

# National Reconciliation Week

## What is National Reconciliation Week?

Each year from 27 May to 3 June, National Reconciliation Week (NRW) celebrates and builds on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. The week-long celebration is an ideal opportunity for all Australians to explore ways to join the national reconciliation effort.

## When did it begin?

National Reconciliation Week began as the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation in 1993 and was supported by Australia's major religious groups. Three years later it evolved into National Reconciliation Week as we know it today under the guidance of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (now Reconciliation Australia).

## What is the significance of 27 May and 3 June?

27 May and 3 June are important dates in Australia's history. 27 May marks the anniversary of the 1967 referendum when Australians voted to remove clauses in the Australian Constitution that discriminated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

3 June marks the historic 1992 Mabo decision in which the High Court of Australia recognised Native Title—the recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights over their lands has survived British colonisation. 2012 marked the 20th anniversary of the Mabo decision and the 45th anniversary of the 1967 referendum.

The day before National Reconciliation Week, 26 May, is National Sorry Day, which was first held in Sydney in 1998 and is now commemorated nationally to remember and honour the Stolen Generations.

## What does 'reconciliation', mean in the context of National Reconciliation Week?

Reconciliation involves building positive, respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians; enabling us to work together to close the gaps, and to achieve a shared sense of fairness and justice. The ultimate goal of reconciliation is to build strong and trusting relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, as a foundation for success and to enhance our national wellbeing.

## Why is National Reconciliation Week important?

National Reconciliation Week is an ideal time for organisations, schools, universities and workplaces to join the reconciliation conversation and process. It is a chance to work towards the goal of building respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, and to create a fair and equal society.

## Who organises National Reconciliation Week?

National Reconciliation Week is organised by Reconciliation Australia; an independent, not-for-profit organisation established in 2000. It is the national organisation responsible for building and promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. Reconciliation Australia also works with state reconciliation councils in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia to organise local events and activities for National Reconciliation Week.

## How can I get involved?

During National Reconciliation Week, you can participate in lots of activities and events that focus on bringing all Australians together. You can think about hosting an event at your school, organisation or workplace—it can be as simple as flying an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander flag, writing a blog, hosting a morning tea or posting something on Facebook or Twitter.

On a personal level, you can take the time to learn about the rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture that exists in Australia. And importantly, you can talk with your family and friends about why it's important for all Australians to build respectful relationships with each other.

National Reconciliation Week is a great time for your early childhood, primary or secondary school to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan through our *Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning* program. Get started on your RAP by using our [online RAP builder](#).

Visit the [Reconciliation Australia website](#) for more information about National Reconciliation Week and to discover what activities and events are taking place in your local area.

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