

IN BRIEF: THE STATE OF RECONCILIATION IN AUSTRALIA

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, **Australia's colonial history is characterised by devastating land dispossession, violence and overt and unapologetic racism. Reconciliation is the process of righting those wrongs.** Reconciliation Australia's 2016 report, *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* measures Australia's progress in five key aspects of reconciliation: race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity, and historical acceptance. The report makes it clear that, although some progress has been made, **there is still much to be done on our journey as a nation towards reconciliation.**

This fact sheet provides a summary of *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report's findings, alongside goals across **five key areas: race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance.**

RACE RELATIONS

- The **level of contact and interaction** between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is low – at just 30 per cent.
- Only 26 per cent of the general population believe **trust towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people** is high.
- 33 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had experienced **verbal racial abuse** in the six months before the survey.

Goal: *All Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, rights and experiences, which results in stronger relationships based on trust and respect and that are free of racism.*

EQUITY AND EQUALITY

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy **less participation and access to life opportunities.**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to consider their living conditions are worse than other peoples and are more likely to see **barriers to employment and education.**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have **less enjoyment of their unique individual and collective rights.**

Goal: *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participate equally in a range of life opportunities and the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld.*

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

- There is **broad multi-partisan political support for reconciliation**, but successive governments' implementation of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's recommendations has been mixed.
- **Funding** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services has decreased.
- Business and community support for reconciliation is increasing.
- Most Australians believe that **political, business and community institutions should do more to advance reconciliation**.

Goal: *The active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures.*

UNITY

- 65 per cent of Australians believe it is **possible for Australia to be united**.
- Over 70 per cent of Australians believe **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are important to Australia's national identity** and agree that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold a unique place as the First Australians.
- 76 per cent of people who support reconciliation policy don't know how they can help further the cause.

Goal: *An Australian society that values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared national identity.*

HISTORICAL ACCEPTANCE

- 94% of Australians agree that **wrongs towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples** occurred as a result of European settlement, but many are unsure of the details.
- Between 50% and 60% percent of the general community agree that **past race-based policies have created today's disadvantage**.
- Australia is **repeating some of the wrongs of the past**, and urgent, well-considered action is needed to reduce the rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in out-of-home care and in prison.

Goal: *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participate equally in a range of life opportunities and the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld.*