

Reconciliation

Reconciliation Week 27 May – 3 June 2010

The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2010 is Reconciliation: Let's see it through!

Activities and celebrations will highlight a decade of reconciliation progress.

And while there's still a way to go, respect, trust and the knowledge to turn good intentions into effective actions pave the way forward.

On the tenth anniversary of the bridge walks (and of Reconciliation Australia itself), the challenge to all Australians is to embrace the future and aspire to achieve great things together.

National Reconciliation Week began in 1996 to provide a special focus for nationwide reconciliation activities.

It is a time to reflect on achievements so far and to renew commitments to reconciliation by exploring ways to help create a better future for Indigenous Australians.

National Reconciliation Week coincides with two significant dates in Australia's history which provide strong symbols of the aspirations for reconciliation.

The week begins on 27 May with the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum which removed clauses from the Australian Constitution that discriminated against Indigenous Australians.

It also gave the Commonwealth Government the power to make laws on behalf of Aboriginal people.

The week ends with the anniversary of the High Court of Australia's judgement in the Mabo case on 3 June 1992.

The decision recognised the Native Title rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and overturned the myth of terra nullius - that the continent was empty of people and the land unowned before European settlement in 1788.

Welcome to the Department of Indigenous Affairs' special Reconciliation edition newsletter.



This year marks 10 years since the historic Sydney Harbour Bridge Walk, and the 10-year anniversary of Reconciliation Australia.

Don't forget to put in your application for Reconciliation funding - details on page 4.

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Patrick Walker
Director General



10 year anniversary of Reconciliation Australia,

This May we mark the tenth anniversary of two significant reconciliation milestones—the historic Bridge Walks for Reconciliation and the establishment of Reconciliation Australia itself.

So National Reconciliation Week seems an ideal time to ask Australians to think about just what reconciliation means 10 years on and what can each of us do to make it work. The theme for this year's NRW (27 May – 3 June) is 'let's see it through' and calls on Australians to embrace our future and achieve great things by walking and working together.

Shortly after the Bridge Walks in 2000, Reconciliation Australia (RA) was set up as the peak body to promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community. To achieve the organisation's ultimate goal of closing the gap in life expectancy, RA works with many partners on multiple projects.

For the last ten years Reconciliation Australia has been building evidence, influencing policy and encouraging action to advance reconciliation. Over this time an increasing number of Australians have been taking steps to engage and get involved in the process. Of course more still needs to be done but with goodwill and willingness true reconciliation can be achieved.

As a lead-up to the twin anniversaries, RA has produced a position paper which explains the crucial connection between reconciliation and closing the gap and the potential for meaningful, lasting progress.

The report is on: www.reconciliation.org.au.

2010 Reconciliation grants open

Applications are open for the Department of Indigenous Affairs' 2010 Reconciliation funding round. Like last year, funding is for selected local projects up to \$3,000 that recognise the relationship between the original inhabitants of the State and the people who have made this country their home over the past 250 years.

These small sponsorships are aimed at small, community-based projects driven by local groups in Western Australia.

If you or someone you know is interested, you must submit a written application on the prescribed form and address the criteria.

The project must demonstrate active engagement and participation with the local Indigenous community and the broader community which embraces the unique Indigenous Culture.

The applicant or administering body must be incorporated (a copy of the incorporation certificate to be provided), a government agency or school.

The project must be undertaken in the geographical region in which it is applied.

DIA reserves the right to publish details of projects receiving funding for publicity purposes.

Applications close on Friday 30 April 2010 at 4pm. If you have any questions please talk to someone in your local DIA regional office.

Sydney Harbour Bridge walk: 10 years ago

On a freezing cold morning in Sydney 10 years ago, a crowd of a quarter of a million people gathered to make a statement about Reconciliation.

The Harbour Bridge event was followed by walks in all other capital cities and many other towns, involving almost a million people around the country.

This walk was the culmination of 10 years work by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, set up by the Federal Government to promote greater understanding between Indigenous and other Australians.

The day was dominated by a formal treaty with Australia's first peoples.

The Bridge spans Sydney Harbour from Bennelong Point named after Eora man, Bennelong.

At the age of about 25, Bennelong was captured by soldiers on the orders of Governor Arthur Phillip, who had been instructed by King George III to "endeavour, by every possible mean, to open an intercourse with the natives, and to conciliate their affections, enjoining all our subjects to live in amity and kindness with them".

As the Aboriginal people had avoided contact with the Europeans this had proven difficult, hence the decision to take Bennelong by force.

In 1792 Bennelong went with Governor Phillip to England for an audience at the court of King George III.



Photo: Loui Seselja. Courtesy: National Library of Australia

When he came home three years later, Phillip's successor, Governor John Hunter, reported that cold and homesickness had "much broken his spirit".

After his return, he struggled to fit into either society and struggled with an addiction to alcohol, eventually dying at the age of about 50 in 1813.

Historical accounts show him to have been a skilful diplomat, often negotiating between local Aboriginal people and the European settlers.

It is this legacy nurturing understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous society that drives Reconciliation efforts.

Reconciliation

let's see it through

A decade after the historic bridge walks it's fair to say the future for reconciliation has never looked brighter. While there's still a way to go, respect, trust and the knowledge to turn good intentions into effective actions pave the way forward.

On this 10th anniversary of the bridge walks (and of Reconciliation Australia itself), let's embrace our future and aspire to achieve great things together.

**National
Reconciliation
Week 2010**

27 MAY – 3 JUNE

Find out how you can join in:
www.reconciliation.org.au
Tel: 02 6273 9200

