

2020 AUSTRALIAN RECONCILIATION BAROMETER

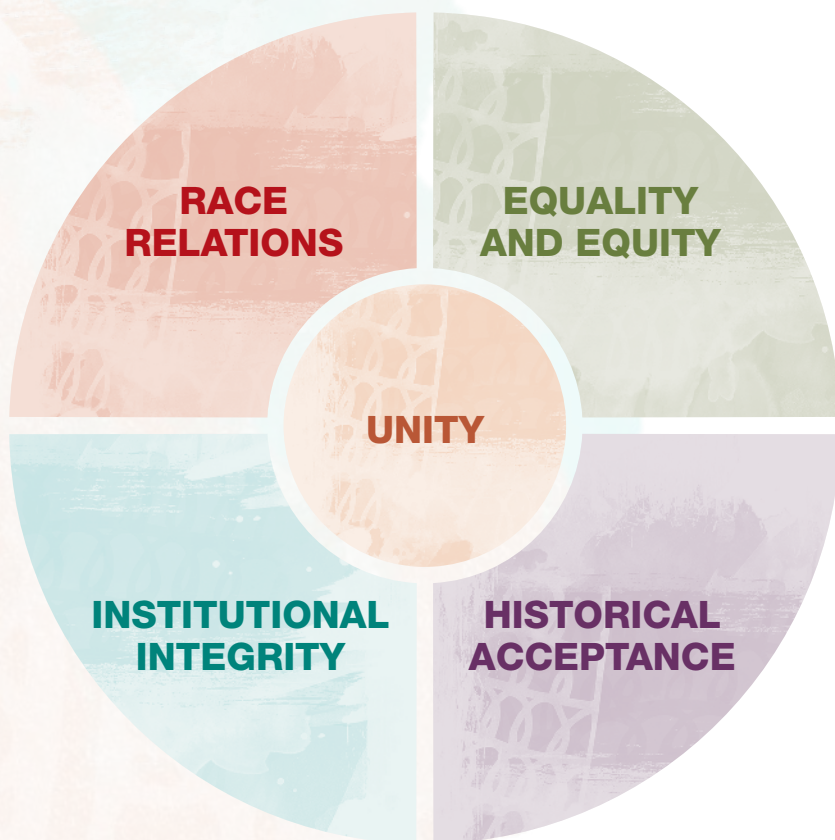


RECONCILIATION
AUSTRALIA

RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia is the national lead organisation for reconciliation in Australia. We partner with business, government, education and community sectors to achieve our vision for a just, equitable and reconciled Australia.

FIVE DIMENSIONS OF RECONCILIATION



Race Relations

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

Equality and Equity

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.

Unity

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

Institutional Integrity

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

Historical Acceptance

All Australians understand and accept the wrongs of the past and the impact of these wrongs. Australia makes amends for the wrongs of the past and ensures these wrongs are never repeated.

2020 AUSTRALIAN RECONCILIATION BAROMETER – SUMMARY REPORT

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer (ARB) measures attitudes towards reconciliation, using the five dimensions of reconciliation to inform data collection and analysis. The 2020 ARB shows that support for a reconciled nation is higher than ever with steady improvement across most measures. However, inequality and racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples still stand in our way.

The ARB is a biennial, national research study, undertaken by Reconciliation Australia since 2008. The research delves into the heart of our nation to identify the attitudes and perceptions Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians hold about each other and about reconciliation, while mapping Australia's progress towards the five dimensions of reconciliation.

The 2020 ARB surveyed a national sample of 495 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and 1988 general community members, across all states and territories. Both the general community sample and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sample are weighted to be representative in terms of age group, gender and location (state and territory populations), as per Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census data.

Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the potential impact of COVID-19 in Australia during this survey period. The advent of heightened awareness and sentiments around the global and local Black Lives Matter movement, and the Juukan Gorge destruction may also have influenced attitudes to reconciliation and other issues this year.

2020 Australian Reconciliation Barometer

The 2020 ARB tells us that support for reconciliation is growing and that more Australians know how to get involved. As in previous years, almost all Australians—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people in the general community—believe the relationship between each other is important.

More people surveyed accept key accounts of Australia's history as factual, and believe it is important for all Australians to learn about past issues.

As in 2018, an overwhelming majority of respondents believe it is important to undertake formal truth-telling processes in Australia.

There has been improvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feeling they can be true to their cultures in different settings. However, experiences of racial prejudice have increased for First Nations' Peoples.

Nearly all Australians want Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say in their own affairs, which may explain the growth in support for treaty, sovereignty and a constitutionally enshrined Voice.

While perceptions towards responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's disadvantage are varied, a majority of all Australians believe governments must do more to close the gap in health, justice, and employment.

RACE RELATIONS

All Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, rights and experiences, which results in stronger relationships that are based on trust and respect, and are free from racism.



Sorry Day walk. Photo: Sean Davey

Key findings: Relationships | Racism

As in previous years, almost all Australians–Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and general community members–believe the relationship between each other is important. More effort is required to curb racism as experiences of racial prejudice increased for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2020.

Almost all Australians think the relationship is important.



95%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (94% in 2018) and **91%** of the general community (90% in 2018) **feel our relationship is important.**

70%

people in the general community (unchanged since 2018) and 68% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (56% in 2018) **believe that Australia is better off with many cultural groups.**

Australians largely feel they have good relationships with medical staff, local shop owners and police.



However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are **much more likely to have a poor relationship with police** (16%) than the general community (6%).

There are still gaps in the trust that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people have for each other.



44% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people believe they have **high trust towards people in the general community** (46% in 2018).

30% of people in the general community believe they have **high trust towards Indigenous Australians** (27% in 2018).

60% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents agree that **Australia is a racist country** (51% in 2018), compared with **43%** of the general community (38% in 2018).



60%



43%

Experiences of racial prejudice have increased.



52% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have **experienced** at least one form of **racial prejudice** in the past 6 months (43% in 2018).

EQUALITY AND EQUITY

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.



Pius Gregory, Yawuru Country Manager, Kimberley region, Western Australia. Photo: Jillian Mundy

Key findings: Self-determination | Socio-economic Conditions

Nearly all Australians want Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say in their own affairs. While perceptions towards responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's disadvantage are varied, a majority of all Australians believe governments must do more to close the gap in health, justice, and employment.

95% of the general community

94% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

believe it is important for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say in matters that affect them.**

86% of the general community (85% in 2018)

91% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (90% in 2018)

believe it is important to **establish a representative Indigenous Body.**

81% of the general community (77% in 2018)

88% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (86% in 2018)

believe it is important to **protect an Indigenous Body within the Constitution, so it can't be removed by any government.**

In Australia there has been some change in perceptions and attitudes towards **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being responsible for their own disadvantage.**

In the general Australian community



agree
(35% in 2018)



disagree
(33% in 2018)



neither agree or disagree
(32% in 2018)

that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people **are responsible for their own disadvantage.**

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



agree
(33% in 2018)



disagree
(unchanged)



neither agree or disagree
(25% in 2018)

that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people **are responsible for their own disadvantage.**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people in the general community, generally believe **more must be done by government departments to close the gap in outcomes for health, justice, and employment.**

Health



60% general community

73% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Justice



62% general community

71% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Employment



57% general community

64% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Living Conditions



Since 2018 there has been some improvement for all Australians when considering their own living conditions.

18% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people **consider their living conditions to be worse** compared with the majority of people in Australia (23% in 2018).

13% of the general public **consider their own living conditions to be worse** than the majority of people in Australia (17% in 2018).

UNITY

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



ACT Ranger sharing knowledge on Reconciliation Day. Photo: Sean Davey

Key findings: Culture | Reconciliation | Representation | Recognition

The desire to become a more reconciled nation has increased, with more Australians knowing what they can do to help. Most Australians believe it is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures to be taught in schools. Support for treaty and sovereignty has grown.

Pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures remains strong.



87%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (86% in 2018)

64%

people in the general community (62% in 2018)

agree they are **proud of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.**

Pride in Australia's multiculturalism is unchanged since 2018.

72%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

74%

general community

are **proud of Australia's multiculturalism.**

Australians increasingly want to do something to **help improve reconciliation.**



78%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (73% in 2018)

61%

of the general community (54% in 2018)

And more of us **know what we can do to help:**

56% of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (44% in 2018)

32%

of the general community (29% in 2018)

More of us believe it's **important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures to be taught in schools.**



91%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (89% in 2018)

83%

of the general community (79% in 2018)

Support for **Treaty and Sovereignty** continues to grow.



53%

of the general community (47% in 2018)

69%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (64% in 2018) **support a treaty**

39%

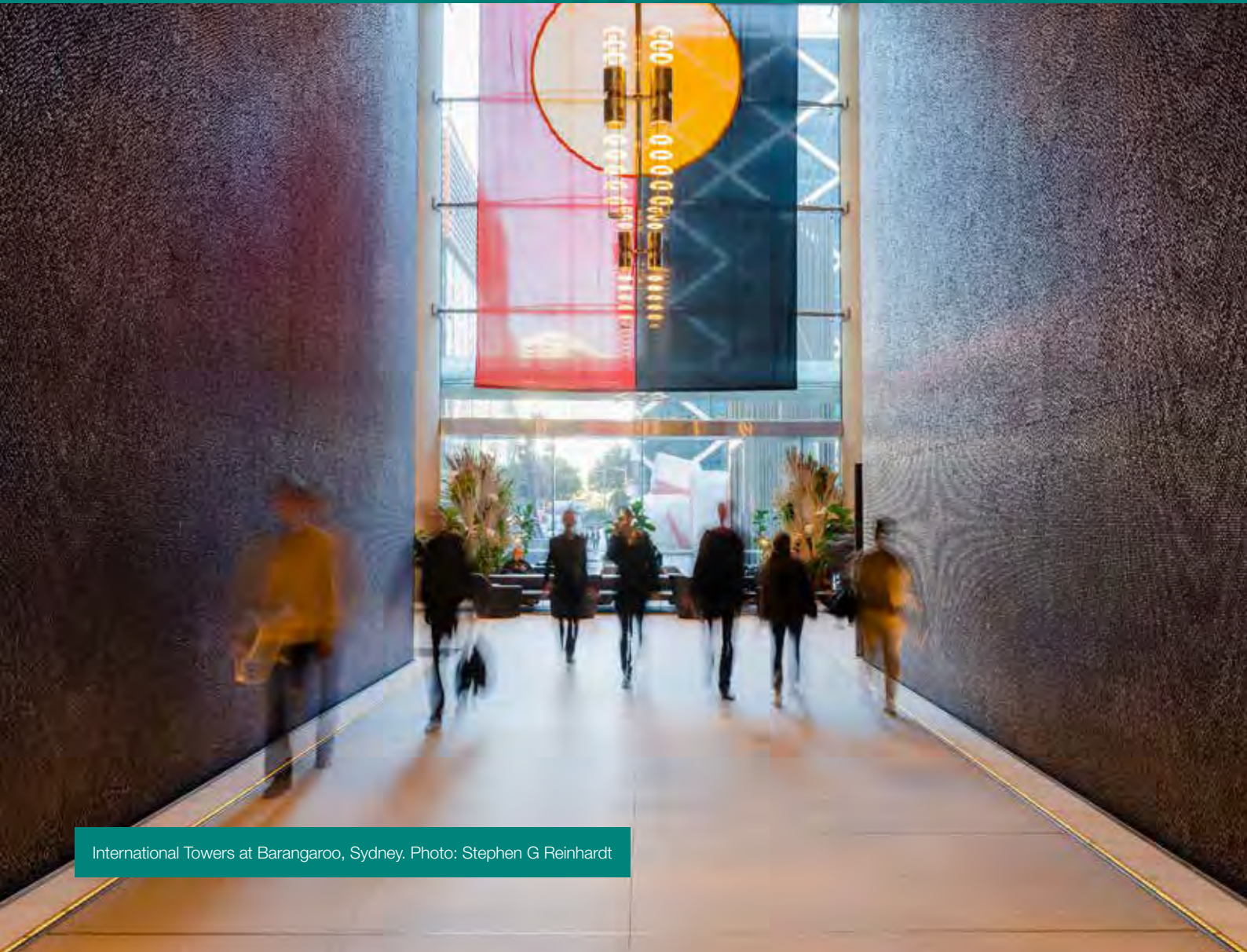
of the general community (31% in 2018)

58%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (55% in 2018) **support sovereignty**

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

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



International Towers at Barangaroo, Sydney. Photo: Stephen G Reinhardt

Key findings: Institutional Racism | Cultural Safety | Media

Experiences of racial prejudice by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander have increased in the last year. The feeling that media portrayal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is usually negative has continued to be high. There has been some improvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feeling they can be true to their cultures in different settings.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to have **experienced racial discrimination** in the **last 12 months**.



30%

in interactions with police (16% in 2018)



24%

in interactions with local shop owners/staff (18% in 2018)



24%

in interactions with real estate agents (12% in 2018)



22%

in interactions with doctors, nurses and/or medical staff (14% in 2018)

There has been some improvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feeling they cannot be true to their cultures in a number of different settings.



20%

in interactions with police or the courts (25% in 2018)



15%

at work (19% in 2018)



14%

in interactions with educational institutions (17% in 2018)



12%

in interactions with government departments (19% in 2018)



10%

in the general community (13% in 2018)



46% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (50% in 2018)

44% of the general community (42% in 2018)

believe media portrayal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is **usually negative**.

HISTORICAL ACCEPTANCE

All Australians understand and accept the wrongs of the past and the impact of these wrongs. Australia makes amends for the wrongs of the past and ensures these wrongs are never repeated.



Identifying Country on the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia. Photo: Sean Davey

Key findings: Understanding history | Truth-telling

Most Australians believe formal truth-telling processes should be undertaken in Australia, while more accept key accounts of Australia's history as factual, and believe it is important for all Australians to learn about past issues.

More Australians in the **general community** believe key accounts of Australia's past are factual.

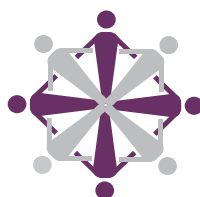


81% believe it is true that government policy enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be removed from their families without permissions until the 1970s.

76% believe it is true that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were subject to mass killings, incarceration, forced removal from land and restricted movement throughout the 1800s.

80% believe it is true that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people did not have full voting rights through Australia until the 1960s.

More Australians want Australia's shared history to be brought into view through truth-telling.



89%

of the general community and 93% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people believe it is important to undertake formal truth-telling processes in relation to Australia's shared history.



90%

of the general community (86% in 2018) feel it is **important for all Australians to learn about past issues**, compared with 93% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (91% in 2018).

35% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (40% in 2018) believe **the wrongs of the past must be rectified** before we can move on with reconciliation, compared with 29% of the general community (28% in 2018).

What must we do as a nation?

The results of the 2020 Australian Reconciliation Barometer, while reaffirming increased public understanding of First Nations histories and cultures, and increased support for reconciliation and justice, also indicate that more progress is needed for reconciliation to be achieved.

It is the more difficult, substantive change that will propel us towards a more reconciled country.

As we consider how to maintain the momentum towards meaningful national reconciliation, one thing is clear from the evidence: there is much more to do.

The following actions focus on the key findings from each dimension, and propose actions that, if addressed, would help propel us towards a reconciled nation.

Race Relations

Almost all Australians – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and general community members – believe the relationship with each other is important. This is a foundation stone upon which we can address more difficult issues.

Significant among these issues is that more than half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have experienced at least one form of racial prejudice. Sixty percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People agree that Australia is a racist country (compared with 43% of the general community).

It is clear that more effort is required to curb racism. Such experiences have remained stubbornly high in previous Australian Reconciliation Barometer research. Continued racism is both a barrier to reconciliation, and an infringement on the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Key actions – addressing racism:

- Maintain legal protections against racism.
- Support public campaigns against racism.
- Support public education on First Nations' cultures and histories.

Equality and Equity

Nearly all Australians (95%) want Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say in their own affairs, and more than 80% of the general community believes it is important to protect a First Nations' representative body within the Constitution.

A majority also believes governments must do more to close the gap in health (60%), justice (62%), and employment (57%).

This positive support from the broader community is ahead of the political response to these issues, and provides a basis for demanding more of our political leaders. It is clear that more must be done, and it must be done with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people having a say when decisions are being made.

Key actions – voice and socio-economic gaps:

- All future policy development, implementation and monitoring of Indigenous Affairs is done in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their representative bodies.
- The calls in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including for a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament, should be supported by parliaments, corporate and civil society, and the broader community.

Unity

The desire to become a more reconciled nation has increased, with more Australians knowing what they can do to help. Most Australians believe it is important to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

More than 60% of people in the general community are proud of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and want to do something to help improve reconciliation. Over 80% believe it is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures to be taught in schools.

This provides a platform from which to lift our national ambition, and turn strong support and attitudes into positive outcomes.

Key actions – promoting First Nations’ culture and histories:

- Governments, the corporate sector, education and media institutions should support initiatives that celebrate, promote and enhance public education about First Peoples’ history, culture, and achievements.
- Government should promote discussion about enhancing our national identity by embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history into our national story.

Institutional Integrity

There has been improvement in First Nations’ people feeling they can be true to their culture in different settings. However, almost half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel media portrayal of them is usually negative, and experiences of institutional racial prejudice have increased for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the last year.

Building institutional respect and recognition of First Nations’ cultures is critical to reconciliation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to practice their culture and enjoy a life free from racial discrimination.

Key actions – building cultural safety:

- Governments, corporate organisations and civil society should work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve the protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Historical Acceptance

Most Australians believe formal truth-telling processes should be undertaken in Australia, while more accept key accounts of Australia’s history as factual, and believe it is important for all Australians to learn about past issues.

Truth-telling offers the opportunity to understand and accept the wrongs of the past and the impact of these wrongs. It can provide a means through which Australia can make amends for these wrongs and ensure they are never repeated.

Key actions – supporting truth-telling:

- Governments at a federal, state and local level should support truth-telling in local communities to build national understanding of our shared past, and build a culture and movement of truth-telling.
- Governments, working with our educational institutions, should work with First Peoples to improve the teaching of First Nations history and culture in our schools.



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Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of Country and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

