

National Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week—held every year from 27 May to 3 June—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.

What's the significance of 27 May and 3 June?

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 did survive British colonisation.

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 is reconciliation in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

At its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Australia's colonial history is characterised by devastating land dispossession, violence and racism. Over the last half-century, however, many significant steps towards reconciliation have been taken.

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey that reminds us that while generations of Australians have fought hard for meaningful change, future gains are likely to take just as much, if not more, effort.

Why is National Reconciliation Week important?

National Reconciliation Week provides a focus for working towards our goal of a just, equitable and reconciled Australia

National Reconciliation Week is an ideal time for organisations, schools, universities, community groups and workplaces to advance understanding of reconciliation within their own places and their own lives. National Reconciliation Week provides a focus for working towards our goal of a just, equitable and reconciled Australia

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

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 creates a theme for National Reconciliation Week each year.

Reconciliation Australia also works with state reconciliation organisations in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia and the ACT to organise local events and activities for National Reconciliation Week.

Thousands of workplaces, schools, early learning services, universities, councils, and more organise their own private or public activities for National Reconciliation Week.

How can I or my group or organisation get involved?

Visit the Reconciliation Australia website for more information and to discover what activities and events are taking place in your local area during National Reconciliation Week

On a personal level, you can think about what you can do locally and take the time to learn about the rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures that exists in Australia.

And, importantly, find the time to talk with your family and friends about why it's important for all Australians to build respectful relationships with each other, and especially with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

What can I do for the rest of year?

While National Reconciliation Week is an excellent time to think about these issues, you can still take action throughout the year to work towards reconciliation.

Visit www.reconciliation.org.au or follow us on social media for more information.