

# Reconciliation News

OUR HISTORY,  
OUR STORY,  
OUR FUTURE.

10 Years of  
Reconciliation  
Action Plans

Reconciliation  
in Conversation:  
Future Action

Indigenous  
Governance  
Awards winners

Reconciliation  
and First  
Contact 2

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RECONCILIATION  
AUSTRALIA

  
RECONCILIATION  
IN AUSTRALIA

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Reconciliation Australia acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

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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 [www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au) to find out more.

Welcome to the first all-digital edition of Reconciliation News. Digital publication offers news avenues and platforms for the richer delivery and sharing of information.

Our digital strategy reflects Reconciliation Australia's transformative role in leading the national conversation on reconciliation, and the needs of our growing online audiences across the nation.



**This year we celebrated 25 years of formal reconciliation in Australia.**

**Twenty-five years ago, members of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation knew that advancing reconciliation would be a generational project, and now twenty-five years on, Reconciliation Australia is continuing to drive our vision for Australia's reconciliation.**

In February this year we launched our landmark report, *The State of Reconciliation in Australia*. The Report highlights the milestones achieved in Australia's reconciliation journey over the past 25 years and provides recommendations for the nation's way forward if we are to realise our potential as a reconciled nation.

This year, we facilitated 800 leading Australian organisations to drive reconciliation through our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program. We are also proud of the more than 1,000 schools who engage in reconciliation through the *Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning* program.

In marking 25 years of formal reconciliation, we came together to celebrate our alumni, and those who have contributed so much to the reconciliation movement. Together, we joined with thousands of Australians who took part in National Reconciliation Week. We also came together to celebrate the achievements of our Indigenous Governance Awards finalists, who demonstrate leadership and vision in practicing self-determination in their organisations. We hosted key women leaders at the Garma Festival and saw achievements in advancing policy and engagement outcomes, guided always by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led perspectives.

Today, in workplaces across Australia, our RAP program works to advance trust, respect and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and non-Indigenous Australians. In 2016, the RAP program made significant strides: with more than 800 organisations employing more than three million people engaged through endorsed RAPs. RAPs continue to drive widespread positive social change, lower prejudice, and engender greater trust—in turn, contributing significantly to the realisation of our nation's vision for reconciliation.

Similarly, in only three years, Reconciliation Australia's *Narragunnawali: Schools and Early Learning program* has moved from strength to strength – engaging and supporting educators with key materials, curriculum resources and professional learning opportunities to increase their knowledge and confidence teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Our biennial Indigenous Governance Awards created in partnership with BHP Billiton were highly successful this year, receiving the most applications ever and with the caliber of applicants and finalists being of an exceptionally high standard. Each of the finalists were exemplars of good governance with innovative approaches to community leadership.

As always we celebrated our key national campaign, National Reconciliation Week. This year's theme – 'Our History, Our Story, Our Future' – saw millions of Australians come together to reflect and consider how we can progress further in our nation's reconciliation journey. The week's highlights included a dinner celebrating 25 years of Reconciliation in Australia which saw many of the reconciliation movement's leaders and visionaries gather together to reflect on the progress we have made in this journey, and the journey that lies ahead.

In this, our 25th year, we also hosted the 'Reconciliation in Conversation: Future Action' Forum. The Forum provided the opportunity to consider key actions to progress our national reconciliation journey and to reaffirm our commitment to making reconciliation a national priority.

Thank you for reading *Reconciliation News* and for your interest in our work, and for your commitment to playing your part as we work towards another generation of achievements in reconciliation. We wish you well in the festive season, and look forward to engaging with you in 2017.



Justin Mohamed  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



# RECONCILIATION IN CONVERSATION: FUTURE ACTION FORUM

**The reconciliation movement has achieved strong progress towards a just and equitable Australia over the past 25 years.**

Since formalising reconciliation based on recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, with the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, and later Reconciliation Australia, the national reconciliation conversation has moved forward and enabled the ‘unpacking’ of key areas of national reconciliation action.

In November 2016, Reconciliation Australia hosted the ‘Reconciliation in Conversation: Future Action’ Forum. The Forum provided the opportunity to consider key actions to progress our national reconciliation journey. The event was attended by over 100 guests; including Reconciliation Action Plan partners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led community organisations, advocates, academics and Indigenous Governance Awards finalists.

The panel sessions making up the Forum unpacked suggested ideas and initiatives for action as articulated in *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report. In understanding race relations, panellists considered whether Australia is a ‘racist country’; the opportunities and challenges of improving institutional integrity; and the rightful place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in decision-making processes. Attendees also discussed the importance of our nation’s constitutional recognition journey, and stories of truth, justice and healing. Together, we will continue to make reconciliation a national priority.

**Critically, the Forum focused on several key areas of national action to progress reconciliation to the next generation. During the Forum, common themes emerged as part of the discussions, including:**

- Empowering communities—both Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous—to further progress reconciliation, and meaningfully contribute to the nation's vital reconciliation conversation;
- Ensuring the active and effective support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures, beyond project cycles and core business objectives to accommodate the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- Ensuring governments deliver effective funding, monitoring and evaluation of key services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as central to positive outcomes;
- Supporting ongoing healing through acknowledging the wrongs of the past, and progressing reconciliation through truth, justice and healing, including the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- Building trust and hope for a diverse yet united Australia, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights are an increasingly valued and recognised part of a shared national identity.



(L-R) Ms Djapirri Mununggirritj, Ms Joy Taylor, Ms June Oscar AO, Ms Melinda Cilento.

In challenging those present to consider the next generation of reconciliation through rich and frank discussions, the forum participants were guided by our five dimensions of reconciliation—seeing these as interrelated, rather than individual concepts. Participants were also encouraged to ensure that we have learned from past mistakes and successes, and to remain, as always, guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led solutions.

Moving forward, Reconciliation Australia is proud to reflect these important community-led insights in our forthcoming strategic plans. Together, we will continue to make reconciliation a national priority, and realise these ambitions in our course of the next generation.



L-R) Richard Weston, Florence Onus, Sam Almaliki, Reconciliation Australia Deputy CEO Karen Mundine.



# 10 YEARS OF RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANS

**In 2016, as we celebrate 25 years of formal reconciliation in Australia, we also mark 10 years of our ambitious and highly successful Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program. Today, RAPs provide organisations across Australia with the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to, and advance, reconciliation in the workplace.**

Launched in July 2006 by former Prime Minister John Howard and former Director of Reconciliation Australia Professor Mick Dodson, Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) were first known as simply as 'Action Plans'.

In committing to progress reconciliation within their workplaces, communities and spheres of influence, Action Plan partners "make it impossible for others to say they don't know what reconciliation means, or how to get involved (in reconciliation)," said Professor Dodson. "These first action plans demonstrate the maturing of the reconciliation process over the last ten years."

## **The RAP program today - respect, relationships and opportunities**

Today, more than 800 RAP partners – employing more than 3 million Australians – have demonstrated their commitment to progressing reconciliation within the RAP program. The program shows continued growth, with some 280 partners in the initial 'scoping' stage of RAP development.



Reconciliation Australia Deputy CEO Karen Mundine (left), with Department of Human Services Secretary Kathryn Campbell CSC.



Basketball superstar and Australian Olympian Patrick Mills with Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) General Manager Darryl Monaghan.

## **Did you know?**

The Action Plan program first began with eight 'trailblazer' partners, many of whom continued to progress their reconciliation commitments through the RAP program. This included: BHP Billiton, ANZ Bank, Canberra Investment Corporation, Centrelink, Melbourne City Council, Oxfam Australia, South Australia Department of Administrative and Information Services, and Yarrteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation.

Ten years on, our RAP community has grown significantly, and is a diverse, ever growing collective of organisations striving to put reconciliation into action.

# 10 YEARS OF RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANS



Reconciliation Australia CEO Justin Mohamed presents Lendlease CEO Stephen McCann with an Elevate RAP certificate.

## The RISE framework

In early 2013 Reconciliation Australia launched the RAP R.I.S.E framework, giving organisations the opportunity to be categorised in one of four RAP models, 'Reflect', 'Innovate', 'Stretch' and 'Elevate'. Reflecting each organisation's stage in its RAP journey, the framework ensures that these commitments correspond with the needs and opportunities of respective RAP organisations.

Our RAP Elevate partners who are taking reconciliation beyond 'business as usual' and are embedding the delivery of core business practices and decision-making at the highest level. The actions in these Elevate RAPs continue to accelerate the commitment to meaningful and sustainable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities. Today, our RAP partners include: Rio Tinto, Sodexo, Telstra, Crown Resorts, KPMG, Qantas, CBA, Woodside, Richmond Football Club, Brierty, Lendlease, Westpac, AIATSIS, Broadspectrum, Herbert Smith Freehills, Department of Human Services, and NAB.



## The future of the RAP Program

Reconciliation Australia strives to see RAPs as commonplace in every Australian organisation. We encourage organisations and local governments to embrace RAPs so that reconciliation can continue to be progressed in local communities.

Along with support of the government and our networks, the RAP program will continue to drive the widespread social change, building better relationships within the wider community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the benefit of all Australians.

Reconciliation Australia support hundreds of organisations across the nation to participate in the RAP program. To find out more about the RAP program, or to develop your own RAP, visit [www.reconciliation.org.au/raphub](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/raphub).



# RECONCILIATION AND FIRST CONTACT 2



Photo credit: SBS.

With an audience of over two million people, First Contact 2 encouraged many Australians to consider the place of reconciliation in our nation today and challenged the preconceptions and stereotypes about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that are slowing our progress towards reconciliation.

In the second season of First Contact, host and former Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair Ray Martin, guided six well known Australians with diverse and deeply entrenched preconceptions and opinions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, on a journey to discover more about the histories, stories and cultures of Australia's First Peoples.

Broadcast simultaneously on both SBS and NITV, First Contact 2 reached nearly two million Australians and sparked a nationwide conversation on the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

cultures in our shared identity, and the 'gap' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia.

Our recent The State of Reconciliation in Australia report reaffirms that while goodwill and support for reconciliation is growing across the Australian community, racism and discrimination, denial of rights, and a lack of historical acceptance continue to overshadow the nation's progress towards reconciliation. However, Reconciliation Australia's 2014 RAP Impact Measurement Report shows that cultural education and contact between Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians, such as that facilitated by Reconciliation Action Plans, create higher levels of trust and lower prejudice. Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the generous support and participation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who took part in the series and enabled this 'first contact' and education—opening their homes and sharing their lives and cultures with those participants to ensure that the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were reflected as part of the program.

## Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in schools and early learning services

The teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures can be challenging for teachers and educators, especially those who are non-Indigenous. Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning is a program that has been designed in recognition of this challenge, and aims to support the more than 21,000 early learning services, primary and secondary schools in Australia to foster a higher level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

To positively and proactively engage students and educators in discussions surrounding First Contact, the Narragunnawali team collaborated closely with SBS Learn to develop teaching resources. The resources are designed to provide students and teachers with the opportunity and confidence to research and understand aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, in line with Australian curriculum outcomes.

In broadening their knowledge and learnings from First Contact, teachers and students are also encouraged to develop their understandings of the unique individual and collective rights of First Australians, and the importance of reconciliation in our national story.

VIDEO: "This experience drove home for me just how far we have to go, when it comes to reconciliation," says Tom Ballard. Watch the video below to find out more:

[YouTube link here](#)

## The State of Reconciliation in Australia: First Contact

- 6 out of 10 Australians say they've had little or no contact with Aboriginal people, yet almost all Australians (86 per cent) believe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is important.
- Most Australians (71 per cent) agree that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold a unique place as the First Australians.
- Despite this, in today's Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people still experience high levels of racial prejudice and discrimination, and report feeling less cultural security than other Australians.
- While most Australians' knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is limited (only 30 per cent are knowledgeable), many Australians (83 per cent) believe it is important to know more and strongly support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories being a compulsory part of the school curriculum.
- Some Australians (44 per cent) want to support reconciliation but most don't know how (76 per cent). When people participate in reconciliation activities, their knowledge improves and their views on the relationship change significantly.

## The national conversation: Social media and First Contact 2

Historical acceptance means acknowledging our past through truth, justice and healing. **#FirstContact**

Reconciliation Aust. @RecAustralia  
1 in 6 Stolen Generation children experienced physical abuse in institutions. 1 in 10 experienced sexual abuse. #FirstContact

RETWEETS 2 LIKES 8

Until we start trying to start a proper dialogue with indigenous Aussies we are never going to start improving things **#Firstcontact**

RETWEETS 4 LIKES 5

Most Australians (94%) agree that wrongs towards Aboriginal peoples occurred as a result of European settlement **#FirstContact**

RETWEETS 14 LIKES 16

This **#FirstContact** documentary is excellent. Hopefully it will jolt awareness and understanding. Australia. The lucky country.

RETWEETS 2 LIKES 8

What do you want to be when you grow up? **#FirstContact**

SBS Australia @SBS  
What do want to be when you grow up? #FirstContact - Starts Tuesday 29th November 8.30pm

RETWEETS 7 LIKES 14

positive two-way relationships built on trust and respect, that are free of racism **#FirstContact**

kk @flashblak  
The bond is that you are both human beings show #Respect #humanity Oldfield #firstcontact



# INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Reconciliation Australia in partnership with BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities, have revealed the winners of the Indigenous Governance Awards 2016 and celebrated the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations and projects across Australia.



(L-R) Reconciliation Australia CEO Justin Mohamed, Senator Patrick Dodson, Senator Nigel Scullion, with Reconciliation Australia Co-Chairs Melinda Cilento and Prof. Tom Calma.

**The Indigenous Governance Awards recognise and celebrate success in two categories: incorporated Indigenous organisations (Category A), and non-incorporated Indigenous projects and initiatives (Category B). This year, the Awards received a record number of 138 applications, which is testament to the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and initiatives.**

In November, we were proud to reveal the winners of the Indigenous Governance Awards: Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (Western Desert Dialysis) was selected as the winner of the Category A Award for incorporated organisations, while Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (Murdi Paaki) was honoured as winner of the Category B Award for non-incorporated projects.

Commenting on Category A winner, Western Desert Dialysis, Chair of the Indigenous Governance Awards, Professor Mick Dodson, said: “It’s their humanity that stands out in their governance. They strike me as a family that really cares for every member of that family in the way they deliver services. Aboriginal culture has been wrapped around access to modern medicine and allows it to be administered in a holistic and culturally appropriate way.”

Category B winner Murdi Paaki’s success “comes from the fact they’re made up of community members, which gives them power to advocate,” said Professor Dodson. “They show leadership, vision, and fearlessness, and they are practicing self-determination.”

Effective governance is key to success for any enterprise. Effective Indigenous governance melds traditional governance and responsibilities based on culture and kinship, with the requirements of mainstream organisations, including financial and legal accountabilities. By creating governance models that are effective and legitimate in two worlds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations are examples of successful self-determination and two-way governance in action.



William Johnson (left) of Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly with Sam Jeffries, former Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly Chairman.

A highly commended honour was awarded to Kanyirninpa Jukurpa in Category A, for its work strengthening Martu people's connection with Country and leadership capacity; and Ara Irititja in Category B, for its dedication to digitally archiving culturally significant materials from the APY Lands.

BHP Billiton Chief External Affairs Officer Geoff Healy said good governance is critical to BHP Billiton and its engagement with Indigenous peoples around the world.

"Good governance delivers better, more transparent and accountable decision making and builds confidence in organisations and their leadership."

"BHP Billiton has been proud to support the Indigenous Governance Awards since they began in 2005. These finalists are great examples of the benefits that flow when good governance standards are in place," Mr Healy said.

The calibre of the finalist organisations from which the winners were selected was the most outstanding in the twelve-year history of the Awards.



Winners of the Indigenous Governance Awards Category A, Western Desert Dialysis, with IGA Chair Prof. Mick Dodson.



(L-R) Luke Frank, Mic Dodson, Muuki Taylor from Kanyirrinpa Jukurpa - KJ Rangers.



(L-R) John Dallwitz, Sally Scales, Dora Dallwitz from Ara Irititja.

“This was certainly the highest standard of finalists we’ve ever had. They’ve all got the administrative nuts and bolts of good governance in order and are taking innovative approaches to community leadership. Across the board, we have seen the governance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations improve exponentially and these finalists could teach non-Indigenous organisations many things about innovation and success,” reflected Professor Dodson.

By shining a light on well-governed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and initiatives around the country, the Awards encourage others to emulate their success. Despite working in challenging environments, the finalists and others like them, are achieving amazing outcomes for their families, communities and wider Australia.



Nurse Helen Martin (left) and dialysis patient Phynea Maher Western Desert Dialysis.



Tom Ballard (far right). Photo credit: SBS.

## TOM BALLARD REFLECTS ON FIRST CONTACT 2

Tom Ballard is an Australian comedian who took part in SBS' First Contact 2 program. Tom joined the cast of well-known celebrities, including singer-songwriter Natalie Imbruglia, ex-One Nation politician David Oldfield, TV personality Ian 'Dicko' Dickson, former Miss Universe Australia Renae Ayris and actress Nicki Wendt. Reconciliation Australia spoke to Tom about his experience and reflections while on the journey, and his thoughts on how we might achieve a just, equitable and reconciled Australia.

This interview has been edited for clarity.

**RA: What was your understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues before taking part in First Contact?**

TB: I would say that I had a pretty limited understanding of Indigenous Australia before doing this show—an embarrassingly limited understanding. I think back to school and the paucity of knowledge that we had about learning about the history of this country and what actually happened to Indigenous people, and the lack of personal interaction that I had with Aboriginal people, growing up.

I had heard phrases like the 'Stolen Generation'—I'd learnt about the Apology, and heard about reconciliation—but I had huge gaps in my knowledge. Everything that I did have was received knowledge, like reading, from being a 'bleeding heart', I (already) knew that this country is racist in lots of different ways.

## RA: What attracted you about taking part in the program?

TB: I wanted to do First Contact because I watched the first season, and was really impressed because... it seemed like it did want to talk about the sticky, uncomfortable, complicated issues involved in reconciliation—especially the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. That's a relationship that goes both ways.

I spent a lot of time being uncomfortable, which is good! It's how you learn. And if we're going to talk seriously and honestly about Australia's relationship with its First Peoples, and the challenges facing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, we're going to be really uncomfortable. That is important.

I'm positive now that every white person who seriously wants to help, can only benefit from listening more, and shutting up a little bit more. That definitely became clearer to me over the trip.

## RA: Many young Australians struggle with historical acceptance, and understanding the impacts of past wrongs, even today, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. How do you think this can be overcome?

TB: This trip for me just drove home how far we've got to go, in lots of different ways, when it comes to reconciliation in Australia today. Most notable, in terms of our mindset, and in term of reckoning what our history is—not only what happened, but what is happening now, in this country—particularly when you've grown up your whole life being told that Australia is the lucky country, the home of the fair go, the best country in the world...

A multicultural success story! There's a lot of truth to that, but it's just not the full picture.

When we went to Kinchela (Boys Home), and we heard about this horrific abuse that was inflicted on these boys, that people knew about, and still haven't been brought to account for—it's extremely shocking, and depressing.

You would hope that Kevin Rudd's Apology (to the Stolen Generations) went some way towards healing that, but I still think that wounds are there. The big message, though, was that this is still happening—and that a lot of Aboriginal parents are still deemed unworthy parents because of racist reasons. They're being separated from their kids, who can't then grow up with access to their family history, and to their culture. So the idea of history repeating is a scary one.

I still don't think that people my age, especially, don't fully appreciate the impact that these events had on these men, and will have, for the rest of their lives. They told us that this affected their ability to be fathers themselves, which then affects their children, and their children—this idea of hereditary trauma, the idea that those actions of the past are still affecting Aboriginal people today. We still have a long way to go before we fully acknowledge and accept all that.

There were so many moments that you had to remind yourself that you were in the same country that you were born in, and that you grew up in. In many ways the experience was so foreign and so far removed from your own personal experience, and what you associate with

what Australia is, and what happens in Australia... A first world country! It deepened and broadened my understanding of what Australia really is, as a country—how diverse it is.

There's a lot of darkness that we don't like talking about, and that you don't

hear about in our history classes in schools, or in the media.

You have to find out for yourself, really—educate yourself. If you want to be a good Australian, if you really want to be able to say that 'I'm proud of my country', then you need to have a full understanding of what that really means.

## RA: Twenty-five years ago, we knew that advancing reconciliation would be a generational project.

## Do you think that Australia can achieve reconciliation in this generation? If so, what needs to happen to achieve this?

Do I think we're a big enough country for reconciliation? Yes, we have to be! We have to believe that we are big enough, and good enough, as a nation, to achieve this. I certainly hope that I have changed; the show has awakened a desire in me to do more, and learn more, and to try to be a better ally to Indigenous Australians. I'm still figuring out how to do that. You can often feel powerless in this world, but you need to bring these issues back to you, and look at your world, and what you can do—even if that means challenging racism when you hear it, or challenging your own preconceived notions. When reading the news about Indigenous people, I think it's worth being more skeptical and not receive everything as granted wisdom. I'm just starting out on my journey.

*Tom Ballard's latest show Boundless Plains To Share will be staged in January as part of Belvoir Theatre's 2017 season in Sydney.*



# NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2016 'OUR HISTORY, OUR STORY, OUR FUTURE'

Each year, Reconciliation Australia hosts National Reconciliation Week (NRW). NRW celebrates and builds on respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, and is held from 27 May to 3 June; significant dates in our nation's reconciliation journey that mark the anniversaries of the 1967 referendum and the historic Mabo decision, respectively.



Reconciliation Australia CEO Justin Mohamed speaks at an Alumni dinner during National Reconciliation Week (NRW).

NRW is a key platform to generate understanding and a national conversation about reconciliation through social media, the NRW website, and events - conducted across the nation by schools, workplaces, community organisations, and government.

## NRW 2016 theme

NRW 2016's theme was 'Our History, Our Story, Our Future'. In marking 25 years of formal reconciliation in Australia, the theme is derived from *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report, which asks all Australians to reflect on our national identity, and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights in our nation's story.

**Our History** reminds us all that historical acceptance is essential to our reconciliation journey. Historical acceptance will exist when all Australians understand and accept the fact that past laws, practices and policies deeply affected the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, often having devastating immediate impacts and causing much of the disadvantage that exists today. It is also a commitment to ensuring these wrongs are never repeated in the future.

**Our Story** reflects the fact that the journey towards reconciliation forms a significant part of Australia's story, as do the stories of both trauma and triumph told by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It also encourages each and every one of us to make reconciliation part of our own story.

**Our Future** reinforces that reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians as we move forward, in the knowledge that we believe in fairness for everyone, that our diversity makes us richer, and that together, we are stronger.

## NRW 2016 events

In 2016, Reconciliation Australia saw a record number of 1,204 events held by Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) partners, schools and early learning services, workplaces, community groups and individuals nation-wide. The NRW website featured a number of digital resources, providing important support to each of our community partners.

To launch NRW 2016 and celebrate 25 years of formal reconciliation in Australia, Reconciliation Australia hosted a dinner for its eminent Alumni on 27 May at the Crown Palladium in Melbourne. The dinner was attended by 220 guests, including Reconciliation Australia Alumni, politicians, Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) partners, representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, government representatives and friends of Reconciliation Australia. It featured live entertainment by Archie Roach, The Merindas, and the Short Black Opera.

Reconciliation Australia also partnered again with The Long Walk in Federation Square, Melbourne on 28 May, which provided a unique community engagement opportunity, and was attended by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. The Walk began with a series of community performances and speeches held at Federation Square, Melbourne, before 'The Long Walk' towards, and around, the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). The event concluded at the 'Dreamtime at the 'G' AFL match between Elevate RAP partners Richmond Football Club.



A performer at the National Reconciliation Week Alumni dinner.



The Long Walk 2016, Federation Square, Melbourne VIC.

## Looking to the future of NRW

NRW 2016 was greatly successful, and Reconciliation Australia extends its sincere thanks to those who were involved, either by hosting an event or participating in events around the country.

2017 will mark significant milestones in our nation's reconciliation journey; the 50th anniversary of the 1967

referendum, and 25 years since the historic Mabo decision and will continue to drive the national reconciliation conversation in Australia.

*To find out more about National Reconciliation Week (NRW) 2017, visit [www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw)*