflect on the important connection between the revitalisation and preservation of Australia's Indigenous languages and reconciliation.**

For tens of thousands of years, hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages have been spoken across Australia. At the time of European colonisation, there were at least 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages spoken across the continent.

In 2014, the National Indigenous Languages Survey Report estimated that only 120 of Australia's First Languages were still being spoken, with just 13 of these being considered 'strong'. It's estimated about 100 of those languages are considered severely or critically endangered, meaning they are at risk of becoming no longer spoken, or 'sleeping.'

The damage done to the state of First Languages in Australia is, in many ways, reflective of the disrespectful, inequitable relationships that have existed between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians throughout history. First Languages maintenance, revitalisation and revival processes can therefore be recognised as important acts of reconciliation.

Where appropriate, engaging non-Indigenous Australians with language revitalisation helps to build understanding and a shared sense of pride.

At Reconciliation Australia, staff in the Canberra office undertook a Ngannawal language class which gave them the confidence to acknowledge Country in the local Ngannawal language.

In 2015, Greg Hanthorn, a Terminal Operator for Origin Energy on the NSW north coast, jumped at the opportunity to learn the local Gumbaynggirr language, following the launch of Origin's RAP. He also studied local Aboriginal languages at TAFE and is now sharing with his family, friends and colleagues how language preservation is linked with reconciliation.

There are many ways that you can get involved in language revitalisation in Australia. Here are several ideas to get you started:

- Visit [narragunnawali.org.au](http://narragunnawali.org.au) for information, actions and webinars on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.
- Jingeri\*! After fulfilling his obligations as the 2018 Commonwealth Games Mascot, Borobi the Koala has found a new purpose in helping to revive the Yugambeh language. Visit [yugambeh.com](http://yugambeh.com) to find out more about Borobi and the Yugambeh Museum Language and Research Centre. Don't forget to follow @BorobiJingeri on social media too.  
\*Jingeri means hello in Yugambeh.
- Discover the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF)'s Living First Language Program, which preserves and revitalises Indigenous First Languages and turns them into dynamic, community-led and interactive digital literacy apps. Head to [alnf.org](http://alnf.org) to learn more and find out how you can offer support.
- Visit [aiatsis.gov.au](http://aiatsis.gov.au) to find out about their language research projects. Be inspired to help by reading about Rachel Perkin's Arrernte Women's Project on page 12.
- See how First Languages Australia is working toward a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language communities have full command of their languages and can use them as much as they wish to. Head to [firstlanguages.org.au](http://firstlanguages.org.au) to learn more and sign-up to their newsletter.

# TWELVE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS TO FOLLOW

By Alex Bleasdale

Social media is somewhat disputed ground in this day and age. On one hand, we're constantly being told it's bad for us, that it's ruining the way we relate to each other, and that it's making us into unthinking, phone-addicted, narcissistic zombies.

On the other hand, research from *The Guardian* suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people use social media more than the non-Indigenous population, and what's more, they use it in different and more diverse ways.

Whether you love the 'gram' or you're a 'retweet-queen', we have compiled a list of social media platforms to follow that could help you learn something new; or maybe even challenge you a little on your morning scroll. Get liking.

## 1. @indigenousX

**Platform: Twitter, Facebook and Instagram**

For the past seven years, independent media platform *IndigenousX* has used social media, particularly Twitter, to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories overlooked by traditional media into the spotlight. With a rotating cast of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hosts, the content is always dynamic, diverse, and often, challenging – in a good way. Follow *IndigenousX* to not only stay at the forefront of the political, social and cultural issues that matter, but also to be reminded daily of the incredible diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writing, thought and opinion.

*Check out our interview with founder of IndigenousX, Luke Pearson on page 18.*

## 2. @AnitaHeiss

**Platform: Twitter**

Dr Anita Heiss' Twitter account is a refuge for all you book-lovers and voracious readers out there. A successful author in a frankly intimidating number of genres, Dr Heiss' books include non-fiction that speak to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience, including *Growing Up Aboriginal in Australia* and *Am I Black Enough For You?* A lifetime ambassador of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation, Dr Heiss' Twitter is equal parts informative, entertaining and inspiring. Come for tips on the next writer's festival, stay for the 'what book to read next' recommendations.

## 3. The Healing Foundation

**Platform: Youtube**

The Healing Foundation is a national organisation that works alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to help heal the trauma of forced removals of children. From interviews with members of the Stolen Generations, to animations on the impacts of intergenerational trauma, their YouTube page provides depth of knowledge on our nation's history of forced removals and its ongoing consequences. Whether you want to become more informed yourself, or perhaps you wish to educate others, the Healing Foundation's videos are personal, accessible and always informative.

## 4. @ausindigenousfashion

**Platforms: Instagram and Facebook**

The @ausindigenousfashion Instagram and Facebook accounts will add a much needed dose of colour, style and artfully-placed feather boas to your feed. From swimsuits inspired by the vibrancy of the Torres Strait, to showcasing the best of couture from the Darwin Art Fair, this account revels in just how avant-garde, flourishing, and delightful Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fashion industry has become. But a word from the wise – online shopping is a slippery-slope, and this account might be the one to tip you over the edge!

*Check out our style page on page 26.*

## 5. @UN4Indigenous

**Platform: Twitter**

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is the United Nations' body that deals exclusively with Indigenous issues and in doing so, encourages cooperation between Indigenous peoples around the world. With 2019 being declared by the UN as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, the UN4Indigenous twitter is flooded by a multitude of tongues. Follow to not only learn about the richly diverse traditions, cultures and languages that make up our world's First Nations people, but to understand the global issues that unite them.

## 6. @magabalabooks

**Platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram**

Magabala Books' social media accounts will make you want to read, read, read – or better yet, inspire you to write. You might even be inspired to plan a trip to Broome to visit their bookshop in person. As Australia's oldest independent Indigenous publishing house, Magabala Books has stories to tell and a passion for helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors tell theirs. Follow to learn more about the books they publish and the talented authors and illustrators behind the tales.

## 7. @purplehousedialysis

**Platforms: Instagram, Facebook and Twitter (via @WDNWPT)**

Purple House is an innovative Indigenous-owned and run health service providing kidney dialysis in the most remote parts of Australia, with the goal of getting patients back home so that families and culture can remain strong. Their social media accounts are full of chickens, purple wigs, and smiles! Follow for the celebration of the good things big and small – from flowers growing in the garden at Mt Liebig, to someone moving back to community.

## 8. @NITV

**Platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (via @nitv\_au)**

National Indigenous Television (NITV) is Australia's primary television station made by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Their social media accounts colourfully go behind the scenes of many of their programs. NITV in particular use Instagram in fun and creative ways to educate their followers on important events from history. Follow and your Instagram-addiction becomes educational!

## 9. @tiddas4tiddas

**Platform: Instagram and Facebook**

Like all good online content, the @Tiddas4Tiddas initiative is meant to be enjoyed across multiple platforms. First and foremost a podcast, Kamilaroi and Dunghutti sisters Marlee and Keely Silva set out to create room in the 'mediascape' for the multitude of stories among young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Their Instagram and Facebook accounts are perfect visual extensions of these voices: diverse, informative and always empowering. @Tiddas4Tiddas distinctly feels like it is content made for and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, which is exactly why it is compelling and exciting listening for non-Indigenous women. Follow and learn something new.

## 10. @AIATSIS

**Platforms: Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (via @aiatsis\_)**

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is the world's foremost repository for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions, artefacts and languages. If you're a research-nut, love a meticulously curated exhibition, or interested cultural heritage, then the @AIATSIS Twitter, Facebook or Instagram accounts are for you.

## 11. @koorimail

**Platforms: Facebook and Twitter (via @koorimailnews)**

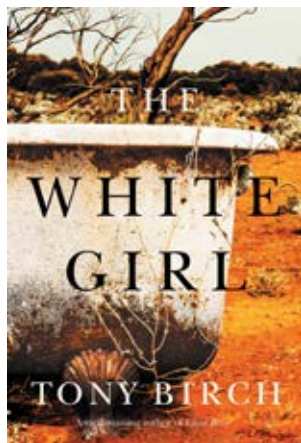
For almost 30 years, *The Koori Mail* has provided a much-needed space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander current affairs in print media. Their Facebook and Twitter accounts are a great way to get ahead on the stories they have coming up, and will also connect you with the perspectives of their long-time readers too, helping you to be a part of their community.

## 12. @mssgstickwalk

**Platform: Facebook**

In 2018, Gooreng Gooreng and Wakka Wakka man Alwyn Doolan started an 8,600km journey from Cape York to Canberra (via Tasmania), with the aim of meeting the Prime Minister to deliver Message Sticks on key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. His Facebook page chronicles his incredible and inspiring journey, with all of the highest-highs and the lowest-lows, in real time. Using social media in this way has allowed his followers to gain a real sense of what this walk took. Follow Alwyn for what is sure to be more uplifting journeys to come.

# BOOKS TO READ



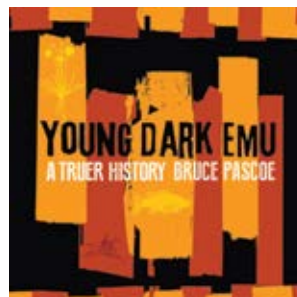
***The White Girl*  
by Tony Birch  
(University of  
Queensland Press)**

*It never failed to surprise Odette how white people were always going on about uplifting Aboriginal people, yet they would demand information about the old ways when it suited them.*

Tony Birch's new novel, *The White Girl*, is a closely-drawn look at the many different and devastating ways a single Aboriginal family can be torn apart through interference by the state. In the fictitious town of Deane, Aboriginal woman Odette Brown struggles to hold on to the precarious but precious life she has built with her beloved granddaughter, Sissy. Set in the oppressively paternalistic years that led up to the 1967 referendum, Birch wields the weight of historical accuracy to colour in the details of what life was like living under the Aboriginal Protection Act. When a righteous white policeman in her town is charged as the 'Guardian' of the local Aboriginal people, Odette must act to disrupt the repeated waves of outside intervention on the lives of the children in her community, or lose the granddaughter she adores.

While the depiction of this recent history will leave you reeling, it's Odette's singular and extraordinary love for her family that stays with you long after you put the book down. Read *The White Girl* for Birch's deft ability to find tenderness and hope where you least expect it.

**Reviewed by Alex Bleasdale.**



***Young Dark Emu - A Truer History*  
by Bruce Pascoe  
(Magabala Books)**

Bruce Pascoe has collected a swathe of literary awards for *Dark Emu* and now he has brought together the research and compelling first person

accounts in a book for younger readers. Using the accounts of early European explorers, colonists and farmers, Bruce Pascoe compellingly argues for a reconsideration of the hunter-gatherer label for pre-colonial Aboriginal Australians. He allows the reader to see Australia as it was before Europeans arrived – a land of cultivated farming areas, productive fisheries, permanent homes, and an understanding of the environment and its natural resources that supported thriving villages across the continent.

*Young Dark Emu - A Truer History* asks young readers to consider a different version of Australia's history pre-European colonisation.



***Kindred* by Kirli  
Saunders (Magabala  
Books)**

Kirli Saunders' debut poetry collection is a pleasure to lose yourself in. Kirli has a keen eye for observation, humour and big themes that surround Love/Connection/Loss in an engaging style, complemented by evocative and poignant imagery.

It talks to identity, culture, community and the role of Earth as healer.

*Kindred* has the ability to grab hold of the personal in the universal and reflect this back to the reader.



***The Yield* by Tara June Winch (Penguin Random House Australia)**

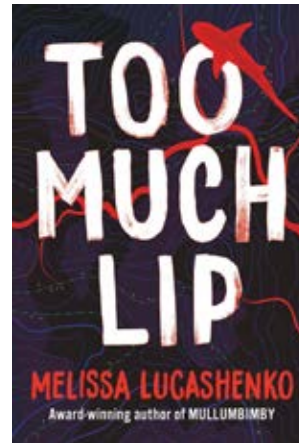
*I was born on Ngurambang – can you hear it? – Nguram-bang. If you say it right it hits the back of your mouth and you should taste blood in your words.*

August Gondiwindi is returning to Country to

attend the funeral of her brilliant and eccentric grandfather, Albert Gondiwindi, after years overseas. Grief stricken and shocked to learn a mining company is due to evict her grandmother from their ancestral home, August turns to searching for a Wiradjuri dictionary handwritten by Albert to support her family's Native Title claim. Albert's dictionary, and its personal and evocative entries, becomes the beating heart of *The Yield*, weaving its cross-generational narratives into one. As such the Wiradjuri language, spoken word and ways of naming combine into a living and magical presence in the book, a character unto itself.

This book challenges grand and timely issues using the deeply personal. While *The Yield* will be remembered for its long overdue deep-dive into the particulars of the Wiradjuri language, readers will come away affected by Winch's skilful depiction of the universal ways in which homecomings can be painful.

**Reviewed by Alex Bleasdale.**



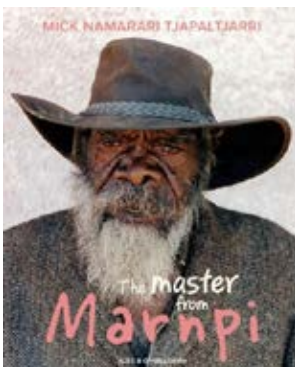
***Too Much Lip* by Melissa Lucashenko (University of Queensland Press)**

*Too much lip, her old problem from way back. And the older she got, the harder it seemed to get to swallow her opinions. The avalanche of bullshit in the world would drown her if she let it; the least she could do was raise her voice in anger.*

Wise-cracking Kerry Salter has spent a lifetime avoiding two things – her hometown and prison. But now her Pop is dying and she's an inch away from the lockup, so she heads south on a stolen Harley.

Kerry plans to spend twenty-four hours, *tops*, over the border. She quickly discovers, though, that Bundjalung country has a funny way of grabbing on to people. Old family wounds open as the Salters fight to stop the development of their beloved river. And the unexpected arrival on the scene of a good-looking dugai fella intent on loving her up only adds more trouble – but then trouble is Kerry's middle name.

Gritty and darkly hilarious, *Too Much Lip* offers redemption and forgiveness where none seems possible.



***The Master from Marnpi* By Dr Alec O'Halloran (LifeDesign)**

*The Master from Marnpi* is the biography of Pintupi man, Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri (c1923-98) who became an award-winning Papunya Tula artist.

Namarari is a worthy choice as a biographical subject. He

won the National Aboriginal Art Award (1991) and the Alice Prize (1994, co-winner), and was the inaugural recipient of the Commonwealth's prestigious Red Ochre Award (1994) – the only artist to receive all three awards. Yet there is no published biography of Namarari, only sketches, and no fulsome account of his innovative art practice or outstanding career.

This story provides insights into the colonisation of Central Australia and the tenacity of the Pintupi people. Namarari's biography illuminates the circumstances of desert living and remote settlements for metropolitan readers, and offers some background for understanding contemporary communities and the link between remote artists and the marketplace.

This book is for people wishing to learn about Namarari, Pintupi people and culture, Aboriginal art, Papunya Tula Artists and twentieth century Central Australian history.

# STYLE

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designed and crafted fashion, homewares and more



Earrings, \$59 Beanie, \$30 and Stud earrings, \$25  
[bandtshirts.com.au/shop/baker-boy](http://bandtshirts.com.au/shop/baker-boy)  
 Photographer: Charlie Ashfield.  
 MUA: Eleanna Hingston.  
 Stylist: Aurie Spencer-Gill.  
 Models: Tea Angles, Tina De Melo, Aurie Spencer-Gill and Baker Boy (Danzal Baker).  
 Designed in collaboration between Baker Boy (Danzal Baker), Aurie Spencer-Gill and Haus of Dizzy (Kristy Dickinson).



People pin, \$20  
[rachaelsarra.com](http://rachaelsarra.com)



Meeting place pin, \$20  
[rachaelsarra.com](http://rachaelsarra.com)



Raffia basket with lid, \$65  
[mickybarlow.com.au](http://mickybarlow.com.au)

Lubly hoodie, \$119  
[gamminthreads.com](http://gamminthreads.com)



Quandong serving tray, \$145  
[mickybarlow.com.au](http://mickybarlow.com.au)



Self care tote, \$34  
[gamminthreads.com](http://gamminthreads.com)

Dhari white polo shirt, \$47.49  
[bwtribal.com](http://bwtribal.com)





Gandjiwang (bat) earrings, \$45  
gillawarraarts.com

Earrings, \$59  
bandtshirts.com.au/shop/baker-boy



Keens tee, \$59  
gamminthreads.com



Beanie, \$30  
bandtshirts.com.au/shop/baker-boy



Sunset Earth earrings, \$79  
gillawarraarts.com



Waterholes gym towel, \$18.99  
bwtribal.com



Painted quandong and ininti seed necklace, \$120  
mickybarlow.com.au

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# National Reconciliation Action Plan Conference 2019

Walking Together, Working Together

23 – 25 October 2019 | RAC Arena, Perth, Western Australia

Reconciliation Australia, along with Reconciliation WA and Curtin University are proud to co-host the National Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Conference 2019: Walking Together, Working Together, alongside Supporting Partner RAC and Welcome Event Partner Woodside Energy.

RAP partners and organisations interested to know how they can contribute to reconciliation in Australia are invited to attend.

For details and to register, visit:  
**[reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans](https://reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans)**

