



Allyship

What is an ally?

To make change for a better and fairer society, **non-Indigenous allies are needed** to help challenge the racist systems and policies that adversely affect the experiences of First Nations Peoples[i]. First Nations Peoples make up 3.5% of the population, this means they need the support of non-Indigenous Australia for social justice.

Being a good ally is about amplifying Indigenous voices and causes in a respectful way. This requires an understanding that, as an ally, you are coming from a position of privilege. The privilege of non-Indigenous people in Australia has been gained through the dispossession of First Nations Peoples from their lands.

Allies can:

Learn

- Educate yourself through engaging with First Nations resources about race and racism.
- Learn about the First Nations People whose land you live and work on.
- Learn about the terminology and what it means i.e. race, racism, white privilege, ally.
- Understand your racial privilege and use it to amplify First Nations causes.
- Engage with truth telling - this means learning about the myth that Australia was founded on, Terra Nullius, and the traumatic events that followed, including the Frontier Wars, massacres, and the Stolen Generations.

Act

- Privilege First Nations voices. Being an ally is about listening to First Nations communities who are determining the road ahead.
- Call out racism when you see it - this First Nations racism register allows you to call out racism through an online racism register, whether it be in the workplace, a social setting, or the street.
- Donate to First Nations organisations.
- Buy from Blak businesses.
- Engage with the community and their needs.
- Write to your MP about local First Nations issues.
- Turn up to rallies and protests.

Share

- Educate family and friends.
- Amplify Indigenous voices on social media through sharing and liking First Nations content.
- Recommend First Nations resources to your friends, family, and workplace.

To fight social inequity, allies need to be led by First Nations Peoples in challenging the systems that work to disadvantage them.[ii]



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What to avoid as a good ally?

It is okay to make mistakes, everybody does! The important thing is to listen to the feedback and learn from your mistakes. **Here are some common mistakes allies can make...**



- Thinking their work is done; an ally's work is never done. Being an ally is a continuous practice of self-reflection, learning and challenging white privilege, oppression, and racism.
- Attending events without invitation. First Nations communities will usually indicate when allies are welcome. It is an ally's responsibility to be culturally aware and understand when you need to support self-determination and community control by not showing up.
- Homogenising First Nations Peoples, they make up more than 500 diverse clans with 250 distinct language groups. Their opinions, political views, needs, and causes are diverse [iii].
- Speaking for First Nations Peoples, this is not good ally work. They have a voice and need to be heard on the issues that affect them.

Don't let the fear of making a mistake stop you from trying!

- Proactively promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices
- Be alert and call out blatant or unconscious racism
- Recognise the discrimination and marginalisation experienced by First Nations people
- Recognise systemic racism and work behind the scenes to take the required action
- Be consistent, confident and committed to stand up and act on addressing inequities

Next Steps

- 1 **Learn more about how to be a good ally at our resources page.**
- 2 **Read our next factsheet on white privilege.**
- 3 **Become familiar with basic terminology.**

- [i] Summer May Finlay, “How to be a good ally”, May, 2019, <https://reconciliationnsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/recnewsmay2019.pdf>.
- [ii] “10 ways to be a genuine ally to First Nations communities”, Amnesty International, published 2 July 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org.au/10-ways-to-be-an-ally-to-first-nations-communities/>.
- [iii] Katie Boudreau Morris, “Decolonising solidarity: cultivating relationships of discomfort”, *Settler Colonial Studies* 7, no.4 (2017): 465, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2016.1241210>.