

Reconciliation News

Stories about Australia's journey to equality and unity

Baker Boy

A rapper's take on language, music, education and country

National Reconciliation Week 2019

A time for truth and bravery

Reconciliation Barometer

Keeping track of our opinions

ULURU STATEMENT

DENIED, BUT NOT DEAD

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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.

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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 to find out more.

Cover:

Rapper, dancer, artist and actor, Baker Boy (photo by Cesar Rodrigues)

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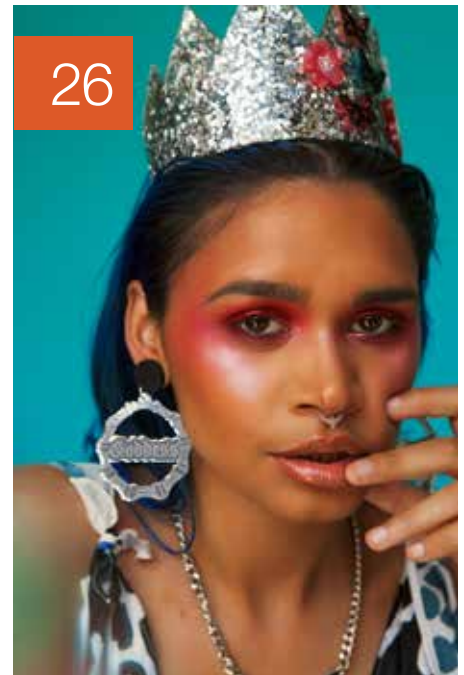
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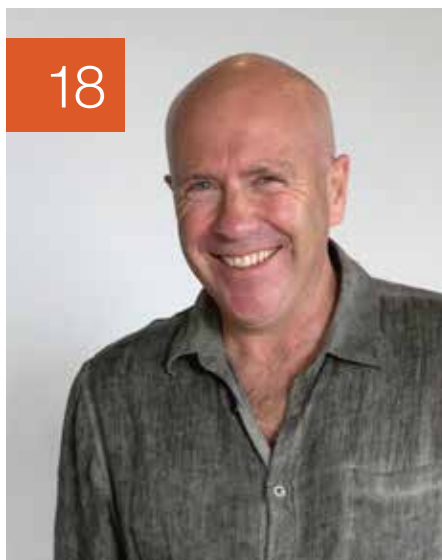
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RECONCILIATION RECAP

SIX MONTHS IN REVIEW



25 January 2019
Australian of the Year
Awards breakfast

On the morning of the Australian of the Year Awards (AOTY) Reconciliation Australia hosted a special breakfast for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander finalists. Once again an impressive group of high achievers had made the final eight in their respective AOTY category. They were Danzal Baker (NT), Reginald Dodd (SA), Cheryl Kickett-Tucker (WA), Charlie King (NT), Michael Long (NT), Frank Mallard (WA), Mark Sullivan (VIC) and Elijah Buol (QLD). Reconciliation Australia CEO Karen Mundine congratulated the finalists and thanked them for their passion, saying that through their efforts each had made an important contribution to reconciliation in Australia. Later, at the presentation, Danzal Baker (aka Baker Boy) was announced as the Young Australian of the Year.



January 2019
The message of
NRW 2019

The choice of this year's National Reconciliation Week theme, *Grounded in Truth: Walk Together with Courage*, emerged after a truth telling symposium organised in October last year by Reconciliation Australia and the Healing Foundation.

At the symposium, experts from around the country developed a set of guiding principles to progress truth-telling in Australia. Trust and honesty are at the core of good relationships and a truthful telling of Australia's history is a basic building block on which successful reconciliation is based.

Truth-telling is not about ascribing guilt or shame in non-Indigenous Australians but about addressing past injustices simply by listening to stories and sharing conversations with open hearts. As a nation we need to know our history to enable our relationships to blossom and for reconciliation to succeed.

31 January 2019 Miners and lawyers back Uluru Statement

Support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart continues to grow, with major mining companies, BHP and Rio Tinto endorsing the Statement, including the First Nation's Voice to Parliament. They assert that it would empower First Peoples and ensure participation in decisions about legislation, policy and programs affecting their rights and interests.

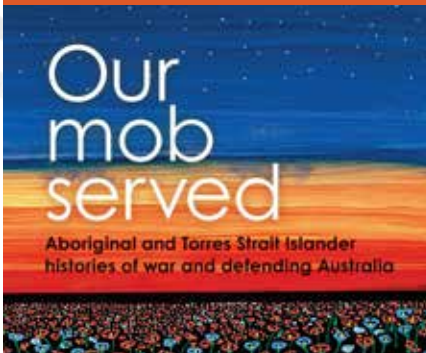
The support by the two big miners was followed by a group of 18 leading Australian law firms who, in mid-March, also backed the Uluru Statement from The Heart and its call for the establishment of a First Nations voice in the Constitution.

Both groups pledged to work with First Nations people and the Australian Government to progress adoption of key demands in the Uluru Statement.

The lawyers' endorsement thanked First Nations people for 'your invitation to walk with you in a movement of all Australian people for a better future.'

28 March 2019

Our Mob Served



Our Mob Served: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories of war and defending Australia was recently published by Aboriginal Studies Press. In its 320 pages, the book presents a moving and little-known history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander war time and defence service.

Told through the vivid oral histories and treasured family images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it shares lively and compelling wartime stories and the impact on individuals, families and communities, sometimes for the first time.

Launched at the Australian War Memorial, the book illuminates the significant role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the national histories of war and service. It's an involvement that all Australians should know more about.

Edited by Allison Cadzow and Mary-Anne Jebb, *Our Mob Served* can be purchased online at aiatsis.gov.au for \$39.95.

October 2018

Massacre map project expands to WA



The final stage of the University of Newcastle's Colonial Frontier Massacres Map is underway, with Dr Chris Owen from Western Australia's State Library joining the project to research massacres in the west.

Dr Owen is a leading researcher of frontier violence in WA and author of *Every Mother's Son is Guilty: Policing the Kimberley Frontier of Western Australia 1882-1905*.

The WA work is expected to lift the number of confirmed frontier massacres from the current figure of 250 to more than 400 and expand the timeline from the 1930s until the 1960s.

Project leader, Professor Lyndall Ryan said stage three of the project, which will be launched later this year, will show evidence of massacres occurring in WA and the Northern Territory up until 1960.

In March, The Guardian Australia launched its special report *The Killing Times*, which tells stories of some of the mass killings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples during Australia's frontier wars.

Both projects provide strong evidence of the need for a formal process of truth telling.

17 December 2018

ALP embraces its RAP



The Australian Labor Party (ALP) has become the first Australian political party to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan.

In launching its Innovate RAP at the party's 2018 National Conference in Adelaide, the ALP joined nearly 1,000 organisations who currently have active RAPs. Those present included the Leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten, and members of the ALP First Nations Caucus: Linda Burney MP, Senator Pat Dodson and Senator Malarndirri McCarthy.

In developing its RAP, the ALP consulted with the National Indigenous Labor Network, State and Territory First Nations' MPs, the union movement and rank and file members. It was also assisted and approved by the First Nations' Caucus Committee.

The new RAP commits the ALP leadership team to undertake cultural competency training and participate in key cultural activities and programs. It also commits the ALP to develop an Indigenous leadership program, supporting emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders through a year of one-on-one mentoring with senior members of the ALP.

FROM THE CEO



Coinciding with National Reconciliation Week 2019, this edition of *Reconciliation News* explores the growing calls for

a process of truth telling in Australia; a process where, for the first time, all Australians might collectively face and acknowledge the horrifying brutality of modern Australia's history.

In the past few months we've seen some significant moves in this direction, with the 2018 Australian Reconciliation Barometer showing that over 80 per cent of Australians are now supportive of such a process. Following on from the Barometer results, two of Australia's biggest mining companies, BHP and Rio Tinto, publicly backed truth telling as part of their support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

And more recently, 18 of Australia's largest law firms released a short statement endorsing the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

We are witnessing an historic convergence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hopes and aspirations and the willingness of other Australians to embrace these desires.

Inspiring times indeed and Reconciliation Australia is proud of the effort that we and our RAP partners have made to help create this positive climate of genuine reconciliation.

The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2019, *Grounded in Truth: Walk Together with Courage*, was developed to encourage further promotion of truth telling in communities across the country. The theme is not solely about truth, it is also about the connection between truth and honesty in creating improved race relations. Please help us promote the week with the poster included in this magazine.

Inside you'll also read about the extraordinary work of one of the 2018 Indigenous Governance Awards winners, south-east Queensland's Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH). Praised by the judges for their profound vision and leadership skills, the IUIH has reinterpreted the concept of 'community control' into a contemporary model of governance. This model features increased responsibility, agency and autonomy by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and has achieved remarkable results.

We speak with 2019 Young Australian of the Year, Yolngu man and rapper, Danzal Baker, better known as Baker Boy, about his life, his music, and his desire for all Australians to better understand our history. Baker Boy is determined to use his music and his growing profile to show the next generation of Australians that a better future is possible.

Included too is an extract from the powerful speech by Richard Flanagan at Garma last year about the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The author's persuasive words resonate so strongly and give us all hope that the Statement's time is yet to come.

Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair, Dr Tom Calma AO shares his thoughts about how individual universities are now opening up to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars consigning to the past the historical exclusion of our people.

We also feature another great organisation from our RAP program – Dreamworld Corroboree – which has such an inspiring story to tell. Corroboree brilliantly showcases Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures while providing a solid career pathway for its young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

And finally, we check out Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali program and the great success of Middle Park Primary school through its strong connections with its local Boonwurrung community.

In closing, let me give Baker Boy the final words: "My passion is education and I think that if we can get to a place where the whole of Australia is educated about Indigenous history and languages then we will be close to achieving reconciliation."

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

Karen Mundine
CEO Reconciliation Australia



CALENDAR

SPECIAL DAYS

26
May

National Sorry Day

27-3
May June

National Reconciliation Week

8-15
July

NAIDOC Week

4
August

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

9
August

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

5
September

Indigenous Literacy Day

EVENTS

The Long Walk

When: Sat 25 May
Where: Federation Square, Melbourne, Vic
Price: Free
Info: thelongwalk.com.au

Reconciliation in the Park

When: Mon 27 May
Where: Glebe Park, Canberra City, ACT
Price: Free
Info: visitcanberra.com.au

Lowitja O'Donoghue Oration – David Rathman AM

When: Tues 28 May
Where: Bonython Hall, University of Adelaide, SA
Price: \$10-15
Info: dunstan.org.au

Myall Creek Memorial Ceremony

When: Sun 9 June
Where: Myall Creek, NSW
Price: Free
Info: myallcreek.org

Deborah Cheatham's Eumeralla – war requiem for peace

When: Sat 15 June
Where: Melbourne Symphony Arts Centre, Melbourne VIC
Price: \$35
Info: mso.com.au/whats-on/2019/eumeralla

International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference

When: 18-20 June
Where: Darwin Convention Centre, NT
Price: \$480 (one day) to \$1,050
Info: conference2019.lowitja.org.au

Bangarra, 30 Years of 65,000 – celebration of contemporary dance, story and culture

When: June to September
Where: Sydney 13 June-13 July; Canberra 18-20 July; Perth 31 July-3 August; Darwin 17 August; Brisbane 23-31 August; Melbourne 5-14 September; Adelaide 19-21 September.
Price: \$59-\$99
Info: bangarra.com.au

AIATSIS National Indigenous Research Conference

When: 1-3 July
Where: Queensland University of Technology
Price: \$440 (one day) to \$990 (full program)
Info: aiatsis.gov.au

NAIDOC Week

When: 7-14 July
Where: Australia-wide, host city: Canberra
Price: Free
Info: naidoc.org.au

Mowanjum Festival

When: Fri 12 July
Where: Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre (10 kms south-east of Derby, WA)
Price: Adult \$30, youth \$15, child \$5
Info: mowanjumarts.com

Garma Festival

When: 2-5 August
Where: North-east Arnhem Land, NT
Price: \$1,513 (youth), \$2,503 (adult), \$4,128 pp (corporate deluxe, for groups of 10)
Info: yyf.com.au



NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2019: WALKING WITH COURAGE

For the past 24 years, National Reconciliation Week (NRW) has provided a strong impetus for building relationships through special events and activities across Australia. It's a week of conversations and connections where everyone is invited to share in the cultures of the First Australians.

During NRW 2019, and in line with this year's theme *Grounded in Truth: Walk Together with Courage*, Australians will gather at myriad events around the country, together taking thousands of small steps in our shared quest for reconciliation.

When we talk about grounded in truth we aren't referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history stretching back thousands of generations, but Australia's history since European settlement, which needs to be explored.

To be grounded in truth we must speak the truth, however painful, however confronting.

Because to truly understand and connect with one another, the truth matters.

This NRW, Reconciliation Australia aims to inspire all of us to be brave and bold and have honest conversations.

That's the starting point for genuine understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. And that candid exchange is essential for improving how we relate to each other.

This year, two notable NRW events are precursors to the week – The Long Walk on Saturday 25 May and the AFL's Indigenous round the same weekend. Reconciliation Australia is proud to be

a co-sponsor of The Long Walk which sees thousands of Australians walking together from Federation Square to the Melbourne Cricket Ground prior to the Dreamtime game between Essendon and Richmond.

NRW draws its significance from the anniversaries of two important events that bookend the occasion's eight-day span from 27 May to 3 June.

On 27 May, the historic 1967 Referendum saw more than 90 per cent of Australians vote to remove clauses from the Australian Constitution that discriminated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. It meant that, for the first time, First

Let's be inquisitive about our history and unafraid of what it reveals and where it might take us. That's what walking together with courage is all about.

Australians would be counted as citizens in the national census. The referendum also gave the Commonwealth Government the power to make laws on their behalf.

And 3 June was the date of the High Court's 1992 Mabo judgement which overturned the long-held principle of terra nullius.

The wheels turn slowly in Australia and today, more than 50 years on since the referendum, it's fair to say the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have fallen short of what those courageous campaigners in the 1960s would have hoped for.

In the 10 years since the Apology to the Stolen Generations, so widely welcomed, the reconciliation journey has

traversed fallow ground. Even the simple gesture of Constitutional recognition for the First Australians was apparently a bridge too far.

And the Uluru Statement from the Heart, so thoughtfully considered and so respectfully submitted, was barely given the time of day.

But, as Bob Dylan once wrote, *the times they are a changing*. The growing chorus of voices demanding we embrace Australia's true history and respect the desires of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will not be silenced. Constitutional reform will come, Australia just needs a leader with the imagination and commitment to make it happen.

In the meantime, we all have an opportunity to learn a little more and become a little closer during NRW 2019. We're at our best at this time, not so guarded, more welcoming, respectful and considerate.

So, as the NRW theme this year suggests, let's be inquisitive about our history and unafraid of what it reveals and where it might take us. That's what walking together with courage is all about.

A unified Australia beckons.



NRW is an ideal time to experience Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures at events all around the country.

HOW TO BE A GOOD ALLY



Summer May Finlay.

Summer May Finlay is a Yorta Yorta woman, academic, writer and a public health consultant. Summer has worked in a number of different areas relating to Aboriginal health and social justice. Follow Summer @ OnTopicAus

How can non-Indigenous people be a useful ally to Aboriginal people? As a somewhat outspoken Aboriginal woman, it's something I'm asked a lot.

And admittedly, it's tricky—how do they avoid crossing that invisible line? The line that takes you from being in the Aboriginal 'good books' to being on the *shit list*.

When Ed Sheeran was in the country last year, he wore an Aboriginal flag t-shirt that he'd purchased from the Tandanya cultural institute in Adelaide. He then opened his performances—to audiences made up of tens of thousands—with an Acknowledgement of Country. This simple act is a great example of how to be an ally.

He used his position to support us, and he did it respectfully. Big shout out to Ed Sheeran!

We need good allies. We are only three per cent of the Australian population. We can't raise the profile of issues affecting us without our allies. But what does a good ally look like?

While I appreciate Ed Sheeran's support, being an ally goes beyond wearing an Aboriginal flag and doing an Acknowledgement of Country (not everyone has the status and influence of a major international pop star).

We get it. Non-Indigenous people aren't silently surrounded by Aboriginal culture like those of us who are Aboriginal. It's unreasonable to expect people to understand all the nuances—politics, unconscious bias and cultural competency are some of the few that people can get wrong.

As a Yorta Yorta woman, it will take me a lifetime to understand what it means fully to be an Aboriginal woman. My mother is Aboriginal, and I have been surrounded by the subtleties of culture even before I was born. I was wrapped silently in culture as I moved from toddler to child and was quietly expected to participate in the world as a young Aboriginal woman in my teens and beyond. In my 20s and 30s, I was surrounded by culture in both my workplace and my personal life and have learnt even more about our culture and what it means to practice it every day.

So then how do non-Aboriginal people support us but avoid paternalism and cultural appropriation? Well, the truth is there is no simple answer, and good intentions often aren't enough.

In lieu of an 'ally rulebook', here are some tips which may help non-Aboriginal people stay on the right side of *that* line.

1. Preference our voices

Don't speak on our behalf. We have a voice, and we aren't afraid to use it. Yes, there are many people out there who work closely with Aboriginal people and communities and are involved in Indigenous affairs, and can shed some light on settler-First Nations issues.

The problem is, we are only a small proportion of the population and with many non-Indigenous people working in the black space, this ratio can end up with non-Indigenous voices dominating our issues. True self-determination means supporting us, working with us, but allowing us to speak on the subjects that affect our lives. If you're really here for us, you won't mind taking a step back.

Example: This means saying no to the radio or TV interview and instead recommending an Aboriginal person.



Ed Sheeran shows his support for Aboriginal peoples. (Photo by Nic Minns).

2. Be OK with not always being part of the conversation

As Aboriginal people, at times yarns may be off-limits to non-Aboriginal people for many reasons. Be okay with not being included in everything and accept some decisions must be made by Aboriginal people. Don't question the outcome of these conversations.

Example: Support the Uluru Statement, not the parts you like. That tip is particularly relevant for politicians.

3. Be there for the good times and the bad

A good ally will stand with us at all times, not just when it is easy.

This requires taking an active interest in our issues rather than just having a NAIDOC morning tea or romanticising Aboriginal dreaming stories.

As Aboriginal people, we don't have the option of picking and choosing when we can be Aboriginal. Our allies need to stand with us, even when the going gets tough. This also means practice what you preach. Educate yourself and you can educate others (but just don't hijack our space and start talking like you are Aboriginal!)

Example: Support our art industry and community programs as well as protesting the suspending of the Racial Discrimination Act which allowed the Northern Territory Intervention to occur.

4. Say something when you hear someone say inappropriate things about Aboriginal people

If you hear someone say something racist, reinforcing stereotypes or being dismissive about Aboriginal people and culture—say something. Not saying something means condoning their attitudes, making you as bad as them.

Example: You're at a BBQ and one of your friends makes an 'Aboriginal joke'. Pull them up on it. It's not always easy to be confrontational, but if you're a true ally, you will push past that uncomfortable feeling.

5. Don't take it personally when we don't agree with you

Understand that a good ally can sometimes be wrong on issues affecting Aboriginal people. You need to be resilient like we are required to be. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off and come back to the position of an ally.

Example: If an Aboriginal person tells you that you have the wrong end of the stick on an issue affecting us. Don't push back and tell us we are wrong. Sit with it and digest what has been said. Reflect.

6. Don't go it alone

Don't assume you have enough information or experience to march ahead without stopping to check with Aboriginal people that you are heading in the right direction.

If you don't include us at all stages along the way, there is a good chance you are stepping on Aboriginal people and culture to get where you are going. Not to mention you are probably heading straight for that *shit list* without even realising.

Example: When conducting academic or professional research, have us on the research team as one of the investigators. In the workplace, make sure that you employ Aboriginal people on Aboriginal projects.

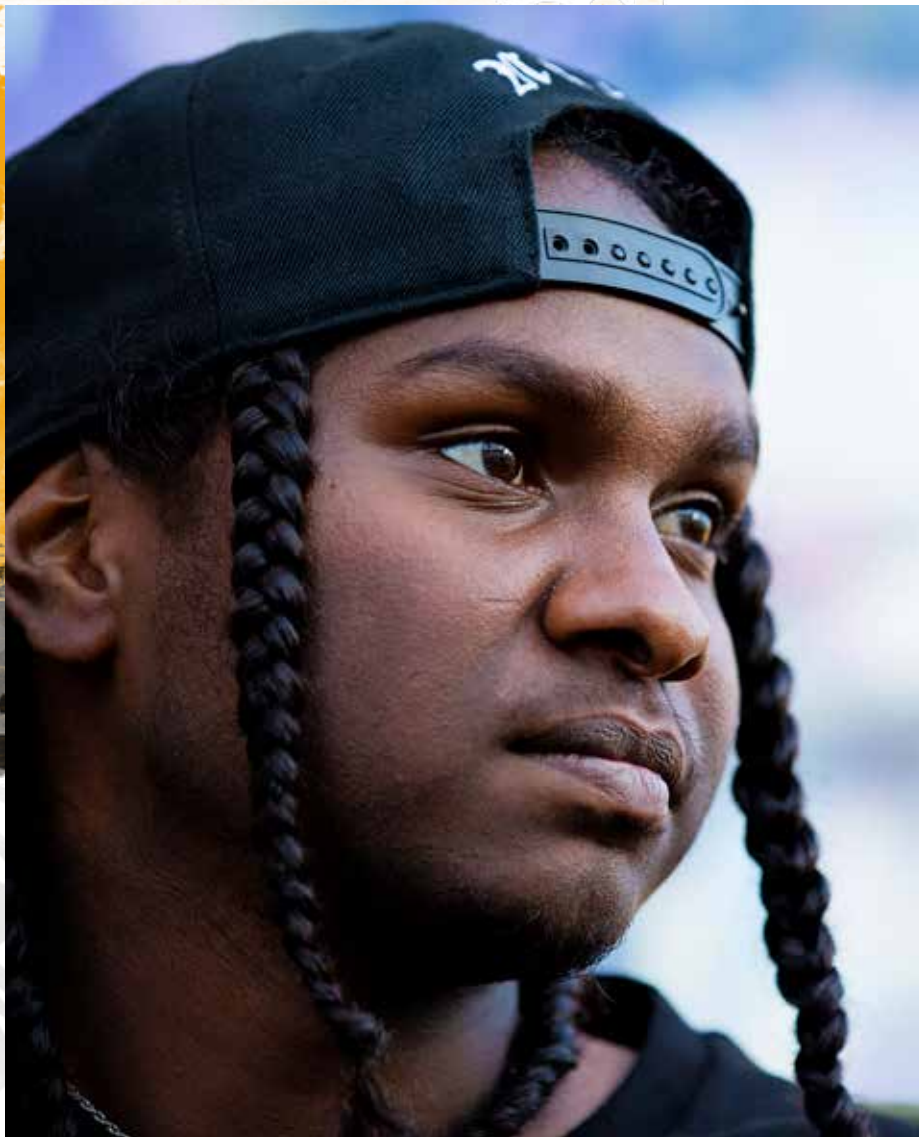
7. Understand that Aboriginal people are *not* all the same

We do have different views, just like other Australians.

Example: Appreciate and value the variety of perspectives we bring to public debate. Allow us to air our various opinions without being upset or surprised that we don't agree.

So, this is not an exhaustive list. I can't promise you aren't going to get growled at from time to time. Accept that your experience as a non-Indigenous person is vastly different from that of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Just remember: Aboriginal people need to be the actors, directors and producers on issues affecting us, with non-Aboriginal people helping by being the backstage crew.

This article was originally published on NITV.



Danzal Baker, better known as Baker Boy. (Photo by Cesar Rodrigues).

IN CONVERSATION: BAKER BOY

Born in Darwin and raised in the remote NT communities Milingimbi and Maningrida, Danzal Baker, known professionally as Baker Boy, is an Australian rapper, dancer, artist, and actor. A dynamic performer, Baker Boy is best known for his original hip-hop songs incorporating both English and Yolngu Matha. In January, Danzal was named Young Australian of the Year 2019.

You're the first artist to have mainstream success rapping in Yolngu Matha language. How does that make you feel?

It makes me very proud to have the privilege to take my music to this level in the mainstream industry. But the even bigger joy is the support and strength I receive from my family back home and those who live on country all over the nation. I know I've done them proud and that's my driving force to keep doing what I'm doing, with my head held high. I think my debut track Cloud 9 is more relevant now in my career than when it first came out.

I do have days when I sit there and just think "wow, this all happened so quick and I've played at massive festivals like Splendour, Laneway, Bluesfest. How did it all happen so fast?" It's a pretty amazing yet surreal feeling coming from a remote little kid in community, to living in the big smoke as an artist living out my dreams. And as a role model, I want the younger generation to actually see that their dreams can be reality if they really want to get out there and make a difference. You just gotta break through that brick wall that's standing in your way.

What does language mean to you? What are your thoughts on the importance of maintaining and restoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages?

It's really important because it is who we are. Our Language is our identity. We need to maintain and restore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages as keeping our languages alive, keeps our culture alive.

What was it like for you growing up in Arnhem Land? How did popular culture shape your perception of yourself?

Growing up in Arnhem Land there was a certain level of isolation, for me I was exposed to and inspired by the 1980s even though I was born in 1996. It's what my parents loved and I just

kind of embraced that. So much of my music is inspired by the 80s. I think it is really important to be inspired and have role models. I won a competition as a kid and the prize was an MP3 with music on it. One of the songs was *Technology* by Justin Timberlake and 50cent and I remember laying in my bed imagining myself on stage performing; fast forward to last year and I got to be the support for 50cent! That's just crazy to me. I feel like I was exposed to the world and set my goals high and now here I am achieving them. I hope my story can be an example for kids in community, I hope I can inspire them, maybe they're even listening to music imagining being on stage with me, ha ha!

What are some of the challenges people face in Milingimbi and Maningrida where you grew up? What things do you miss now that you live in Melbourne?

The challenge that I think remote communities face, and that I can relate to, would be the lack of opportunity and a lack of exposure to the big wide world. For me, I can see all the opportunities and amazing experiences that I've been lucky enough to have which give me the power and the imagination to dream of even bigger and better things I could potentially do. It's human nature, the more we're exposed to, the more creative and imaginative we can be.

I love home and the freedom I had growing up. I think a lot can be said for that as well. A lot of my Melbourne friends and family feel pressured to always be working or doing something and sometimes feel guilty for relaxing or doing something they enjoy.

Fishing. I miss fishing, anyone who knows me, knows how much I love fishing and love eating seafood. But I love just being able to get out there, often with my Dad or little brother, and just enjoy it and relax!

There are lessons to be taken from both worlds I've lived in, I try to find a balance between the two.

Arnhem Land is home to some of the country's greatest artists and bands. What is it about the region that produces such a wealth of creative talent?

You're not wrong but I think because of the bands/artists that have come out of the region in the past (Dr. G Yunupingu, Yothu Yindi, East Journey, Gawurra, Yirmal) a lot of Australia has really spotlighted the talent in the area which has given Arnhem Land the platform that so many of us in remote areas don't have access to. But from all the travelling I've done in the last four years the talent is everywhere, not just Arnhem Land.

I'm just speaking from own experiences but in my community [Milingimbi] if someone has a talent that is broadly recognised on a large scale by everyone in the area then they'll really push us to step outside our comfort zone and try to reach for the sky. That's what happened to me, Yirmal and Gawurra. Maybe that's why Arnhem Land has had so much magic come out of it in the last ten years because we have the whole community backing us and so a good handful of us have succeeded to pave the way for the younger generations. It's a bit hard to say no when everyone is saying YES!

Can you tell us a bit about your work with Indigenous Hip Hop Projects? What role can music and the arts play in tackling harmful behaviours such as binge drinking and petrol sniffing?

Working with Indigenous Hip Hop Projects was an incredible experience and what led me to writing music and having the confidence to rap in both English and Yolngu Matha. I wouldn't give my time with IHHP for anything! The goal of IHHP is to use music as a form of education and starting conversations. It is about empowering people with knowledge. Some harmful behaviours are worse in some places than in others, so it's about communicating and understanding the issues and then providing the education around that in a positive and fun way.

It is also about us going there and setting positive examples for the kids, letting them know that they are in control of their own futures and that with passion, dedication and discipline they can have amazing bright futures and don't need to get caught up in those kinds of harmful behaviours.

How do you think Australia is tracking towards reconciliation? What do you think still needs to be done?

I think we're on the way. For me, my passion is education and I think that if we can get to a place where the whole of Australia is educated about Indigenous history and languages then we will be close to achieving reconciliation. The saying that knowledge is power is very true, we need to empower people with the knowledge of our history so they can be informed.

Do you think music can play a part in reconciliation? If so, how?

I hope so, that's why I do what I do. Again, it is about education for me so if me being out there rapping in my native tongue and exposing Indigenous language to some people who may not be aware that so many different languages are still spoken in Australia, then that's a positive. I'm using music to help keep not only my language but all languages alive. Like I said earlier our language is our culture, they go hand in hand.

NARRAGUNNAWALI PROMOTES TRUTH IN EDUCATION

For teachers, the opportunity to educate students about Australia's First Nations peoples, histories and cultures is a unique, exciting and sometimes overwhelming experience.

Historically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives have been avoided in classrooms, absent from curriculums and missing from textbooks. As a result, generations of Australians grew up with a basic, largely inadequate understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and very limited awareness of the true histories of Australia.

Today, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is a cross curriculum priority, the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the classroom is still met with hesitation. Feelings of not wanting to be tokenistic, together with a fear of causing offence or getting it wrong, often leads to teachers choosing not doing anything at all.

Australia's reconciliation journey is, at its core, a personal and shared learning journey. It's never too late to learn.

The Narragunnawali professional learning resource, *Reconciliation in Education: Learning, Unlearning, Relearning*, encourages teachers and educators to reflect on the relationship between reconciliation and education in relation to their own schooling. Genuine engagement in reconciliation involves personal and professional learning and reflection. This may become a journey of 'unlearning' and 'relearning' — of challenging assumptions and recognising that what has been taught about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures in schools may have been inaccurate or incomplete.

The film in the *Reconciliation in Education* learning resource is the ideal introduction to start a conversation with staff about the importance of education to reconciliation, and the need for continued learning and unlearning. When facilitating these discussions, it is important to create a safe and supportive space for active listening, respectful conversations and continued critical reflection.

Discovering that you were unaware of the truth can be confronting. But the benefits and contribution to reconciliation far outweighs any discomfort. Australia's reconciliation journey is, at its core, a personal and shared learning journey. It's never too late to learn.



Diane Pelle, Centre Manager of Explore and Develop, Penrith South Public School, winners of the 2017 Narragunnawali Award for Early Learning.



Middle Park Primary School students embrace Aboriginal culture at every opportunity.

MIDDLE PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADS THE WAY

When Middle Park Primary School became a finalist in the Narragunnawali Awards in 2017, it was a well-deserved recognition of their outstanding achievement and commitment towards reconciliation in education.

Middle Park's vision for reconciliation, as articulated in its Narragunnawali Reconciliation Action Plan, focusses on understanding, respect, and unity through its strong connections with the local Boonwurrung community.

For Anne Spackman, the school's reconciliation team leader, relationships are key to any reconciliation activity, and she says this is especially true for schools as they are always important community hubs.

'Our relationships with the local Boonwurrung community members and especially with respected Elder Aunty Carolyn Briggs are at the heart of our successes.

"For many years now we've worked with her on a range of reconciliation activities around the school and in the classrooms," Anne said. "Aunty Carolyn also attended the Narragunnawali Awards workshop and ceremony alongside my team. Sharing that time led to Aunty Carolyn's grandson, Marbee joining the school community to teach Boonwurrung culture and history in classrooms."

Students and teachers continue to learn Boonwurrung language each week at assembly, where a 'word a week' is presented. Anne said that students embrace this learning and take it on as part of their life, commenting that 'children see two cultures – one community.'

Reconciliation Australia CEO Karen Mundine congratulated Middle Park Primary School saying they had forged meaningful relationships and deserved to be proud of their successes.

"That's what the Awards are all about – facing challenges, sharing reconciliation stories and celebrating your successes," she said.

Since the Awards, Middle Park teachers and students have continued to strengthen relationships and improve their Boonwurrung language learning practices. The school has also created a reconciliation garden, hosted a smoking ceremony, renamed school rooms and made all school signs bilingual in Boonwurrung and English.

Anne's message to educators is: "It's about teaching students the true history of Australia. It's important to make the learning real for students by making it local. As students learn more, they can make informed decisions and judgements."

Nominations have now closed for the 2019 Narragunnawali Awards and later this year we'll announce the finalists acknowledging more schools and early learning services for their brilliant reconciliation successes.



RECONCILIATION BAROMETER: TRACKING THE CHANGES

Public support for reconciliation and for a greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice in their own affairs continues to grow, according to the latest community survey undertaken by Reconciliation Australia.

The 2018 Australian Reconciliation Barometer, a national research study conducted every two years to measure and compare attitudes and perceptions about reconciliation, has found that an overwhelming number of Australians (90 per cent) believe in the central principle of reconciliation—that the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is important.

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer is the only survey undertaken in Australia which measures the progress of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

This recent survey comprised a national sample of 497 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and 1,995 Australians in the general community across all states and territories.

Reconciliation Australia CEO Karen Mundine, said that the latest findings again showed a steady strengthening of the indicators for reconciliation and improved relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

“In addition to disclosing the fact that 90 per cent of Australians believe that the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is important, these indicators also show that 79 per cent agree that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are integral to Australia’s national identity,” Ms Mundine said.

This result shows that race relations, one of the five key dimensions of Reconciliation Australia’s Reconciliation Outcomes Framework, continue to improve. Race relations are at the heart of the process of reconciliation; to achieve reconciliation, we need to develop strong relationships built on trust and respect, and that are free of racism.

“Significantly, almost all Australians (95 per cent) believe that ‘it is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say in matters that affect them’ and 80 per cent believe it is important to ‘undertake formal truth telling processes’, with 86 per cent believing it is important to learn about past issues,” Ms Mundine said.

The Barometer also found that more Australians than ever before feel a sense of pride for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. That figure has risen to 62 per cent from the 50 per cent recorded 10 years ago when the first barometer was conducted.

An increasing proportion of Australians believe that more must be done by government departments to close the gap in areas of disadvantage including in health, education, justice and employment.

Closing the gaps in life expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a prerequisite for successful reconciliation.

This result shows a growing public realisation that reconciliation requires equality and equity, another of the five key dimensions in the Reconciliation Outcomes Framework.

Closing the gaps in life expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a prerequisite for successful reconciliation.

Ms Mundine said she was heartened by the 2018 results which indicated that the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the need to truthfully present Australia's history, was having a positive impact.

"In welcoming these latest results, I must acknowledge the hard work undertaken by so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share the incredible beauty and complexity of our cultures across this continent."

Ms Mundine said that while it was encouraging to see support for reconciliation grow again in the past two years, there were still obvious shortcomings.

"Disturbingly the Barometer found that 33 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have experienced at least one form of verbal racial abuse in the last six months."

The Barometer also found that just over 50 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and one in three in the general community, believe that Australia is a racist country

Racism against First Nations people remains a major impediment to achieving reconciliation and Reconciliation Australia continues to call for greater government and corporate investment in public education and anti-racism campaigns.

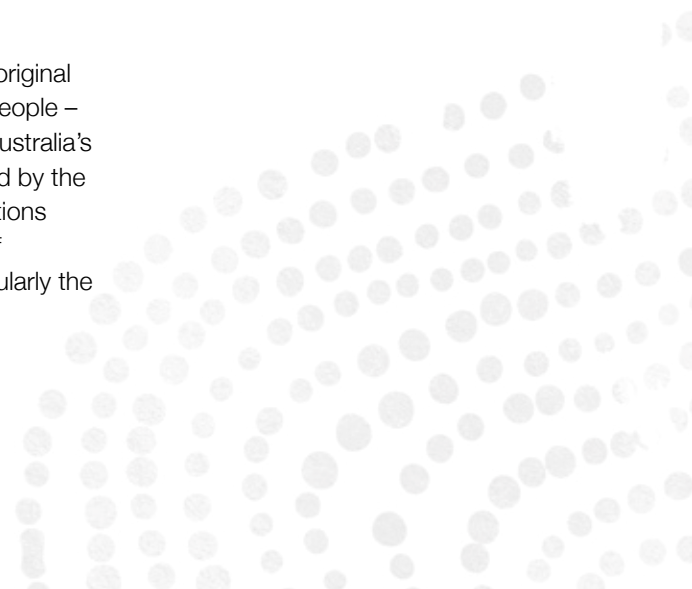
Reconciliation Australia has identified a number of key actions that should be taken to further improve the situation for Australia's First Peoples and progress Australia's next steps towards a reconciled nation. These include:

- **Developing** a deeper reconciliation process through truth, justice and healing, including supporting a process of truth telling, the establishment of a national healing centre, formal hearings to capture stories and bear witness, reform to the school curriculum, and exploration of archives and other records to map massacre sites and understand the magnitude of the many past wrongs.
- **Support** to address unresolved issues of national reconciliation including through legislation setting out the timeframe and process for advancing the issues proposed in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.
- **Supporting** the national representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples – underpinned by the principles of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly the right to self-determination.

- **Recommitting** to the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Closing the Gap framework by renewing and increasing investments and national, state/territory and regional agreements to meet expanded Closing the Gap targets that are co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- **Investing** in, and supporting, anti-racism campaigns and resources with strong legislative protections against racial discrimination and providing leadership to promote a zero-tolerance approach to racism and discrimination.

Despite the negatives mentioned, the latest Barometer findings show that the views of non-Indigenous Australians have never before been so closely aligned with the aspirations of First Nations peoples as expressed in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

That revelation bodes well as Reconciliation Australia continues to pursue those aspirations.





THE ULURU STATEMENT – DENIED BUT NOT DEAD

Richard Flanagan speaking at the Garma Festival.

The following is an extract from the speech made by Richard Flanagan at last year's Garma Festival. The full text can be accessed via [The Guardian website](#).

At the heart of the Uluru statement is a single terrible, haunting sentence, which reads, 'This is the torment of our powerlessness.' To end that terrible torment there is finally only one remedy: it is to accord Indigenous Australia a measure of power through constitutional recognition of its sovereignty.

A government that claims to be of good heart to Indigenous Australia humiliated a generation of great black leaders.

The great question of Indigenous sovereignty has been repeatedly acknowledged as a fundamental problem of the Australian state by successive national leaders. White Australia could not solve that problem. In a democracy that has constantly denied them, it was Indigenous Australia which, in a democratic process, came up with a solution.

But the historic magnitude of the Uluru statement was matched only by the smallness of the government's response, which was akin to watching circus clowns standing on a wet soap bar.

I don't doubt that, for the government, the constitutional and legal questions are complex, that the politics are pregnant with the possibility of failure. The Indigenous community is also of many minds on many aspects of these various issues. Yet in spite of these difficulties, in spite of labyrinthine politics, the Indigenous community managed to find common cause, and with one voice say what it wanted.

And one might have thought that our government would listen and emulate the hard graft, the gritty politics, the trust in democracy, and aspire, at the very least, to the same hard-won achievement.

The historic magnitude of the Uluru statement was matched only by the smallness of the government's response.

Perhaps they knew themselves it was a task beyond their desiccated souls. The Uluru statement was a historic moment for our nation and, by refusing it, the Turnbull government chose to write itself out of history. Of them, only shame will endure.

But if Canberra needs Australia, Australia does not need Canberra. By framing the Uluru statement as a political request that awaited a political response, by thinking it was about Canberra and not Australia, what has been forgotten is the immense power of the story Indigenous Australia is seeking to tell to all Australians.

And it is this which I think forms the heart of what Galarrwuy Yunupingu has characterised as a great gift to Australia.

The Makarrata – the less-discussed aspect of the Uluru statement – calls for a commission charged with two tasks: seeking agreements at various levels of government with Indigenous people and with truth telling about the past.

Indigenous Australians know the truth of us as a people for they have lived the lie of the white explorer and the white pastoralist who brought not freedom but chains, not food but poison, not home but dispossession, not law and order, but massacre, murder, rape and the stealing of children.

But most Australians do not. Most Australians would be horrified to learn the full extent of the massacres, of the fireside killings, of the wars of extermination, of the rapes, of the destruction and desecration of sacred sites, of the children taken, of the

countless lives allowed to continue life without living. It is a terrible story, a story of shame, but it is my story as much as it is your story, and it must be told, and it must be learned, because freedom exists in the space of memory, and only by walking back into the shadows is it possible for us all to finally be free.

Though the Uluru statement has been denied, it is not dead.

If we can as a nation learn and understand some of these things we can also appreciate the second story which is as transcendent as the first is tragic, and that is a different story of the past, a story of glory. It is the 60,000-year story that manifests itself here at Garma.

It is in the Indigenous languages I hear all around me here, each a different way of divining the universe, unique and irreplaceable. It is in the cosmology and wisdom of traditional communities; it remains artfully written over much of our landscape in the fire-shaped patterning of bush, scrub and grassland; it stares back at us from the great rock paintings of the past and the extraordinary Indigenous art of today, from the films of Warwick Thornton to the paintings of Emily Kame Kngwarreye to the dance of Stephen Page, to the exquisite beauty of Michael Long holding the ball out to Carlton in the 1993 grand final, daring anyone to be better, as a grand final became wholly about his time, and his place, and his magnificent wonder.

And in that strange frozen moment of pure motion, as Australia thrilled as a man seemed to move at once backward and forward in time in defiance of time and space, it is possible to see also

that our great struggle as a nation has always been to find ourselves in each other – the white in the black, the black in the white.

That is why though the Uluru statement has been denied, it is not dead.

I do not think that the majority of Australians have even started thinking about it. I do not believe that presented with the great drama of our nation going back into deep time that they will not be moved; that in being shown the vast tragedy of invasion that they will not understand the enormity of the crime; that in being shown the great wealth and diversity of Indigenous culture they would not feel an immense, shared pride.

And I think that they will come to the view that in denying black Australia that they have finally denied themselves, that this denial damages us all, and that they accept that it must now end.

If Australians can understand these stories as the mighty stones on which their nation could rest, I believe we could then combat the forces of racism, of hate, of fear, that are presently destroying other nations. We might even finally become a truly independent nation, knowing our strength resides not in obsequious alliances with power elsewhere, but within the marvel of our own people.

But for these things to happen the truth must be heard.

Richard Flanagan is the author of the Man Booker Prize winning novel, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*.



Hallowed walkway at the University of Queensland. (Photo courtesy of UQ).

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES IN OUR UNIVERSITIES

By Professor Tom Calma AO

When Malera/Bandjalung woman Margaret Williams-Weir walked into the sandstone quadrangle of Queensland University in 1957, she made history as the first Aboriginal person to be accepted into an Australian institution of higher education. Imagine that. It had taken more than a century from the time Australia's first university, the University of Sydney, had opened its doors in 1850 for a First Nations person to be permitted to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by tertiary qualifications.

It was also an important first step on the transition to an Australian education system that honours and benefits from the unique expertise of Australia's First Nations peoples.

The late Dr Williams-Weir ultimately completed a doctorate entitled *Indigenous Australians and Universities: A Study of Postgraduate Students' Experiences in Learning Research* at the University of New England. Today, First Nations people are found in every professional cohort in Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander astrophysicists, health researchers, doctors, dentists, hydrologists, politicians, teachers, engineers, architects and lawyers are living proof of our capacity for hard work and intellectual rigour needed to excel at university. They are all enhancing their field with the unique perspectives of their peoples and cultures.

Like other Australian institutions, our universities have historically been unwelcoming and even hostile to First Nations peoples' higher education aspirations.

The 'colour-bar' which kept Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students out of university has now been replaced with an enthusiastic adoption of reconciliation by most Australian higher education institutions. Today, our universities are actively engaged in recruiting more First Nations students and improving their experiences when they enrol.

Australian universities have strongly increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in recent years with 70 per cent more enrolled today than in 2008. However, there is still work to be done. While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise 2.7 per cent of Australia's working age population, they make up just 1.6 per cent of university domestic student enrolments—up from 1.2 per cent a decade ago.

The ongoing challenge for universities can also be seen in the low percentage rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who complete their bachelor degree; in 2006 this stood at only 47.3 per cent compared to 73.9 per cent for other students. While many First Nations students have flourished at university, racism, homesickness, poor secondary educational opportunities, low expectations and financial constraints have all contributed to others either not enrolling or failing to complete their degree.

Individual universities have responded to this challenge with varying degrees of success by implementing internal policies, plans and programs to lift participation and attainment by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In other words, making the university environment a welcoming one.

As part of their efforts, many have developed Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) in conjunction with Reconciliation Australia. University RAPs support universities to create culturally safe and responsive environments to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment and retention rates. RAPs also aim to increase the knowledge and pride for First Nations cultures and achievements among all staff and students.

What has been missing until fairly recently is a coherent sector-wide initiative that binds all universities together with common goals.

A strategy launched by the universities' peak body, Universities Australia, is designed to fill that gap. Universities Australia's *Indigenous Strategy 2017-2020* intends to 'lift participation and extend our institutional insight and responsiveness'.

The Universities Australia initiatives and Reconciliation Australia's RAPs fit neatly together, one supporting the other.

RAPs challenge universities to acknowledge the fact that too often they preference colonial-based knowledge and pedagogies and ignore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives. This is despite ample evidence that inclusion of First Nations' perspectives increases the engagement, and retention, of our students and improves overall educational outcomes.

Such perspectives will also provide non-Indigenous staff and students with a more rounded, comprehensive and truthful curriculum and learning environment. For example, Aboriginal knowledge of ecology and astronomy would greatly enhance these two disciplines if applied.

Our people have been calling for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander historical and cultural perspectives to be included in the educational curriculum but, 169 years after the birth of Australia's higher education sector, there has been a very slow uptake of 'de-colonising' our education system.

Despite this slow start, RAPs and the Universities Australia strategy are having positive impacts on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the tertiary sector.

Western Australia's Curtin University is a case in point, beginning its 'formal' reconciliation journey in 1998 with the signing of a Statement of Reconciliation and Commitment. Ten years on it's the first Australian teaching and research institution to develop and implement its own RAP.

The University's latest Elevate RAP contains a raft of initiatives including on-Country visits for staff and students as part of the *Indigenous Cultural Capabilities Framework*; a Student Internship Program that provides employment at Curtin for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and a partnership with the Nowanup community to progress a proposed Nowanup Bush Campus.

The Curtin RAP formalises the embedding of First Nations knowledge and perspectives into its governance structures and teaching and learning activities. The RAP supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers to further develop their capability and impact.

Opportunities for First Nations students in higher education are not just limited to Australia. The Charles Perkins Trust and the Roberta Sykes Foundation both offer scholarships to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attend the world's most prestigious universities including Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard. Since 2010, the Charlie Perkins Scholarship Trust has supported 19 scholars, on 22 scholarships to Cambridge and Oxford.

The work of these Foundations and of Reconciliation Australia, Universities Australia and individual universities are making a difference—ensuring that the historical exclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars from higher education is consigned to the past and the full potential of our peoples can be realised.

Imagine a world where all Australian children are respected and offered the absolute best choices in education and future employment; imagine an Australia where every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child has the right and opportunity to realise her or his dream of excellence.

And imagine every Australian university student benefiting from the expertise and ingenuity of the world's oldest living cultures.

These aspirations are at the heart of the reconciliation process and Australian universities must work harder to meet the targets set by Universities Australia and their individual RAPs.

Prof Tom Calma AO is the Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia and Chancellor of the University of Canberra.



Professor Tom Calma AO.



CORROBOREE AT DREAMWORLD

When Dreamworld adopted its first Reconciliation Action Plan and decided to extend its guest experiences to embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures, they had no idea just how successful the initiative would be. Corroboree as it's known, now enthrals more than 300,000 visitors a year and, for many, it's their first contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Dreamworld was the first theme park in Australia to adopt a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which was the genesis of their ongoing partnership with Yugambeh Museum. After three years of collaboration – collating the stories of 22 different First Nations peoples from across Australia, engaging Elders and community storytellers and physically building the space – Dreamworld Corroboree was born.

Dreamworld recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through reconciliation and inclusion in its mainstream business and employment protocols and practices.

“Dreamworld Corroboree is authentic and meets the protocols of our First Australians, and it's through their gracious and sharing contributions that makes Corroboree unique,” General Manager Corroboree Al Mucci said.

Visitors who include Corroboree in their Dreamworld experience witness a beautiful mix of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activities including a welcome to Yugambeh country, fire-making, music and dance.

Mr Mucci says that by showcasing certain customs from Arnhem Land, the Torres Strait and also the local Yugambeh country, visitors are treated to a rare glimpse of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures all in the one place.

“Of course, if people want to visit Arnhem Land or the Torres Strait, their time there will be unforgettable, but for those who have limited time, especially overseas visitors, then Corroboree offers a most memorable experience too,” Mr Mucci said.

Apart from its top-tier tourism appeal, Corroboree also performs an equally significant role in providing a genuine career pathway for its young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The framework that Corroboree has created ensures staff learn and work in a stable, supportive environment.

Mr Mucci said that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures do not live in a lineal world, but more like a ‘circle of support’ network.

“Corroboree staff adopt a totemic structure to signify progression both in culture and education competence. As a network circle, the support is all inclusive. You could be the youngest (Wagun) family member of your tribe and still be supported,” Mr Mucci said.

“The educational path for Corroboree staff increases as they pass through new Totems. Under this framework, staff have the opportunity over four

years to increase their educational capacity with vocational qualifications, enhanced cultural knowledge and a comprehensive skillset,” he said.

Over four years, staff can progress through Cert I & II Tourism, (Wagun bush turkey); Cert III Tourism (Yuggera goanna); Cert IV Mentor & Supervision + Train Coach Assess; (Bogabann sparrowhawk); Cert IV Travel & Tourism (Gowonda dolphin); and Double Diploma Hospitality Management + Leadership Management (Mibunn Eagle).

The framework combines Dreamworld’s high guest experience standards, education and culture lore practices. Their approach to governance is served by cultural customary best practice. ‘Ceremony’ and ‘Rites of Passage’ are represented in the structural cohesion of each layer and performed through Corroboree Initiation.

Corroboree Initiations or ‘Bijung’ (bee-jung) take place as progressive movements through Totems. As staff complete their Corroboree levels of cultural learnings and vocational education studies, their initiation (Rite of Passage) is conducted inside the Corroboree grounds.

Initiations or ‘Gumai’ (goom-eye) follow in the footsteps of thousands of years of tradition with simulation of traditional lore practices. Local Yugambah Traditional Custodians deliver the ceremony and welcome the staff being acknowledged as part of a larger family or tribe.

Gumai ceremony incorporates Welcome to Country, fire, Yugambah dancers and ochre from the cultural ceremony leader onto the Corroboree team (all Totems). All Totems are smoked and cleansed as part of the ceremony before initiation.

Dreamworld Corroboree is one of the best examples of reconciliation in action. It provides a magical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience to hundreds of thousands of people each year, while at the same time equipping its staff with diverse skills through education and training for ongoing careers in tourism and hospitality.

Dreamworld is Australia’s biggest theme park with more than 40 rides, waterslides and attractions.

[See dreamworld.com.au](http://dreamworld.com.au) for details.



Corroboree initiations or ‘Gumai’ (goom-eye) follow in the footsteps of thousands of years of tradition.



IGA WINNER SHAPES HEALTH OUTCOMES

One of the best examples of the critical link between good governance and organisational effectiveness is the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH), joint winner of the 2018 Indigenous Governance Awards (IGA).

The victorious IUIH team at the 2018 Indigenous Governance Awards (left to right): Glenna Tanna; Adrian Carson; Maurie Burke; Lynette Shipway; Kieran Chilcott; Dana Chilcott and Renee Brown. (Photo by Jillian Mundy).

The IUIH was established in 2000 to encourage and formalise regional collaboration between four existing south-east Queensland Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations (ACCHO). Very few of south-east Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had been accessing these local health clinics which were often located in areas where Aboriginal families had lived in the 70s and 80s, but had long since moved on.

The need to address these challenges shaped the blueprint for the ground-breaking new regional governance structure and the formation of IUIH. Critically, the IUIH model was underpinned by strong cultural foundations. These go back to traditional

ways of being, doing and belonging, when for thousands of years, Aboriginal tribes and nations across south-east Queensland came together to achieve shared and cross-territorial goals.

Over the past 18 years, the IUIH has grown into Australia's largest Indigenous health service and one of its most effective.

In announcing IUIH as joint winner, Awards judge Professor Mick Dodson said that the 'strength of their leadership and vision is profound'.

The judging panel also praised the innovative ways that the IUIH leadership and Board had designed and implemented programs and systems, not in 'response to government policy

or programs but as a direct result of its community empowered, self-determined and Indigenous-led governance'.

The IUIH has become arguably the most innovative and responsive ACCHO in the country and it's no coincidence that the south-east Queensland region it serves is the fastest growing Indigenous population in Australia, currently numbering 65,000 people.

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live here than in the Northern Territory, Victoria, or South Australia and it will soon overtake Western Sydney as having the highest concentration of Indigenous people in the country.

The IUIH credit their success on three simple concepts which, according to IUIH's IGA application, 'showcased a new paradigm where increased responsibility, agency and autonomy by Indigenous people themselves created the catalyst for change.'

The first concept is the critical importance of preventative health and of delivering services directly to the community—to the streets, schools, shopping centres and sporting events where Aboriginal people live, work and play – rather than waiting for people to get sick and then seek help.

The second concept directly challenges the deficit view of Aboriginal people as passive consumers of health services and instead argues that if Aboriginal people are given good health information and the power to manage their own health, they will do so.

"We were told that our people didn't care about their health, that our people didn't want to go and get their health checks, that our people didn't care about their babies," IUIH founder and CEO Adrian Carson said.

Of course that is not the case and people want to know about the dangers of smoking, excessive drinking, a sedentary lifestyle and poor diet, and so

over time the IUIH strongly believes the rates of chronic disease and mortality will decline.

And the third concept advocates giving full control to Aboriginal people over their own health services—a principle which Mr Carson says guided the early pioneers of Aboriginal-community controlled health and which remains essential to closing the gap today.

In just nine years, the numbers of Indigenous clients accessing comprehensive and culturally safe care in south-east Queensland has increased by 340 per cent (from 8,000 to 35,000); annual health checks have increased by 4,100 per cent (from 500 to 21,000); and progress against Closing the Gap targets is ahead of predicted trajectories.

The IGA judges also noted the organisation's strong governance structures had allowed it to 'optimise returns on investment while also maximising self-generated incomes. IUIH are training and educating their workforce for the future with good results.

'The current leadership of the IUIH, at Board and CEO level are talented and strategic in their focus on direction for the organisation and on solidifying their current position.'

Five years into its operations this new model has already seen an improvement in health adjusted life expectancy of nearly a full year for the IUIH's patients. That is average extra year of life for south-east Queensland Indigenous people!

CEO Adrian Carson said his organisation's successes had proved that the poor health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people was not insurmountable.

"The narrative in this country has been a kind of hand wringing about how we're never going to close the gap but, in the space of five years, the Institute and our community have demonstrated that we can close the gap."

So extraordinary has been the impact of the IUIH prevention and empowerment model on the health outcomes of Australia's fastest growing Indigenous population that an ABC report last year described it as having 'profound implications for mainstream health if adopted'.

The model was, according to the ABC, 'an example of Aboriginal innovation with the potential to benefit all Australians'.



The IUIH building features a giant mural of Uncle Tiga Bayles and IUIH Patron and Aboriginal Health Pioneer Aunty Pamela Mann.

STYLE

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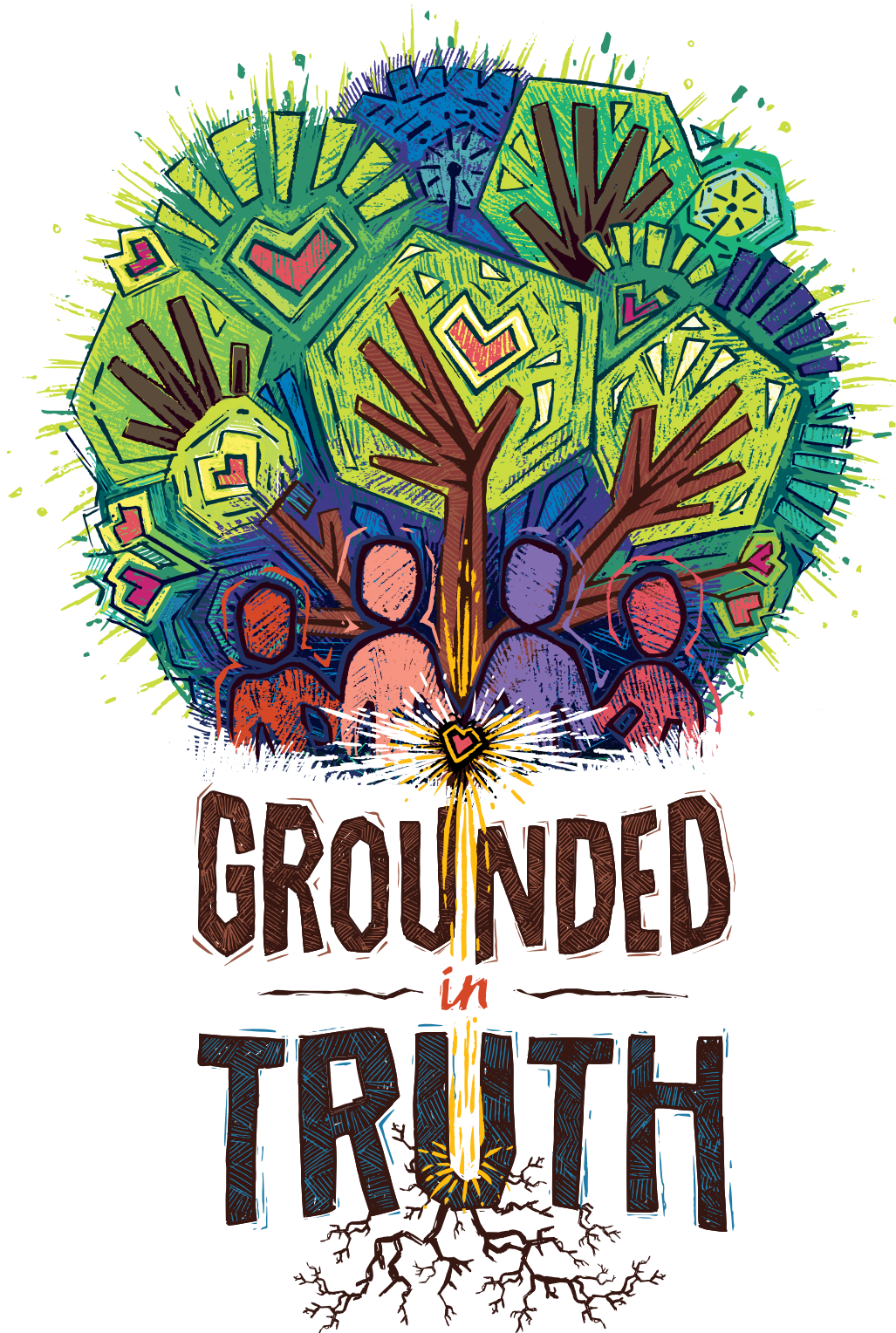


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NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2019

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WALK TOGETHER WITH COURAGE

To foster positive race relations, the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader community must be grounded in truth. Whether you're engaging in challenging conversations or unlearning and relearning what you know, this journey requires all of us to walk together with courage.

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