

Reconciliation News

Stories about Australia's journey to equality and unity

#NRW2025
poster
inside!

**Corroboree 2000
and The Bridge Walks**

What comes next?
It's the economy, stupid!

A Solid Rocker
Shane Howard and that song

BRIDGING NOW TO NEXT
NATIONAL RECONCILIATION
WEEK EDITION

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RECONCILIATION
AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation News is published by Reconciliation Australia in May and October each year. Its aim is to inform and inspire readers with stories relevant to the ongoing reconciliation process between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

CONTACT US



reconciliation.org.au



enquiries@reconciliation.org.au

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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 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** to find out more.

Cover image:

Iconic Australian musician Shane Howard joined Nardi Simpson and Barayagal – an intercultural community choir hosted by the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Sydney University – at the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. They sang Shane's hit song Solid Rock to commemorate 25 years since Corroboree 2000. Photo: BridgeClimb Sydney.

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FROM THE CEO

As we once again approach National Reconciliation Week it is essential that we take time to reflect on the progress in our nation's reconciliation journey and honour all those who have contributed. This year's theme, *Bridging Now to Next*, calls on us all to recommit to the movement for reconciliation and a better Australia.

The theme draws the ongoing connection between past, present and future and it reflects the unrelenting efforts by First Nations and non-Indigenous allies to achieve reconciliation, self-determination and justice.

This is the first edition of Reconciliation News since we farewelled co-chairs Professor Tom Calma AO and Ms Melinda Cileto who had led the organisation with great expertise and hard work for more than a decade. We are indeed fortunate that our new co-chairs, Kirstie Parker and Michael Rose are eminently qualified to lead Reconciliation Australia into the future. (Page 12)

It is now 25 years since Corroboree 2000 and the historic People's Walk for Reconciliation when more than 250,000 Australians crossed the Sydney Harbour Bridge to support reconciliation and justice for First Nations peoples.

I was among the crowds that weekend at both events and still – 25 years later – I clearly remember the display of support as breathtaking, surpassing any of our expectations.

Our story in this edition describes the scene in Sydney that day. (Pages 10-11)

Corroboree 2000 saw our predecessor, the Council for Aboriginal Recognition, present two historic documents, *The Australian Declaration towards Reconciliation* and the *Roadmap for Reconciliation*.

Among the strategies for achieving reconciliation in these documents was the *National Strategy for Economic Independence* which aimed for an Australia 'where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities can share the same levels of economic independence as the wider community.'

Early this year, the Coalition of Peaks released *Informing a Partnership on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Development*, based on feedback from more than 200 organisations. It reveals that First Nations communities are still not being properly consulted on government economic policies.

Chair of the First Nations Foundation and member of the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Council, Ian Hamm, writes about the paucity of government policies to promote economic self-determination in this edition. 'Aboriginal Australians are some of the most clever, industrious and able people that this country has – and we, as a nation, are wasting this invaluable resource.' (Page 20)

But as Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation CEO, Nathan McIvor, explains, First Nations communities are not waiting idly for government policies to change; they are getting on with the job of developing sustainable economic opportunities. 'We don't want to be beholden to the government, we want to be change makers for our own family, for our own selves'. (Pages 22-23)



CEO Karen Mundine. Photo: Joseph Mayers

In Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait Islands) Joey Laifoo explains how he built a cultural tourism business, Island Stars, for the renewal of *ailan kostam* (Island Custom) and for economic and employment opportunities for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. (Page 19)

Singer-songwriter Shane Howard talks to us about how his song, *Solid Rock*, chosen for the *Voices for Reconciliation* community choirs event this National Reconciliation Week, became an unlikely hit. Shane has this advice for choirs, 'Sing it with gusto, sing it like you mean it, sing it like it matters, because it does. Sing it like we are on a journey to somewhere much better because we are.' (Pages 24 – 25)

Shane is right, Australians ARE on a journey to 'somewhere better' and I hope these Reconciliation News stories will inspire readers to work harder for reconciliation and justice to bring our destination closer.

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

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer

UPCOMING EVENTS



AIATSIS Summit 2025

2-6 June

This annual event from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies brings together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, leaders and youth, Native Title representatives, academics, cultural institutions and government representatives, to collaborate on key First Nations issues. The 2025 summit is at Garramilla (Darwin), on the Lands of the Larrakia Nation.

aiatsis.gov.au/whats-new/events/aiatsis-summit-2025



Lowitja – A Life of Leadership and Legacy

4 June-25 July

Celebrating Yankunytjatjara woman Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, this exhibition charts her life from childhood, through an early career in healthcare, to becoming one of Australia's most loved and respected Aboriginal leaders. The free exhibition is presented at the Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre at the University of South Australia, in collaboration with the Lowitja Institute and Lowitja O'Donoghue Foundation.

unisa.edu.au/connect/hawke-centre/events-and-exhibitions/exhibitions/2025/exhibition-lowitja-a-life-of-leadership/



NAIDOC Week 2025

6-13 July

This year marks the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC Week; 50 years of honouring and elevating Indigenous voices, culture, and resilience. The 2025 theme is *The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy* which celebrates not only the achievements of the past but also looks ahead to the future. Keep an eye on the NAIDOC website for resources and events near you.

naidoc.org.au



Supply Nation Connect 2025

20-21 August

Supply Nation's flagship event will bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, corporate organisations and government departments for a two-day tradeshow. Connect 2025 fosters opportunities for collaboration and procurement and celebrates the success of the Indigenous business sector through the Supplier Diversity Awards Gala Dinner. The event this year will be on Gadigal Country at the ICC in Sydney – tickets on sale now!

connect.supplynation.org.au



SNAICC'25

7-9 October

The theme for this year's SNAICC National Conference *Our Culture. Keep it Strong. We Belong.* reinforces the importance of cultural identity and belonging in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The 11th annual conference from SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is on at Meenjin Brisbane.

snaicc.org.au/snaicc-national-conference/



Narragunnawali Awards 2025

6 November

Schools and early learning services across Australia showing outstanding commitment to reconciliation initiatives will be celebrated at the Narragunnawali Awards 2025. The awards night will be preceded by a day-long forum where educators can connect with the wider education sector to advance the ongoing work of reconciliation in education.

reconciliation.org.au/narragunnawali-reconciliation-in-education/

RECONCILIATION RECAP



National RAP Conference 2024
6 – 7 November 2024

In November, Reconciliation Australia welcomed more than 800 reconciliation leaders and supporters to the Brisbane Conference and Exhibition Centre in Meanjin for the National Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Conference.

Delegates from the corporate, legal, cultural, sport and government sectors came together to share strategies for advancing reconciliation, and to show how RAPs are a potent force in building a just and reconciled Australia.

The conference featured more than 70 speakers across the two days, with sessions focused on listening, learning and collaboration to tackle the work needed to progress anti-racism, truth-telling and economic justice at this critical point in the reconciliation process.

Keynote speaker, Ian Hamm, challenged RAP partners to do more to make sure First Nations peoples benefit from the Australian economy. *Read more from Ian Hamm on page 20.*

To learn more about the impact of RAPs, head over to:
reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans/rap-impact/

L-R: Director, First Nations at SBS Tanya Denning-Orman, First Nations Lead at Ashurst Trent Wallace, National Indigenous Youth Education Coalition CEO Hayley McQuire, and Good.Human CEO and Reconciliation Australia Board Director Rana Hussain at the plenary panel on racism action. Photo: Lewis James Bin Doraho



Indigenous Governance Awards 2024
6 November 2024

The Indigenous Governance Awards Gala, held on the first night of the RAP Conference, celebrated the work of the nine finalists and honoured the winners of the 2024 awards.

The organisations, Learning on Country Program (Northern Land Council), Melythina Tiakana Warrana Aboriginal Corporation, and Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation took out the three awards on the night.

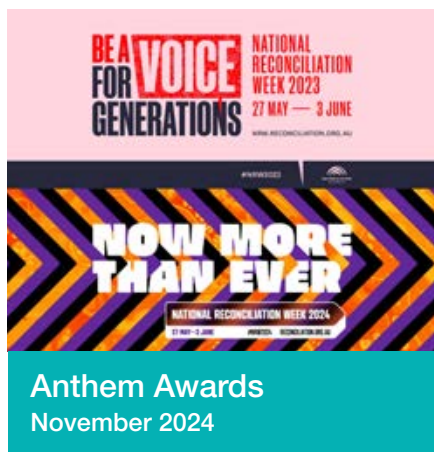
Proud Torres Strait Islander woman Carla McGrath hosted the evening and Electric Fields capped off the night with a stunning live performance showcasing their culture, energy and spirit.

The Indigenous Governance Awards are held every two years and recognise the strength, innovation and governance capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations across Australia.

They are presented by Reconciliation Australia in partnership with the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute and the BHP Foundation.

Learn more about the 2024 awards:
reconciliation.org.au/indigenous-governance-awards/

All the winners and finalists in the Indigenous Governance Awards 2024. Photo: Tom Hoy, Wirrim Media



Anthem Awards
November 2024

The National Reconciliation Week 2023 and 2024 campaigns – *Be a Voice for Generations* and *Now More Than Ever* – won top honours in the non-profit category at the 4th annual Anthem Awards, beating more than 2,300 entries from over thirty countries.

The Anthem Awards are the world's largest and most comprehensive social impact award. The campaigns were recognised for their impact in community engagement for diversity, equity and inclusion causes.

Reconciliation Australia CEO, Karen Mundine, thanked Carbon Creative, our partner agency on both campaigns, and noted that 'this success is also a reflection on our partnership with thousands of businesses, schools, sporting clubs, cultural institutions and not-for-profits which year after year back our efforts for a better Australia.'

Read our full statement: reconciliation.org.au/news-and-media/news



Queensland Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry November 2024

In November 2024, the newly elected Queensland Government announced it would abolish the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry that had been in operation for only five months.

The announcement was made without a meeting or conversation between the Inquiry members and the new government.

Reconciliation Australia was among the many organisations and individuals urging the government to reverse its decision, stressing the importance of these truth-telling processes in enabling Australians to learn the truth of our history.

Joshua Creamer – the then chair of the Inquiry – described the cessation of the Inquiry's work as a continuation

of, '...165 years of government failing to listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.'

He was speaking at a press conference held by the Inquiry on the first day of the National RAP Conference where Mr Creamer was due to speak. However, he was informed by the Queensland Government that he would not be permitted to speak.

The scrapping of the Inquiry means the Yoorrook Justice Commission in Victoria remains the only state-based formal truth-telling process underway in Australia.

It also brings into sharper focus the importance of community-based truth-telling to the future of reconciliation in Australia.

Read Reconciliation Australia's statement: reconciliation.org.au/news-and-media/news

L-R: Inquiry members Ivan Ingram and Cheryl Buchanan, Reconciliation Australia CEO Karen Mundine, Inquiry Chair Joshua Creamer, Yoorrook Justice Commissioner Sue Anne Hunter and Inquiry member The Hon. Roslyn Atkinson AO at the National RAP Conference 2024. Photo: Lewis James Bin Doraho



2025 Australian of the Year Awards Afternoon Tea 23 January 2025

Reconciliation Australia hosted its annual event celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 2025 Australian of the Year Awards finalists and non-Indigenous finalists who work closely with First Nations communities.

Finalists Grant Ngulmiya Nundhirribala (Northern Territory Australian of the Year), Charles Jackson OAM (South Australian Senior Australian of the Year), Dr Katrina Wruck (Queensland Young Australian of the Year) and

Maddison O'Grady-Lee (New South Wales Young Australian of the Year) were accompanied by family, friends and special guests at the event on Ngannawal Country.

Dr Wruck went on to win 2025 Young Australian of the Year for her research into green chemistry. With a focus on reducing global contamination, Katrina's postdoctoral research examines how to break down dangerous 'forever chemicals' into benign ones. Her method of converting mining by-products into compounds able to remove contaminants from water will benefit many communities.

Learn more about the 2025 finalists: australianoftheyear.org.au

Australian of the Year Awards finalists L-R: Grant Ngulmiya Nundhirribala, Dr Katrina Wruck and Maddison O'Grady-Lee with Reconciliation Australia CEO Karen Mundine (absent: Charles Jackson OAM). Photo: Jess Whaler

BRIDGING NOW TO NEXT: NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

The #NRW2025 theme, *Bridging Now to Next*, calls on all Australians to step forward together on our reconciliation journey in honour of our ancestors' hard work for truth and justice.

It reflects the ongoing connection between past, present and future and urges us to look ahead as past lessons guide us.

Bridging Now to Next references Australia's history of reconciliation including both great strides (2000 Bridge Walks and the Corroboree 2000 convention) and disappointing setbacks (the 2023 Referendum).

Twenty-five years ago, Corroboree 2000 brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous leaders in an historic call for reconciliation.

We continue that work in 2025, inviting all Australians to join us in *Bridging Now to Next* – building a more united and respectful nation.



NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2025

Bridging Now to Next

27 MAY – 3 JUNE | #NRW2025 | RECONCILIATION.ORG.AU



ABOUT THE ARTIST AND ARTWORK

Bree Buttenshaw is a proud Kalkadoon woman and talented digital artist based on Quandamooka Country. Bree's artwork is a vibrant fusion between her Aboriginal roots and a contemporary digital approach.

Central to Bree's artistry is her unwavering commitment to community, culture and Country. Every creative endeavour she undertakes is guided by the principles of Aboriginal culture—taking only what is necessary, leaving an abundance for others and giving back whenever possible.

As Bree explains, the artwork celebrates the resilience of Australia's native flora. 'Lemon Myrtle, Banksia, Gum Leaves, Desert Lime and Kangaroo Paw, are all renowned for their ability to endure harsh conditions, regenerate after fire, and flourish through adversity. These plants embody the strength and adaptability of people and communities, emphasising the importance of growth in the present while looking toward the future.'

'Vibrant patterns symbolising journeys and tracks reflect resilience, connection and progress, serving as a reminder of our deep ties to Country and the paths paved by those before us,' she explains. 'By interweaving the regenerative stories of native plants with the campaign's theme, the artwork encapsulates perseverance, unity and hope.'

Photo of Bree Buttenshaw supplied by the artist.



What is National Reconciliation Week?

The dates for NRW remain the same each year: **27 May to 3 June**. These dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey – the successful **1967 referendum**, and the **High Court Mabo decision** respectively.

History

National Reconciliation Week started as the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation in 1993 (the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples) and was supported by Australia's major faith communities.

In 1996, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) launched Australia's first National Reconciliation Week.

On 27 May 2000, CAR presented its final reports to the Australian people at Corroboree 2000. The next day, as part of this event, more than 250,000 people walked across Sydney Harbour Bridge in an exhilarating display of support for reconciliation. Similar walks were held across bridges in cities and towns across the country to show support for reconciliation.

In 2001, Reconciliation Australia was established, from recommendations of CAR's final report, to provide national leadership on reconciliation.

Today, National Reconciliation Week is celebrated in workplaces, schools and early learning services, community organisations and sporting clubs Australia-wide.

To learn more: reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/

Taking action for #NRW2025

Here's some ideas to get you thinking about what you can do to learn more and further justice for First Nations peoples.

Events. Check out the NRW events calendar to find in-person events in your state or territory, and online events across the country that you can attend. If you're organising an event – add it here! reconciliation.org.au/calendar/

Host a Reconciliation Film Club screening. Screen a documentary by a First Nations filmmaker to your workplace or social group. Reconciliation Film Club also supplies downloadable screening kits, discussion guides and features articles and ideas to support your event: sbs.com.au/nitv/reconciliationfilmclub

Go local. Do the First Nations organisations in your area host events or welcome the public to attend open days and other initiatives? Find out and connect with local Traditional Owners. Cultural tours of your town or city are also a great way to learn more about the Country you're on and its rich history.

Get cultural. Across Australia, many exhibitions and shows feature or are by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, musicians and creatives. Organise a day trip for your office or a night out for your friends and support the vibrant community of First Nations artists.

Start reading. Hosting a reconciliation book club featuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors telling their stories their way is a sure way to broaden perspectives and understanding. Search 'look for a book' on reconciliation.org.au for recommendations.

Know where you stand. Ask yourself: Whose Country am I on? What's the shared history of this place, from before and after colonisation? What is my industry's/ community's relationship to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples? How does this year's NRW theme relate to me and my life and my community?

Check all the posters, resources and activities on our website to see how you can display, wear, colour or play while learning more about the 2025 theme: reconciliation.org.au/national-reconciliation-week/posters-resources/



Hundreds of thousands of supporters crossed the Sydney Harbour Bridge on 28 May 2000 in support of reconciliation. Photo: Supplied

CORROBOREE 2000 AND THE BRIDGE WALKS

The peoples' movement for reconciliation was strong, the fight for Native Title rights continued, and talk of a treaty was back in the air. With the 2000 Olympics on its way to Sydney, there was an optimism for the rights of First Nations Peoples in the new millennium.

Corroboree 2000 came at a time of reckoning for Australia's relationship with its own history. The 1990s saw landmark inquiries, such as the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) and the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (1997), which revealed the deep, ongoing legacy caused by state intervention in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) – Reconciliation Australia's predecessor – was established in 1991 by a unanimous vote in the Australian Parliament following the Royal Commission's findings. The Council was tasked with fostering reconciliation, culminating in Corroboree 2000, a two-day event ahead of the centenary of Federation.

The event started on 27 May 2000, with the largest gathering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous leaders in Australian history, taking to the stage of the Sydney Opera House to witness the delivery of the Council's final documents to the Australian people.

Formed through months of consultation, the *Australian Declaration towards Reconciliation* and the *Roadmap for Reconciliation* made key arguments: the decade of formal reconciliation was not enough to address 200 years of history, and that the majority of Australians agreed reconciliation was vital for Australia's future.

The essence of the declaration was conveyed in its final message, 'Our hope is for a united Australia that respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equality for all.'

This support was apparent the next morning, Sunday 28 May at the People's Walk for Reconciliation, the highlight of Corroboree 2000.

The Bridge Walks

In a monumental display of support for reconciliation, more than 250,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their supporters walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Starting on the north end of the bridge, supporters made their way across together in a stream that lasted for close to six hours.

A quarter of a million joyous people braved the chilly weather as they walked, danced, skipped and sang across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in a historic display of unity and commitment to reconciliation.

Over the following months, nearly one million people took part in walks for reconciliation held across the country in what is still the largest display of public support for a single cause in Australian history.

Twenty-five years later, these historic walks continue to inspire communities. In big cities and small towns across the country, they serve as a powerful reminder that reconciliation is an ongoing journey for all Australians.



ANTaR Armidale Bridge Walk

Every year, First Nations and other residents of Armidale come together and walk across Stephen's Bridge to commemorate National Sorry Day and show support for reconciliation in the lead up to National Reconciliation Week (NRW). With a hot drink in one hand and a snag in the other, the walk is always a great opportunity for supporters to meet and chat with friends – old and new – enjoy the entertainment and share ideas. In 2025, ANTaR Armidale celebrates 15 years of this annual community event.

armidale.nsw.gov.au/Our-region/Events/ANTaR-Annual-Reconciliation-Bridge-Walk

Photo: Keith Flemming



Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council Reconciliation Walk

The annual reconciliation walk through the main streets of Queanbeyan brings together thousands of community members to mark National Reconciliation Week. The Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council host the walk in partnership with community groups, schools and local Traditional Owners and Elders. The involvement of local kids is a key part of this event; all schools in the Queanbeyan-Palerang region take part in both the walk and the official ceremony in Queanbeyan Town Park.

qprc.nsw.gov.au/Events/2025-Reconciliation-Walk

Photo: Reconciliation Australia



Reconciliation WA Walks for Reconciliation

A major event in the Western Australian NRW calendar, the annual Walks for Reconciliation take part in multiple cities and regional centres across the state. Reconciliation WA is part of the Australian Reconciliation Network with other state and territory organisations. The walks connect community members, local reconciliation groups, councils and corporates in a unified show of support. This year's events focus on truth and healing as participants are invited to take part in place-based truth-telling by sharing stories about the history and significance of the Countries the walks take place on – Galup (Lake Monger) in Boorloo (Perth) and Koombana Bay in Goomburrup (Bunbury).

recwa.org.au/nrw-2025/

Photo: Atilla Bak



Reconciliation Australia's newly appointed co-chairs Michael Rose AM and Kirstie Parker. Photo: Peter Morris

Michael Rose is an experienced director who serves on a number of commercial, government and not-for-profit boards.

He has been actively engaged in policy issues involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including in rights, employment and education.

He has worked closely with Reconciliation Australia over the years, including during the period of the Recognise campaign.

He was a member of the Referendum Council on Constitutional Recognition and in 2016 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for services to Indigenous communities and the legal profession.

Two new directors

The co-chairs also welcomed the appointments of Wotjobaluk and Dja Dja Wurrung woman, Belinda Duarte AM, and Wakaid and Meuram woman from the Maluligal and Kemer Kemer Meriam Nations of Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait Islands), Stacey Ketchell.

Both new directors are accomplished leaders with histories of passionate advocacy for First Nations peoples and reconciliation, and with extensive experience working with young people, and in culture and sport.

Belinda is the CEO of Culture is Life which supports and promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led solutions to affirm and strengthen culture and to prevent youth suicide. She was the inaugural director of the Korin Gamadjji Institute and a key part of establishing the AFL SportsReady's National Indigenous Employment Program.

Stacey was the co-founder and Chair of Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good (DIYDG), a youth-led movement working to amplify the voices of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities. She served as a campaign coordinator for the 2023 Australian Indigenous Voice Referendum and is Manager for Cape Operations at Cape York Partnerships.

Learn more: reconciliation.org.au/about-us/our-people

PASSING THE TORCH

Reconciliation Australia has welcomed new co-chairs to its board of directors following the retirement of Professor Tom Calma AO and Melinda Cilento who have led the board since 2011.

The new co-chairs are long-standing director Kirstie Parker and newly appointed director Michael Rose AM, who both expressed their deep gratitude to Professor Calma and Ms Cilento.

'Both Tom and Melinda have provided inspired and thoughtful leadership and guidance to the organisation for more than a decade,' Kirstie Parker said.

'Their contribution to reconciliation and Australian public life has been immense, and I have no doubt that their passionate advocacy for First Nations justice and reconciliation will continue.'

Ms Parker said she was honoured to step into the co-chair role and looked forward to working alongside Michael Rose.

Michael Rose said the previous leadership had positioned Reconciliation Australia well to continue its vital work.

'I am looking forward to working with Kirstie, our board colleagues and the management team, taking this work forward,' he said.

About the co-chairs

Kirstie Parker is a Yuwaalaraay woman from northwest NSW and has been a director of Reconciliation Australia since 2010.

Her leadership in community, not-for-profit and government settings spans First Nations rights, representation and advocacy, policy development, journalism and communications, and the arts.

Head of First Nations at the South Australian Film Corporation, Kirstie was previously Strategic Adviser to the Uluru Dialogue, Director – Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation within SA Government, CEO of the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, elected Co-Chair of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, and editor of the Koori Mail newspaper.



NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2025

Bridging Now to Next

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NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2025

Bridging Now to *Next*



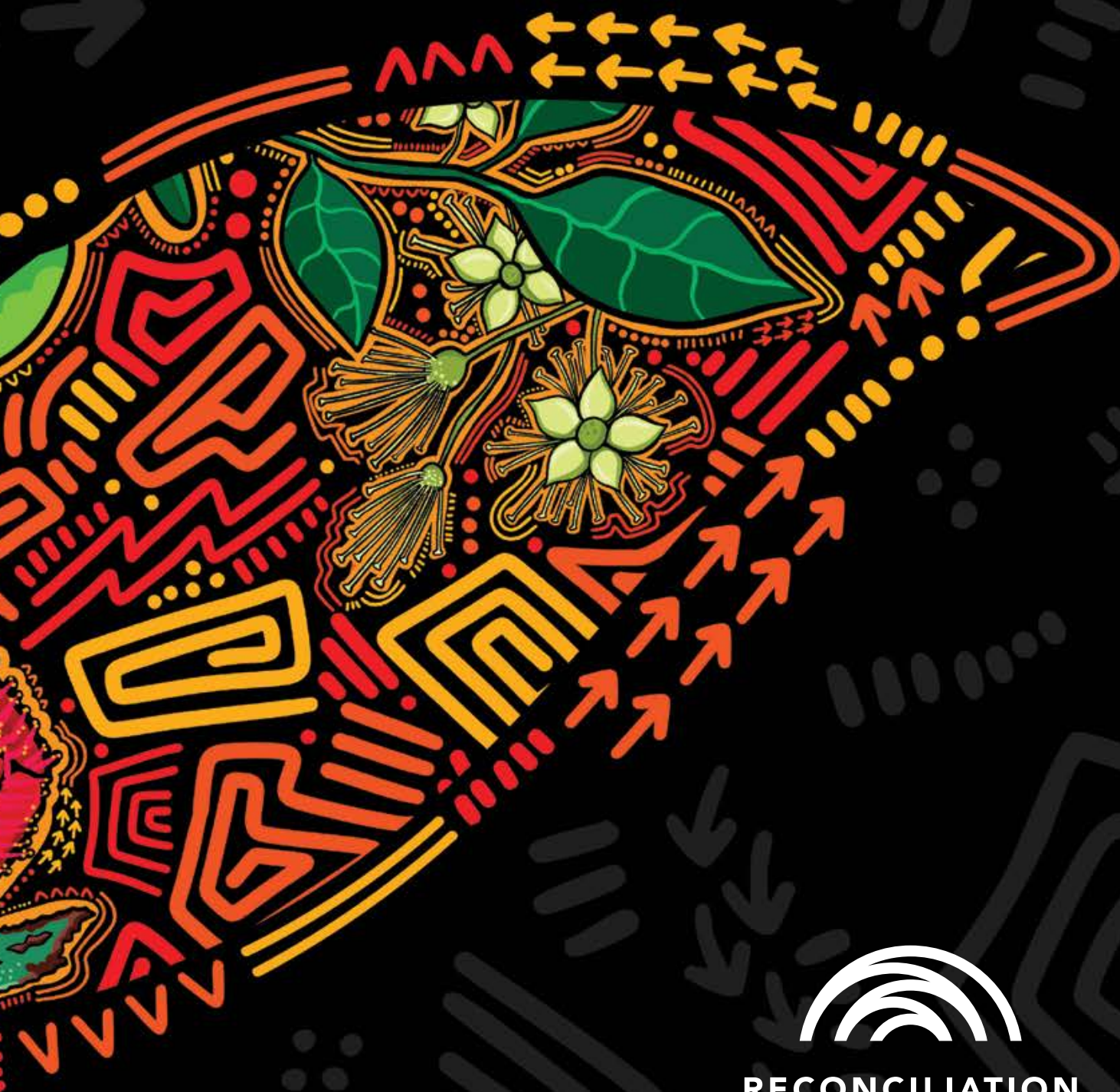
27 MAY – 3 JUNE

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RECONCILIATION
AUSTRALIA

National Reconciliation Week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore and reflect on how each of us can contribute to reconciliation in Australia.

To get involved head to
reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week



NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2025

Bridging Now to *Next*

27 MAY – 3 JUNE | #NRW2025 | RECONCILIATION.ORG.AU



LEARN FROM FIRST NATIONS VOICES IN EDUCATION



First Nations and non-Indigenous educators and education activists have long worked to impact policy and curriculum to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures, and perspectives in Australian classrooms.

Educators are always looking for appropriate resources that truly reflect the wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples produced by – or in collaboration with – First Nations peoples.

Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program provides resources for teachers and educators to take action towards reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to help build understanding on how to respectfully include First Nations perspectives in learning environments.

First Nations Voices in Education is the latest professional learning resource produced by Narragunnawali in collaboration with Gilimbaa Creative Agency.

Much more than a collection of ideas, it is a set of films accompanied by an extensive guide shaped by the hard work and actions of five committed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education champions who understand the power of truth-telling and cultural integrity in education.

The five champions – Aunty Denise Proud, Professor Peter Buckskin, Dr Kaye Price, Aunty Geraldine Atkinson and Ned David – have fought for change in the Australian education system over many decades, leading to some of the policy and curriculum reforms that all learners benefit from today.

The content in *First Nations Voices in Education* equips teachers and educators with the knowledge and understanding to appropriately include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into their work with confidence and respect, creating classrooms where all children and students can learn from the oldest living cultures in the world.

First Nations Education Champions (L-R): Aunty Kaye Price, Professor Peter Buckskin, Aunty Geraldine Atkinson, Ned David and Aunty Denise Proud. Photo: Gilimbaa Creative Agency

Mapped against [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#), this professional learning resource is designed for facilitated as well as self-guided and self-paced use, whether individually, in small groups, or during all-staff professional development opportunities.

Education advocate and contributor to the *First Nations Voices in Education* project Dr Kaye Price said, 'If you don't embed those cross-curriculum perspectives into your teaching, then you are really doing the country as a whole a disservice. It's just paramount that people who live in this country know about the country.'

All of the films and resources can be accessed via the Narragunnawali platform narragunnawali.org.au

You don't need to be a teacher or educator to watch the films but you will need a free account to access these and all the comprehensive education resources on the Narragunnawali platform.



THE IMPACT OF RAPS IN 2024

Every year Reconciliation Australia measures the extraordinary combined impact of organisations with Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs). Built on foundations of strong governance, every RAP drives change through three core pillars: Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

The 2023-2024 reporting year saw the highest level of participation in the RAP Impact Survey with 70% of the RAP network responding. The results show both the expanding reach of the RAP program and the growing number of organisations deepening their impact through strong governance and accountability.

The significant growth in procurement and increase in contracts between RAP organisations and First Nations businesses, the strengthening of relationships through the rise in partnerships, and the increased representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at senior levels are clear markers of impact that must be sustained and built upon.

To learn more about the impact of the RAP program, head to: reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans/rap-impact/



Relationships

The reach of the RAP network continues to grow with a **20% increase** in members represented by a **peak body or sporting club with a RAP** (9,677,200 in 2024 and 8,052,383 in 2023).

Relationships have been strengthened with **21,726** formal and informal **partnerships existing between RAP organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations** – a 17% increase (18,588 in 2023).

Participation in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) keeps growing: RAP organisations hosted **9,246 NRW events** in 2024 – a 41% increase (6,543 in 2023).



Respect

Participation in cultural learning continues to rise: **24,377** employees of RAP organisations participated in **cultural immersion** (23,268 in 2023) and **123,493 in face-to-face cultural learning** (118,049 in 2023).

817,175 employees of RAP organisations participated in online cultural learning – a 17% increase (701,239 in 2023).

RAPs continue to influence organisational outcomes with **75%** of RAP organisations **changing core internal processes and/or policies because of their RAP**. A further 73% of organisations have **changed external facing services and/or practices** because of their RAP.



Opportunities

A sustained increase in procurement opportunities by RAP organisations from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses saw **\$4,812,163,387** worth of goods and services procured, a 31% increase (\$3,680,422,710 in 2023).

This increase is directly related to the **42% rise in contracts** between **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses** and RAP organisations (25,237 in 2024 and 17,795 in 2023).

733 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people sat on **RAP organisation boards** (606 in 2023) and **740** Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in RAP organisations were in **executive leadership roles** (574 in 2023) – over 20% increase for both.



Teaching culture to next generations – Joey Laifoo and his son, Malu.
Photo: Island Stars

ISLAND STARS

Just hearing Joey Laifoo detail his Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait Islands) heritage gives a small sense of the vibrancy and culture of the region.

'My blood line comes from Badu, Moa (Kubin), Mabuiag, and Saibai Islands. My Badu clan is Argun, totem the stingray and my Badu wind is the northwest wind. My clan Moa (Kubin), my totem is the hammerhead shark. My Mabuiag Island clan is Wagadagam, my totem is the crocodile and my wind is northwest. My Saibai Island, my totem is the snake,' he explains.

Joey's love of his culture and his concern about the lack of employment and training opportunities for young people living in his Zenadth Kes homeland led him to establish Island Stars.

'Growing up, culture was everyday life for us, so that's why we could understand it really well.'

His family always stressed the critical importance of *ailan kastom* (Island Custom) in maintaining healthy families and communities in Zenadth Kes.

As a dancer touring the world Joey saw culture in decline in many places.

'We visited places where the local people have been losing their culture and when we came back to the islands, we saw the same thing here.'

'Our young ones on Waiben (Thursday Island) didn't have the opportunity of uncles or aunties teaching them or even a place to go and practice dancing, singing, and culture,' he told Reconciliation News.

'There's one cultural festival a year here and there was nothing for kids here to learn dancing and practicing their culture, but we have pubs everywhere.'

So, Joey and his partner Melissa Crump, established Island Stars to showcase *ailan kastom* to the growing tourist industry, while providing cultural training and employment opportunities to youth.

Today, Island Stars runs a café, an art gallery and dance studio and employs around 20 locals: 15 dancers and the remainder in the café.

Island Stars' determination to train local people is a response to a lack of opportunities provided to young First Nations people, while non-locals are regularly flown to Zenadth Kes to undertake temporary work assignments.

'They come up to work for a few years. Then they go back and take their skills with them.'

'We want to upskill ourselves and manage our own things. People from down south come and implement rules from outside that don't suit here,' he said. 'It's very important for our people to run things because they understand more than someone from outside.'

Joey said it was important to set up and run their own business rather than relying on governments. 'Because we make all the decisions, we decide what we want to do, and how we run our program. Governments want us to tick boxes, and we don't want to do that.'

He says having businesses in Torres Strait Islander hands means greater protection of cultural authenticity.

'If we develop our own structures, I believe that we can keep that authenticity.'

In another unexpected benefit, Joey believes that Island Stars is helping tourists from across the world reconnect to their own cultures.

'We had one young fella from Korea and when we finished dancing, he asked, "Can I share this? This is our dance for our young warriors."

'Then he did a dance – for a good 15 minutes – and our boys followed him around and he said, "Oh, I never felt like this before."

'The experience reconnected him with his culture too.'

For more information visit: islandstars.com.au



Ian Hamm speaking on equity and economic justice at the 2024 RAP Leadership Forum, Gadigal Country, Sydney. Photo: Joseph Mayers

WHAT COMES NEXT? IT'S THE ECONOMY, STUPID!

Yorta Yorta Man and Chair of the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation, Ian Hamm, argues we need better economic policy while maintaining efforts in social policy and in advancing rights.

In the post-referendum world, we now know what our actual place in modern Australia is and how and what our fellow Australians think and feel about us. Many of the assumptions we believed to be rock solid were in fact revealed to be uncertain.

We now understand that a social policy, rights-based agenda has limited cache and this alone will not be able to carry us to equity. It is a sad, but true fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters have been weaponised in the eternal game of one-upmanship that, these days, passes for the contest of ideas.

However, I am an unapologetic policy nerd, I believe well thought through and well applied policy is much more productive than shallow, short-term, thought-bubble, single issue responses to the headline of the day.

Which takes me to something I'm sure many of us are thinking about – if we know the limitations of the approaches we have been using for many years, and we can see that we've probably reached the limits of these, then how do we advance and progress our people?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters have almost exclusively resided in the world of social policy – and rightly so, given the fundamental disparities and injustices that need to be confronted – but social policy has reached the limits of its ability to deliver substantive progression and advancement. This does not mean we should back off from our efforts in social policy areas – far from it – it means we need to add to it.

The obvious addition is economic policy.

Aboriginal Australians are some of the most clever, industrious and able people that this country has and we, as a nation, are wasting this invaluable resource.

If social and economic policy had credit cards, social policy is just about maxed out, while the economic policy card has barely been used.

All the economic effort to date has been basically micro-economic in nature. That is, focussing on one thing, one place or one issue. While these are noble, they are neither substantial, substantive nor sustaining.

Example 1: Procurement policies have enabled the establishment of a rapidly growing First Nations-owned small business sector, servicing government. A wonderful thing, however, many of these businesses are maturing and looking to grow and expand customer markets which usually means a need to access growth capital. But where to access capital? The banking sector is not as prepared for this as we need them to be and government has very limited capacity in the area. Many Aboriginal business owners have spoken of hitting a brick wall trying to access business growth capital.

Example 2: Nearly all Aboriginal employment programs are designed to get people into employment – moving people from unemployed to employed – again, a wonderful thing. Once people are in employment, however, there are virtually no programs designed to support Aboriginal people moving up the employment ladder.

This micro-economic approach short-changes the Australian economy of vast veins of talent and capacity. In a world that is economically uncertain, I would have thought that this is a time for 'all hands on deck'. Aboriginal Australians are some of the most clever, industrious and able people that this country has – and we, as a nation, are wasting this invaluable resource.

So, what do we do about it? Simple – change micro for macro. Not that simple, but here goes.

Firstly, governments should not solely focus on redressing specific disadvantage. A proper macro-economic approach would need to think about all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all circumstances – urban, regional, rural and remote. Secondly, it should be about participation in all aspects of the economy. Thirdly, it should be at all levels of the economy. Imagine, for example, how much better corporate governance in this country would be if Aboriginal people were more commonly in the boardrooms of Australia. Not to mention in executive level roles that are not Aboriginal focussed – as I often say, blackfellas are able to do much more than just blackfella stuff.

Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, the Australian economy largely exists outside of the purview of government. It primarily exists in the realm of private sector, and to a lesser extent, the community/NFP sector. It is only logical – and necessary – for the private and community sectors to make substantial and meaningful efforts to uplift Aboriginal people by way of the economy writ large.

For example, the banking sector has an extensive and deep understanding of the Australian economy. There are equally many other sectors and people who can contribute much to this contest of ideas.

In 2024, the Commonwealth Government allocated \$16 million for the development of an Indigenous macro-economic framework and the Victorian Government is part way through implementing its own Aboriginal Economic Strategy. So, the possibility for a new approach to First Nations economics is real.

Those corporate entities with Reconciliation Action Plans must expand their remit and exercise leadership. What can we do to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's economic outcomes? How do we ensure that the focus is on supporting hopes and ambitions of Aboriginal people for a better life and align those with our own business and objectives?

And why should ordinary Australians get on board with this? Quite simply, it's in their interests to do so. If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are participating across the economy at all levels, this will broaden the national tax base, thus spreading the tax load meaning a decline in the incremental tax burden on personal and business tax. Everyone's a winner.

There is one thing that is not a choice issue. Sometimes it is assumed that we must choose between our cultural identity, and advancement in a broader economic and social sense. No, we don't.

Our fundamental values and cultural identity are not up for negotiation – at any price. In any case, as we move up the social and economic ladders non-Aboriginal Australians might learn from us and that can only be a good thing. Quite frankly, the Australian economy could do with some blackening up!



DJARINDJIN – BUILDING ECONOMIC SELF-DETERMINATION

A recent report by Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) and the Australian National University welcomed growth of more than 50% in five years across the Indigenous business landscape. More still needs to be done to remove obstacles to First Nations' economic self-determination. The Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation is showing the way in building a self-reliant remote economy.

In 1984 a group of Bardi and Jawi people walked out of the Lombadina Catholic Mission on Western Australia's Dampier Peninsular to establish their own free community of Djarindjin.

They left to end their subservience to the Catholic Church, exercise their right to self-determination and reclaim their cultural identity after years of being forbidden from speaking their language or practicing their culture.

More than 40 years later, the tiny remote community of Djarindjin continues to thrive and has become a beacon for First Nations communities across the region and the country.

However, as Djarindjin's CEO, Nathan McIvor explains, it has been a gruelling journey, made even harder by the West Australian Government's refusal to formally recognise the community until March 2024 – decades after its establishment.

Yet, the community still does not have title over the land it is built on.

'Three hundred and fifty people live here but we don't own the land or the houses. We don't own the buildings but we're having to maintain the community with our own money, by and large.

The Djarindjin Fuel Tank Mural was designed by local artists to commemorate the opening of the Djarindjin campground. L-R: Nathan McIvor, CEO of Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation with Indigenous Governance Awards 2024 judges, Val Price-Beck, Belinda Duarte and Kenny Bedford. Photo: Ashlee Jensen, Wirrim Media

'We are living self-determination and financial independence, but we work for it,' he said.

The key to Djarindjin's success has been a combination of good governance, a sheer unyielding community determination to do things the "Djarindjin way" and a strategic decision 15 years ago to invest in hot refuelling for helicopters servicing the oil and gas industry.

A \$4.5 million loan was negotiated with the Broome International Airport's subsidiary company and when refuelling began, Djarindjin's share of the profits started to roll in.

'Initially when we first started, we were getting 15%, then 30%, then 50% of the profits. Then, when I came on board in 2019, we were sitting at 70%,' reports Nathan.

The community is saying no to stuff that we're not interested in, we don't want to be beholden to the government, we want to be change makers for our own family, for our own selves.

'Over the next nine years we paid off the loan, but we still didn't run the airport or own all the profits, and in 2021 we asked Broome International Airport for a plan to transition into full Djarindjin ownership.

'They came to the board with a 10-year extension but no transition plan,' he explains. 'They offered to pay us an extra 15% taking our share to 85%.'

The board rejected the offer, and, in February 2022, the community took full ownership and operation of the airport. Revenue from the airport and other Djarindjin businesses ballooned from \$2.9 million to nearly \$20 million in 2024.

The airport is a source of great community pride.

'We're now running the only hot refuelling service in the Southern Hemisphere, there's only one other in the Northern Hemisphere and we're the only Indigenous owned and operated commercial airport in Australia,' he said.

Djarindjin also runs its own community store, owns the local roadhouse, campground, caravan park, and has a 50% share in the temporarily closed Kooljaman Resort at nearby Cape Leveque.

With inadequate government funding, Djarindjin generates about 70% of its revenue from the airport with most of the rest coming from other businesses. Only 10% comes from government grants for community services.

'We get \$300,000 from the state government, so we're having to top that up by about \$1 million each year to be able to maintain the community's basic needs, and to cover the costs of maintaining land that belongs to the state,' he reveals.

The community now funds many of its activities, including the safe house, aged care and cultural programs from its own revenue.

'We are close to self-determining because we generate our own money. This gives us control over our community's development creating more employment and more training options, and it distributes the wealth across the Dampier Peninsula', said Nathan. 'We went from 20 or 30 people being employed in 2019 to 140 currently and we're running programs up and down the Dampier Peninsula.'

The community is currently negotiating the establishment of the Aalga Goorlil Sun Turtle Djarindjin Community Power Project and recently received a conditional offer of \$5 million grant funding from the West Australian Government's Lower Carbon Grants Program (LCG), allowing Djarindjin to build, own and operate a 100% community-owned renewable energy facility to supply most of the electricity needs of the Djarindjin and neighbouring Lombadina community.

Djarindjin has described the project as a "transformative initiative that underscores our unwavering commitment to self-determination and self-empowerment".

Nathan said the community has turned the tables and is now in a position where it can dictate its own development agenda to governments and has even knocked back funding from the government for not meeting community priorities.

'The community is saying no to stuff that we're not interested in, we don't want to be beholden to the government, we want to be change makers for our own family, for our own selves.'

He argued that the community's overwhelming hunger for self-determination and economic independence is not all about money but has a significant impact on health and culture.

'The "Djarindjin way" is as much about all of the socio-economic stuff that we talk about; the wellbeing, the mental health, the physical health, and kidney disease, those things are all important. We recognise that if we don't do things about the health of our community today, in 20 years' time there will be no young people to run the show.'

Economic independence is also leading to revival of language and cultural practices following long years of suppression by the church.

'Language and culture are coming back. Djarindjin now offers adult Bardi language lessons funded by their enterprises. We're teaching local people in community to speak their own language which was lost over the mission years.'

Nathan says **Djarindjin's new 20-year strategic plan** will ensure community priorities are addressed in a systematic way.

'We just don't see any reason why we should have to do what the government wants us to do,' said Nathan firmly.

'We will be a powerhouse in WA, providing funding to other community organisations,' he predicted. 'We'll be different to other councils who receive their revenue from the government because it's our money to spend as we decide.'

In 2024, Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation took home the Indigenous Governance Award for Category Three — Outstanding examples of governance in Indigenous-led large, incorporated organisations.

To learn more about Djarindjin:
djarindjin.org.au



A SOLID ROCKER SHANE HOWARD AND THAT SONG


Goanna's 1982 hit song, *Solid Rock*, has been chosen for the #NRW2025 Voices for Reconciliation. Reconciliation News spoke to the song's writer, Shane Howard, about its surprising and enduring success.

Shane Howard (right) with (L-R) Owen Whyman Jr, Owen Whyman Snr and Corey Paulson at the 2023 Mundi Mundi Bash. Photo: Teresa O'Brien

In September of 1982, a most unlikely song hit the Australian music charts. The song, *Solid Rock*, by Goanna, reached number three and remained on the charts for six months.

Shane Howard's record label at the time, WEA, was opposed to releasing it as a single because they thought it had little commercial appeal.

The song directly challenged Australia's official colonial history of peaceful settlement while at the same time winning enormous affection from the Australian music-listening public.



Sing it with gusto, sing it like you mean it, sing it like it matters, because it does. Sing it like we are on a journey to somewhere much better, because we are.

Australian musicologist, and writer of the Encyclopedia of Australian Rock and Pop, Ian McFarlane, described *Solid Rock* as 'a damning indictment of the European invasion of Australia'.

How does a song which includes the verse 'It wasn't long before they felt the sting/ White man, white law, white gun', go on to win Best Debut Single at the 1982 *Countdown Music and Video Awards*, or be ranked by MTV Classic in 2021 as number 10 of their special *Top 100 Big in the 80s* countdown?

How does a white man from a working-class family in the tiny Victorian country town of Dennington write a song that became an anthemic call for First Nations justice, land rights and reconciliation?

Shane explains that his family were of Irish stock. 'Anyone whose people lived through the colonial imposition on Ireland for 600 years or more should be empathetic to the circumstances of Aboriginal people', he explained.

Shane grew up just miles away from Victoria's Framlingham Mission. 'So Aboriginal people were a part of my life. The history we were taught at school didn't equate with the disempowerment I saw around me. I saw how broken things were and I didn't hear much language spoken. No one was dancing. I saw the wreckage that colonisation has brought a people.'

'We should be more empathetic than we are. I mean to lose language, to lose your children, to lose your family, to lose your country, to lose everything is almost an unbearable suffering. Too many non-Indigenous people are not in tune to what that feels like.'

While grape picking in Mildura in 1975, Shane saw a bench in the main street with a "Whites Only" sign. 'That was a shock, I thought those things only happened in South Africa or the deep south of the USA,' he said.

But it was a 1980 trip to Uluru that ultimately focused his attention on the dispossession and injustices suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A chance encounter at the base of Uluru saw him invited to an *inma* (a highly significant Anangu ceremony with dance and song).

"'You should go', I was told, and I did, walking around the rock just before sunset and here was this mob painting up. As the moon rose the singing and dancing began, and it shifted my thinking; a revelation came to me after that experience, I am in someone else's Country, this Country was stolen. We have never had a treaty, we never declared war, there is still no negotiated arrangement for how we share this continent.

'I saw an incredible injustice that needed to be dealt with. I had to reassess my whole relationship with the land and the landscape, and understand that we had come from somewhere else, and we had disempowered a whole race of people when we arrived.

'This diminishes us, and it's long overdue that we come to an agreement with the peoples whose lands we stole.'

After 43 years, *Solid Rock* maintains resonance across generations and genres, as it continues to be covered by dozens of Australian musicians. Shane declares confidently, 'It's got a great riff, a great drum beat but most importantly it's honest and it is true. There is not a word wrong, not a word out of place.

'Some songs come from you, and some come through you, and I believe that song was guided through me by the Old Peoples' spirit watching over me.'

Shane said that he is deeply honoured that *Solid Rock* was chosen for the *Voices for Reconciliation* choirs project this National Reconciliation Week and he has some advice for the choirs performing it.

'Sing it with gusto, sing it like you mean it, sing it like it matters, because it does. Sing it like we are on a journey to somewhere much better, because we are.'


'It's all in the song and we still haven't faced up as a nation and proclaimed "Let us tell the truth, let us get on with the business of truth-telling, and then let's get on with the treaty business. Let's turn our anger into action."'

After a few moments' further thought Shane quotes the late great Yolŋu leader and theologian Rev Dr Gondarra 'It's not enough to walk beside us, you need to feel our pain.'

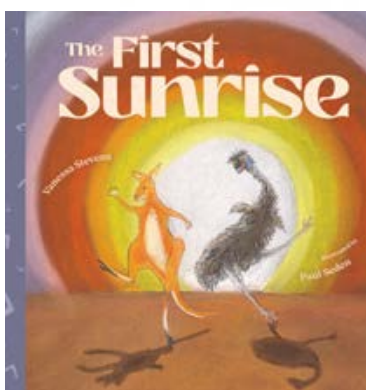
'We whitefellas must do the work now, to reach out to our non-Indigenous brothers and sisters and help them understand. We have to do more,' he concludes.

Reconciliation Australia thanks Shane Howard, Goanna Arts and Mushroom Music Publishing for their support of Voices for Reconciliation.

To learn more, visit reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/voices-for-reconciliation/



LOOK FOR A BOOK!



The First Sunrise
Vanessa Stevens
& illustration by
Paul Seden
Magabala Books

The First Sunrise, written by Mbabaram, Yidinji and Taribalang Bunda woman Vanessa Stevens, is the first Mbabaram creation story to be published.

This creation story was told to Vanessa by her father, Colin Alec Stevens (Alick Chalk) who lived traditionally in the Aboriginal Camps of Irvinebank, Bakerville and Watsonville in North Queensland from 1901 to 1916. Vanessa believes in the importance of these stories and wants them to live on forever.

With the help of beautiful illustrations by Wuthathi and Muralag man Paul Seden, young readers follow how Mulungh, the great creator, shows Kangaroo and Emu how to make boomerangs to help create the first sunrise and nightfall. With these two foundational creations of day and night, Kangaroo and Emu quickly learn how directions and time can be deciphered using the shadows of the day.

This is the first book in the new *First Peoples • First Sciences* series by Magabala Books which shows the important link between creation stories and science. Educators can also access teaching notes for the classroom to help share the story with students.

This book will engage young readers through both the generational stories and easy-to-understand scientific line drawings so they too can find north, south, east and west and determine the time of day.

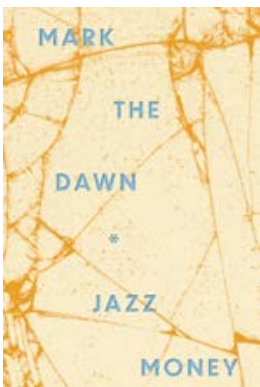


Trouwerner
Patsy Cameron
& Martin Flanagan
Magabala Books

Aunty Patsy Cameron describes the story of her ancestors, the lies of history and the power of truth-telling in *Trouwerner*. Sitting down with journalist Martin Flanagan and Tasmania's 28th Governor, Kate Warner, Aunty Patsy draws from her deep connection to culture and country along with her extensive experience as a researcher and cultural historian.

Aunty Patsy is a founding member of Melythina Tiakana Warana Aboriginal Corporation (MTWAC), who demonstrated outstanding Indigenous governance and self-determination as winners of the Category 2 Indigenous Governance Awards 2024. She continues to advise MTWAC as a member of their Circle of Elders and is renowned for her distinguished service to Indigenous communities in Tasmania.

Aunty Patsy spent her early years on Flinders Island, but her family's story begins long before, tracing back to the revered Pairrebeenne/Trawlwoolway Clan leader, Mannalargenna. In *Trouwerner* she invites you for a yarn as she tells her history, the history of Trouwerner's colonisation and the importance of truth-telling and hope for the future. It is a book that combines personal reflection with broader histories of First Nations culture and resilience, making it both an enlightening and deeply human experience.



mark the dawn

Jazz Money

University of
Queensland Press
(UQP)

If you're looking for a poetry collection that speaks to the present while honouring the deep currents of history, *mark the dawn* by Wiradjuri writer and artist Jazz Money is essential reading.

Their second collection – following the acclaimed *how to make a basket* – weaves together themes of love, family, climate change, queerness and connection to Country in 37 stunning poems. Each piece responds to contemporary essays, artworks, performances and films making this a work deeply engaged with today's cultural and political landscape.

Money's poetry challenges colonial narratives, offering a retelling of our history through a First Nations lens. Their words evoke both urgency and beauty, creating a space for reflection and transformation. The language is sharp yet lyrical, immersing readers in perspectives that are both deeply personal and universally relevant.

This is poetry that lingers – its themes and imagery staying with you long after you've turned the last page. Whether you're a longtime poetry lover or new to the form, *mark the dawn* is a powerful, thought-provoking collection that deserves a place on your shelf.



For the Dreams

King Stingray

Joy. King Stingray's second album moves away slightly from the funk-inflected, garagey 'Yolŋu surf rock' of their eponymous 2022 debut, towards a poppier, synthier, more commercial sound, but without sacrificing any of the infectious love for life, culture and Country that defined that record.

While the band are broadening their horizons you will likely still crank up the volume on this new stuff and find yourself overwhelmed by the compulsion to cut some serious shapes, as this reviewer did at the first night of their album tour at Sydney's Enmore Theatre.

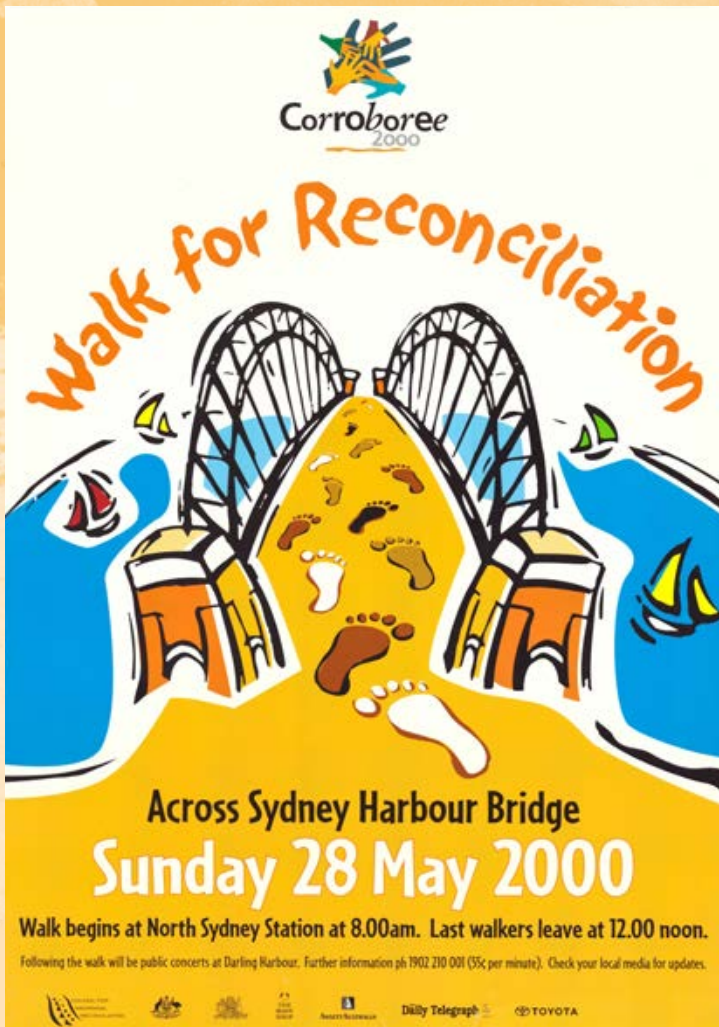
Day Off and *What's The Hurry?* would fit neatly into the first album's track list, but *Nostalgic*, *Soon As*, and *Southerly* are all markers of an exciting new direction.

Culture still comes out strong across this album in the use of Yolŋu Matha, Yolŋu manikay and yidaki and bilma alongside lots of English lyrics for crowd singalongs. If their live shows are anything to go by it's obvious Stingers still have great joy and energy invested in sharing their culture and music.

King Stingray at the Enmore Theatre, Sydney on the opening night of the For the Dreams tour, 20 March 2025. Photo: Sam Brumby

25 YEARS SINCE CORROBOREE 2000

Turn to page 10 to learn more.



Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation

We, the peoples of Australia, of many origins as we are, make a commitment to go on together in a spirit of reconciliation.

We value the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of lands and waters.

We recognise this land and its waters were settled as colonies without treaty or consent.

Reaffirming the human rights of all Australians, we respect and recognise continuing customary laws, beliefs and traditions.

Through understanding the spiritual relationship between the land and its first peoples, we share our future and live in harmony.

Our nation must have the courage to own the truth, to heal the wounds of its past so that we can move on together at peace with ourselves.

Reconciliation must live in the hearts and minds of all Australians. Many steps have been taken, many steps remain as we learn our shared histories.

As we walk the journey of healing, one part of the nation apologises and expresses its sorrow and sincere regret for the injustices of the past, so the other part accepts the apologies and forgives.

We desire a future where all Australians enjoy their rights, accept their responsibilities, and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

And so, we pledge ourselves to stop injustice, overcome disadvantage, and respect that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to self-determination within the life of the nation.

Our hope is for a united Australia that respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all.

Presented at Comboree 2000, Sydney Opera House 27 May 2000

