

Reconciliation  NSW

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25





Acknowledgement

Reconciliation NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country across all lands and waters now known as New South Wales. We pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples who continue to nurture culture, community, and connection.

We honour the enduring sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose stories, languages, and knowledge systems have shaped this land for countless generations. Their custodianship is not a legacy of the past –it is a living, ongoing strength that guides our approach to reconciliation.

As an organisation committed to truth-telling, justice, and reconciliation, we recognise that meaningful change begins with listening, learning, and walking together. We stand in solidarity with First Nations communities and commit to amplifying their voices, protecting cultural integrity, and embedding First Nations leadership at the heart of everything we do.

May this acknowledgement be more than words, may it guide our actions, deepen our relationships, and strengthen our shared journey toward a just and reconciled future.

About our Artworks



BELONGING

Our stunning new artwork created by Dalmarri, and used throughout this report, reflects our connection to First Nations' culture and history. We all come from different cultures, and this beautiful country is a place where we all belong.

Find out more about Dalmarri at www.dalmarri.com.



BUSH MEDICINE

This year, the Schools Reconciliation Challenge artwork has been created by Jason Douglas from Dalmarri. Jason is a proud Murri man, whose people belong to the tribal lands of the Kabi Kabi of south-eastern Queensland. Bush Medicine is the story of how our natural resources provide us with amazing remedies to keep us well and healthy.

Letter from the Co-Chairs

As we mark our 28th year, and as the oldest state-based reconciliation organisation, Reconciliation NSW continues to lead the charge in advancing reconciliation across the state. This year has been one of challenge, resilience, and reflection.

The withdrawal of our government funding late in the financial year placed immense pressure on our operations. In good faith, the government provided six months of emergency sponsorship funding, which helped us maintain continuity and deliver key events for the remainder of 2025. Yet, it was the groundswell of support from our community that truly sustained us. Acts of allyship—large and small—reminded us that the commitment to reconciliation in NSW is not only strong, but growing.

Despite financial uncertainty, we launched our new Changemaker Membership program, inviting individuals and organisations to stand with us in shaping a more inclusive future. We continued to deliver high-quality programs across National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, and our flagship Schools Reconciliation Challenge, reaching thousands of participants across the state.

In 2025, we witnessed more passionate allies than ever standing with us to amplify the importance of our mission. Guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, we have continued to advance the pillars of Voice, Treaty, and Truth—empowering First Nations voices while educating allies across NSW.

Expanding and Strengthening Our Impact

Sustainability remained a core focus in 2025. We continued to diversify our income streams and expand partnerships across corporate, government, and community sectors. Despite this, we firmly believe that the NSW Government must remain committed to reconciliation in alignment with other states.

Our efforts this year have allowed us to extend our reach into regional NSW, ensuring reconciliation is not confined to urban centres.

Internally, we've strengthened our purpose, undertaken deep sector engagement and aligned that to our new strategy. Through focus, streamlining of activities, and targeted outreach, we are working hard to ensure our team and our systems meet the evolving needs of our members and sector. Our membership base has seen close to 4% growth reflecting a broader and more engaged community of individuals and organisations committed to reconciliation. While we remain hopeful about this momentum, we are also realistic about the challenges ahead. We remain focused on building long-term sustainability and meeting the needs of community and our members.

We want to provide our deepest thanks to those who have supported our efforts this year, particularly in response to our funding update. Our heartfelt thanks go to our team, who have ridden the rollercoaster and remain committed to reconciliation for our state.

We are proud of what we've achieved this year. Our dedicated team of staff, volunteers, and supporters continues to show unwavering commitment. Together, we are building a stronger, more inclusive NSW—one grounded in truth, respect, and shared responsibility.

We thank you for walking with us.



Joshua Gilbert, Co-Chair

Annie Tennant, Co-Chair

National Reconciliation Week

During National Reconciliation Week 2025, Reconciliation NSW hosted its annual NRW Virtual Breakfast on Wednesday 30 May. In attendance was the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, David Harris. Minister Harris spoke of his support of Reconciliation NSW and the movement. The Minister took time talking with many of our First Nations Board members and attendees, including many corporate representatives and individuals working hard in this space.

We invited organisations, local councils, schools, government departments and community groups across NSW to join virtually with other workplaces across the state to be part of the discussion on this year's theme, "Bridging Now to Next". We were overwhelmed with the response we received. The highlights of the event were passionate speeches by two notable speakers—our Co-Chair Joshua Gilbert and Mundanara Bayles, Co-founder of BlakCard. We were thrilled with the engagement this saw, and post survey results indicated participants felt extremely satisfied with the event both online and in person.

NRW IN NUMBERS

● virtual attendees	2,949
● in person attendees	100
● organisations involved	139
● events funded	7



Schools Reconciliation Challenge

2025 Theme: Feeding Connection — Learning From Country

The Schools Reconciliation Challenge is a curriculum-aligned program that invites primary and high-school students across New South Wales to explore reconciliation through art and writing. The 2025 theme, Feeding Connection — Learning From Country celebrated deep-rooted knowledge systems, ecological stewardship, and cultural resilience. It invited students to reflect on how food and farming are more than processes — they are cultural practices that carry stories, identity, and collective wisdom.

At the heart of this theme is the understanding that Country is not just a resource, but a living, breathing entity that teaches, nourishes, and connects us all. First Nations peoples have cared for Country for tens of thousands of years through sophisticated agricultural systems that align with the natural rhythms of the environment. These regenerative practices — such as native grain cultivation, cultural burning, and careful land stewardship — support biodiversity, soil health, and climate resilience.

Teachers consistently report that the Schools Reconciliation Challenge is having a material impact in classrooms. Students are engaged, curious, and actively involved — asking questions, exploring diverse perspectives, and deepening their understanding of reconciliation.

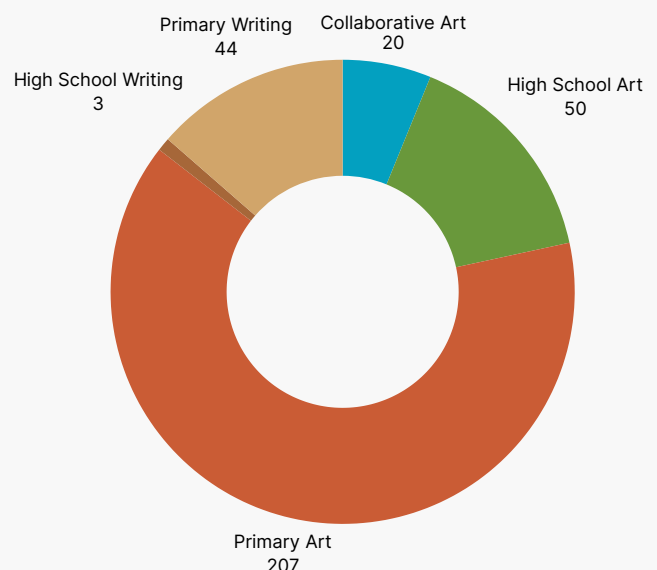
In 2026, the Schools Reconciliation Challenge will be amplified through a refreshed program design. This expansion will engage more schools and broaden the educational scope to include key topics such as anti-racism, truth-telling, and treaty. The next chapter of the Schools Reconciliation Challenge will continue to empower young people as active participants in shaping a reconciled and sustainable future.



IN NUMBERS

● students involved	2,500
● artworks submitted	324
● registered schools	33
● Indigenous countries	11

WORKS SUBMITTED



Schools Reconciliation Challenge

Schools Reconciliation Challenge Impacts

Engaging with children about reconciliation from a young age allows them to develop an understanding of, and respect for, our Indigenous community and cultures. The Schools Reconciliation Challenge allows children to engage and learn, then apply those lessons to the creative endeavours of art and writing. As one participating teacher shared: *The Reconciliation Challenge provides students with a safe, supportive space where they can ask questions, express curiosity and develop a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, culture and experiences.*

The artwork and writing submissions we received have made a powerful impact across multiple platforms and locations, including:

- Three regional exhibitions;
- Two official launches (Maitland and Leura);
- One digital exhibition (Rocks Discovery Museum);
- Special upcoming showcase at Parliament House during December 2025 and January 2026.

From May to June this year, the Schools Reconciliation Challenge was also proudly hosted at Darling Harbour on large public screens during National Reconciliation Week, further amplifying its reach and visibility.

The Schools Reconciliation Challenge celebrates the creativity and voices of young people, drawing countless community members to engage with the exhibition—demonstrating widespread public interest, support, and a shared commitment to reconciliation or as one teacher has shared: *It is an incredibly rewarding experience to watch my students engage with the annual theme and witness their growth in understanding and empathy towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as well as their ability to communicate complex ideas with sincerity and respect.*

Reconciliation means ...

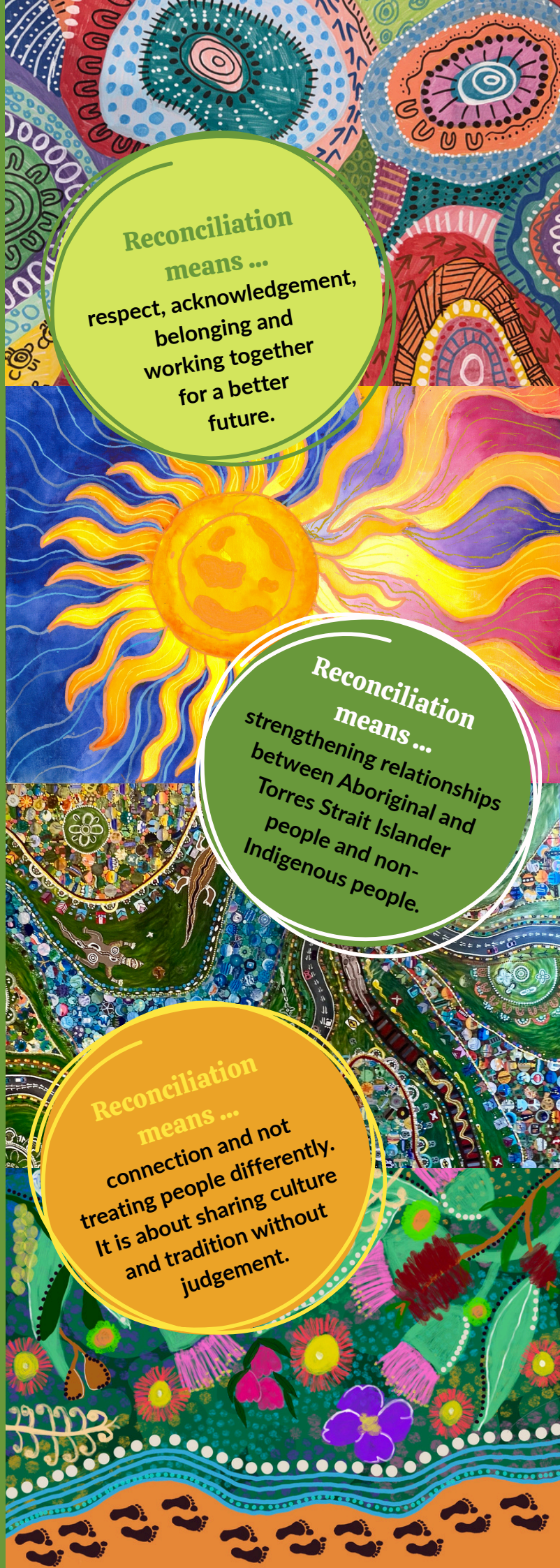
respect, acknowledgement, belonging and working together for a better future.

Reconciliation means ...

strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people.

Reconciliation means ...

connection and not treating people differently. It is about sharing culture and tradition without judgement.



Reconciliation NSW in Community

At Reconciliation NSW, our vision is a reconciled, just and equitable society for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all Australians. We know that achieving this vision requires visibility, connection, and active engagement across communities.

Throughout the year, we've proudly deepened our relationships and shared knowledge through regular collaboration with the Australian Reconciliation Network (ARN), which brings together reconciliation organisations nationwide, alongside other community-based partners.

We've participated in a range of significant community events, including Yabun—Australia's largest one-day celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures—held annually on 26 January. We also attended the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans Commemorative Service in Hyde Park, honouring those who have served.

For NAIDOC Week, we partnered with ANTAR to deliver a collaborative article featuring Blake Cansdale speaking about what the NAIDOC theme for 2025 - "The Next Generation: Strength. Vision & Legacy"

- means to him as a proud Anaiwan man and National Director of ANTAR. The article was proudly sponsored by Jezzini Property Services and supported by an Aboriginal Affairs NSW NAIDOC grant. The article reached over 700 readers and significantly boosted engagement across all our social platforms.

We also joined the Penrith NAIDOC Community Festival in Western Sydney for the first time, where we not only participated but also sponsored First Nations-led Dalmarri to be part of the celebration.

Our team hit the road to connect with regional communities, including a visit to Orange Together—a Local Reconciliation Group in the NSW Central West—which hosted three incredibly successful events. We also shared our reconciliation messages at:

- Sydney Water NAIDOC event, with our board member Nattlie Smith attending as the keynote speaker;
- AbbVie Reconciliation Action Plan launch;
- The eSafety Commission.

We received overwhelmingly positive feed-back from hundreds of staff and stakeholders.

These moments reflect our commitment to walking alongside communities, amplifying First Nations voices, and fostering meaningful partnerships across NSW.



Reconciliation NSW Memberships

Our members are at the heart of everything we do. Each new membership represents a growing commitment to reconciliation and a shared belief in a just and equitable future for all Australians.

In 2024–25, our membership base continued to grow, expanding the reach of our programs, deepening our advocacy, and strengthening our ability to support lasting change across New South Wales. Every member contributes to the momentum behind our work — from truth-telling and anti-racism education to community-led campaigns and sector-wide collaboration.

This year, we proudly launched the Changemaker Membership, a new membership tier designed for individuals who want to directly invest in the future of reconciliation. Changemaker Members provide vital support for our grassroots initiatives, school and community programs, and our independent voice in policy and public discourse. This contribution helps us respond to urgent challenges, sustain long-term impact, and remain a trusted leader in reconciliation across the state.

Membership is more than symbolic — it's a tangible act of solidarity. It enables us to build coalitions, amplify First Nations voices, and deliver practical tools for change. Together, our members are shaping a future grounded in truth, respect, and justice.



MEMBERSHIP IN NUMBERS

● individual members	2,007
● educator subscriptions	425
● organisational members	55
● Local Reconciliation Groups	26

PERFORMANCE BY PLATFORM AT JUNE 2025*

● Facebook followers	11,027	+1%
● Instagram followers	4,980	+6.5%
● LinkedIn followers	2,246	+9%
● Website users	54,532	+51%

*compared to June 2024, measured through meta data providers.

Financial Report

Income received for the 2024-2025 financial year totalled \$533,057. This decreased income, compared to the previous financial year's income of \$641,675, is due mainly to significant decrease in other grants and donations, and merchandise sales, as the previous financial year we received one-off additional grants and support for the referendum Yes campaign. Non-government grants and donations (totalling \$177,086) decreased by 39% to 33% of total funding. Despite this, we received a total of \$86,659 in sponsors, donations & other supporter funds, as compared to the previous financial year's \$54,450.

We continued to operate with a small but efficient team of staff and volunteers, all of whom are passionate and motivated. Our focus and expenditure were directed to our brand-new website, with upgraded resources, and working toward our launch of the new membership options. We also continued support of our core programs, particularly reconciliation in education activities through the Schools Reconciliation Challenge and the Narragunnawali Program, along with National Reconciliation Week events. We continued to strengthen our internal infrastructure and processes, drive membership, and educate the public about reconciliation via our social media communications, events, and programs.

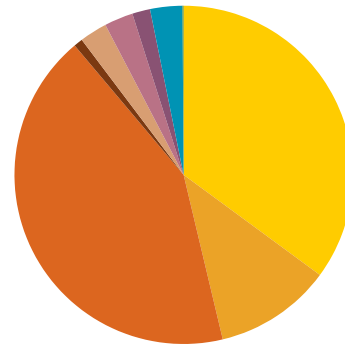
With total operational expenditure of \$563,502, there was an annual loss from our activities of \$30,445. This loss is mainly due to higher staff costs to support the organisation's goals. Employee expenditure has shown a decrease to \$198,704 all other employee expenditures are shown in the consultants and contractors due to contracted CEO position and other minor consulting requirements, taking total employee expenditure to \$439,849. Other increased costs were for the website build and an increase in project expenses for Community Advocacy and Institutional Integrity, offset by cost savings for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge and a significant decrease in office rental costs. We continue to manage the budget efficiently and take care to direct both operational and project expenditure to where it is needed most.

Differences in assets, liabilities, and cash flow movements between last and this financial year continue to be attributable to the timing of funding payments.

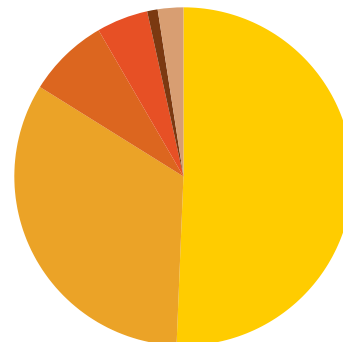
At year-end, our net asset position was \$93,013. Despite this surplus and our continued building of new relationships with supporters and member organisation, changes in our government funding since the end of the financial year may significantly affect the operations of the organisation in the following year. There is a potential ongoing concern regarding our main source of NSW government funding, and future discussions are in place to secure support for our activities in 2025-2026 across all sectors of NSW.

We acknowledge and thank our funders, members, and in-kind program partners for their continued and appreciated support. Our accounts were audited by Byrons Audit Pty Ltd.

EXPENSES \$563,504



INCOME \$533,057



\$270,000	NSW Government Funding
\$177,086	Funding (other) & Donations
\$41,350	Membership Income
\$26,255	NRW Event Income
\$5,344	Merchandise
\$13,022	Fee for Service & Commission Income & Misc.



Our Partners and Sponsors

We sincerely thank our partners, sponsors, and donors for your generous support and ongoing collaboration. Your contributions are essential to the success of our initiatives and help us foster a spirit of reconciliation, understanding, and unity.

Through your generosity, we are able to make a meaningful impact and continue our work with confidence and purpose. We are truly grateful for your commitment and for standing with us in this journey.



Aboriginal
Affairs



BHP



Narragunnawali
Reconciliation in Education

**NAKRA
GUNNA
WALI**



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