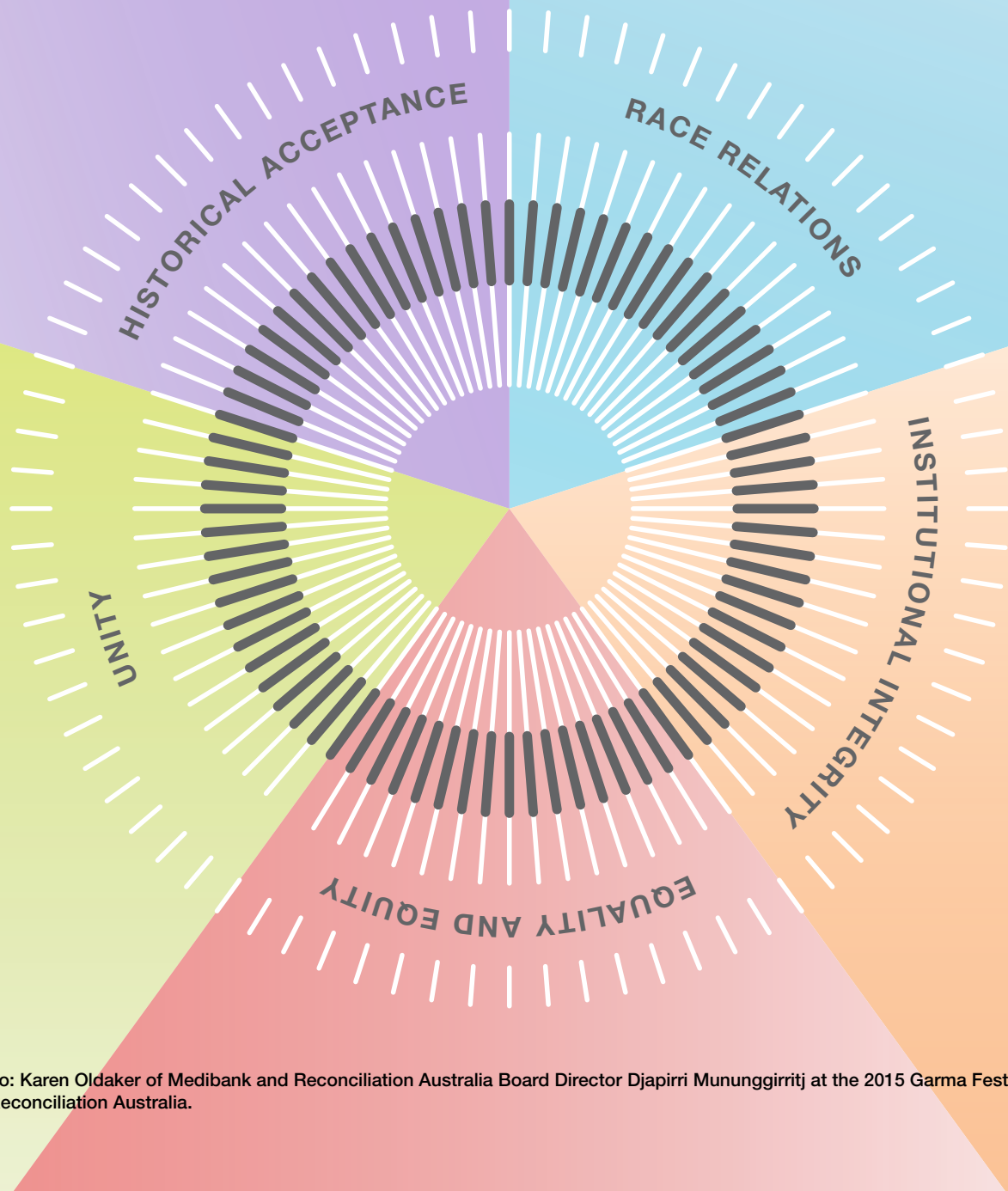


# 2014 Australian Reconciliation Barometer





Cover photo: Karen Oldaker of Medibank and Reconciliation Australia Board Director Djapirri Mununggirritj at the 2015 Garma Festival.  
Image by Reconciliation Australia.

# What is the Australian Reconciliation Barometer?

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer (the Barometer) is a biennial, national research study that measures the progress of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.

At Reconciliation Australia we partner with business, government, education and the community sector to achieve our vision for a reconciled, just and equitable Australia. The tool we use to track our progress towards reconciliation is the Australian Reconciliation Barometer.

This fourth edition of the Barometer shows that there is much goodwill for reconciliation. The vast majority of Australians believe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians is important, and most Australians have a desire to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Additionally, most Australians believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold an important and significant place as the First Australians.

Despite these positive results, there are areas that need significant improvement. For example, we do not agree on a set of facts about our shared history, particularly in relation to the colonisation of Australia. Too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples still experience racial prejudice, the trust between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians is low and we still have to encourage institutions to work towards closing the gap in equality. Significantly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to feel less secure in their cultural rights than other Australians—this is a potential barrier to improving our relationship.

The goodwill for reconciliation indicates that we can continue to make strong progress towards a reconciled nation.

## How do we measure reconciliation?

In 2014, the Barometer used five dimensions to measure progress towards reconciliation:

- **Historical acceptance:** Whether all Australians acknowledge the injustices and actions of the past and their impacts (both historical and contemporary) and are making amends for past wrongs.
- **Race relations:** The importance of the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, as well as the perceived and experienced levels of trust, discrimination and prejudice between us.
- **Institutional integrity:** Whether the nation's political, organisational and community structures and leadership actively support the achievement of reconciliation.
- **Equality and equity:** Material equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in areas such as health, education and employment, as well as cultural security and the ability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to freely exercise self-determination and their individual and collective rights as First Peoples.
- **Unity:** Recognition and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and whether these are viewed as an integral part of a shared national identity by all Australians.

# Historical acceptance

The vast majority of us believe that all Australians should learn about past issues of European settlement, but not many of us can agree on how past wrongs impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Building a better understanding of the past can lead to a better future.



Photo: Artwork at the 2015 National Reconciliation Week launch on the Gold Coast. Image by Reconciliation Australia.

# Key findings across the five dimensions of reconciliation

## We widely agree it is important to learn more about past issues, but are unable to accept some facts

**85%**

of the general community and



**92%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians believe it is important to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories.

**35%**



of the general community do not accept, or are unsure about,

the fact that government policy enabled Aboriginal children to be removed from their families without permission.

## We also don't agree on the ongoing impact of past wrongs



**The general community are far less likely to agree that past government policies are responsible for**

many forms of disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

**More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents strongly agree**

past policies have been a cause of poor education (**41%**), and discrimination (**38%**), compared to just **17%** respectively of the general community.

**36%**

**of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents strongly agree**

past policies have been a cause of the lack of respect for their people, and inadequate living conditions (**37%**), compared to just **15%** and **14%** respectively of the general community.

# Race relations

Currently, our trust for each other is low and levels of prejudice are too high. We must strive to improve race relations, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still too likely to experience racism.



Photo: The Marruk Project, winners of Category B in the 2014 Indigenous Governance Awards. Image by Wayne Quilliam.

# Key findings across the five dimensions of reconciliation

## Almost all of us believe our relationship is important



**86%**

**of the general population and**

**96%** of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population believe the relationship between us is important.



**of non-Indigenous Australians believe we are better off with many cultural groups.**

## Trust is low

**Only 26%**

**of the general population believe trust is high**

for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and **39%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents believe their trust is high for non-Indigenous Australians.

## Prejudice is high

**45%**

**of general respondents believe prejudice is high**

and **62%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents believe prejudice is high.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**

**are more likely to believe Australia is a racist country.**

**35%** of the general community believe Australia is a racist country, while **48%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents believe it is.

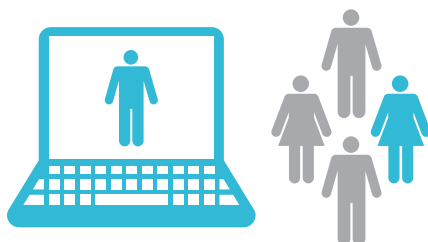
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## Our level of personal interaction is low



**Only 30%**

of the general community socialise with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.



**When people learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures**

through personal experience or education, they are more likely to believe the relationship is very important compared to when people learn from the media (**48% vs 38%**).

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## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are more likely to have experienced and witnessed racial prejudice in the past six months



**of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have experienced verbal abuse**

in the last 6 months compared to **13%** of the general population.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians**

**are also more likely to have witnessed racial prejudice in the past 6 months.**

**42%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have witnessed verbal abuse in the last 6 months compared to **22%** of the general population.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are much more likely to experience racial discrimination.**

**25%**

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have experienced discrimination from teachers or principals and their employer. This compares to **7%** of the general community who have experienced discrimination at school and **12%** of the general community who have experienced discrimination at work.



Photo: Sarah Brown and Patrick Tjungarra at Western Desert Dialysis. Image by Justin Brierty courtesy of The Centralian Advocate.

# Institutional integrity

There is a high perception that institutions can do more to advance reconciliation.

Building trust and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all institutions will be crucial to the progress of reconciliation.



Photo: Representatives from Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly, Indigenous Governance Awards 2012 finalists. Image by Wayne Quilliam.

# Key findings across the five dimensions of reconciliation

## Most Australians believe community, business, government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations all need to do more to reduce problems of prejudice and to improve the relationship



### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents

are more likely to think organisations should do more than general community respondents (**58-76% vs 44-57%**).

### Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

and non-Indigenous Australians believe the government sector needs to do more.



## Most of us believe that institutions can do more to reduce prejudice and discrimination

	National sample	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sample
Government departments	57%	76%
Private sector businesses	44%	65%
Community sector organisations	45%	63%

Proportion of respondents who believe institutions should do more to reduce problems of discrimination and prejudice between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples.

# Equality and equity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel less secure in their cultural and material rights than other Australians. Improving cultural security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is likely to improve relationships and outcomes.



Photo: Employees from Australian Red Cross. Image by Cole Bennetts.

# Key findings across the five dimensions of reconciliation

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are more likely to consider their living conditions to be worse than other people's and are more likely to see barriers to employment and education**

**28%**   
**of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples believe**

their living conditions are worse than the majority of Australians compared to **15%** of the general population.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more likely to feel that employers in Australia do not follow equal opportunity laws and practices**

**34%** 

compared with the general community (24%).

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents more widely disagree that the education system prepares children well for employment**

**45%** 

compared with the general community (39%).

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel less secure in their cultural rights than other Australians**



**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more likely to believe other cultures are harmful to theirs**

compared to the general community (33% compared to 15%).

**Only 51%**

**of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents feel they can be true to their culture or personal beliefs.**

This is compared to **69%** of the general community who feel they can be true to themselves.



**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are less likely to feel they have the right or opportunity to raise issues**

compared to the general community (47-50% compared to 53-59%).

# Unity

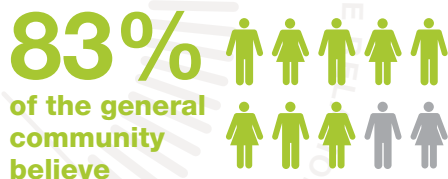
Almost all Australians believe it is important to know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories, but we currently know little. We believe we can become a reconciled nation, but don't know what to do to achieve this. The challenge that stands before us is to turn this goodwill into action, to increase pride in, and to celebrate, the diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.



Photo: Kyle Vander-Kuyp, Jade Hull and Ralph White from AFL Sportsready Education and Employment team. Image by Cole Bennetts.

# Key findings across the five dimensions of reconciliation

## Our levels of knowledge are low, but we believe it is important to know more



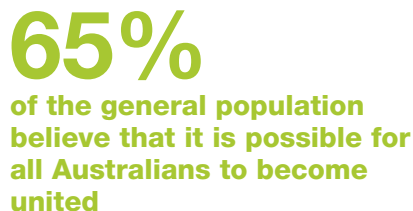
it is important to know about the histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and **80%** believe it is important to know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories should be a compulsory part of the school curriculum.

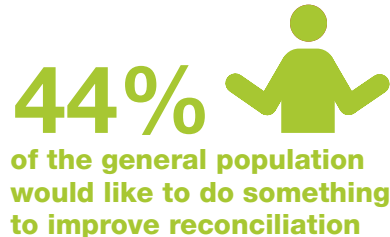


## We believe that we can become a better and reconciled nation



and **70%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents believe this.

## Some of us would like to do something to contribute to reconciliation, but most of us don't know how



but only **24%** know what they can do.



but only **47%** know what they can do.

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## We believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold a unique place as the First Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are important to Australia's national identity

**71%**  
of the general  
community and

**87%**

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Australians believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander peoples hold a unique place as the  
First Australians.



**72%**

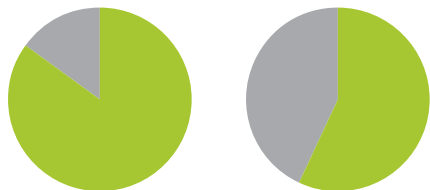


of the general community and

**87%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Australians believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander cultures are important to Australia's  
national identity.

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## We are generally proud of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures



**More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
respondents than non-Indigenous  
respondents are proud of Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander cultures**

**85%** compared to **57%**.

**These results have increased  
slightly from the 2012 Australian  
Reconciliation Barometer for the  
general population**

**57% in 2014**

**vs 51% in 2012**, but have decreased slightly for  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents  
**(85% in 2014 vs 97% in 2012)**.



Photo: Girringun Board Director Claude Beeron with Giringun Chair Charlie Morganson at Giringun Art Centre in Cardwell.  
Image by Wayne Quilliam.

# What can I do?

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer provides evidence that we are making progress towards achieving our vision for a reconciled, just and equitable nation, but we still have a significant amount of work to do.

Contributing to reconciliation can sometimes seem difficult, but there are many ways we can work together to build better relationships across our workplaces, schools and communities. Here are a few ideas:

- Learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, peoples and cultures through Reconciliation Australia's online cultural awareness program. It's free to use, and is designed to take you on an awareness-raising journey. Start your journey at [www.shareourpride.org.au](http://www.shareourpride.org.au)
- Take part in National Reconciliation Week, or hold your own event between 27 May and 3 June (each year). Visit [www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw) to find out more.
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in your workplace, organisation or community group. Visit the RAP online hub to find out more at [www.reconciliation.org.au/raphub](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/raphub)
- Join the Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning program to support your school or early learning service to develop environments that foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures. [www.reconciliation.org.au/schools](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/schools)
- Become a friend of Reconciliation Australia on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ReconciliationAus](https://www.facebook.com/ReconciliationAus), or follow us on Twitter @RecAustralia to keep in touch with news and the latest developments in reconciliation.
- Get involved with your state or local reconciliation group.
- Find out more about RECOGNISE—the campaign to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution and remove racial discrimination. You can show your support at [www.recognise.org.au](http://www.recognise.org.au)
- Talk at home, work, or with your friends about the results of the Australian Reconciliation Barometer. Help others put the results in context and reflect on your own relationships with friends and family by asking: What are the ingredients of a good relationship? What makes you feel respected and what happens when you feel disrespected? What do you do to build trust in your personal relationships?

The full report for the 2014 Australian Reconciliation Barometer is available at [www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au)





Photo: Members of the National Indigenous Youth Parliament during National Reconciliation Week 2014. Image by Steve Keough.



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Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

