

Reconciliation  NSW  
**SCHOOLS**  
**RECONCILIATION**  
**CHALLENGE**

**2026**

**ALL IN**  
**FOR RECONCILIATION**

*Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow*

**INFORMATION KIT**

## Schools Reconciliation Challenge Infopack

### GENERAL INFORMATION



#### ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

- SRC is an **annual Art & Writing Competition**
- Run by Reconciliation NSW
- Inspired by a yearly theme about Reconciliation
- Students can submit **artworks, written pieces or videos**
- Every Submission will get a **Certificate of Participation**
- Finalist artists and schools gain prizes and are exhibited publicly



#### BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

- **Deepens understanding** of First Nations cultures and history
- Fosters respect, empathy, and inclusion
- Encourages creativity and critical thinking
- Supports **curriculum outcomes**
- Offers a platform for student voices
- Chance for **public recognition** through exhibitions (e.g. in International Towers and Parliament)



#### SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

- **Lesson plans** for each stage developed with educational partners
- Classroom activities tailored to the theme
- **Guidance** for culturally competent teaching
- Reconciliation Education Kit
- Acknowledgement of Country and other cultural guides



#### HOW TO TAKE PART

- **Register** to get news and updates
- Use lesson plans and resources to explore the theme
- **Create** artworks, written pieces and/or videos
- Write Artist **Statement** or Writer's **Reflection**
- **Submit** entries online before the deadline via upload link on our website

REGISTER HERE

[SIGN UP FORM](#)  
to receive updates

#### TIME LINE

**27 April** Challenge launch

**April** Downloads Info session

**21 August** Challenge closes

**September** Judging Period

**November** Finalists Announced

**December** Awards Ceremony

SEE MORE INFO  
ON OUR WEBSITE

[www.reconciliationnsw.org.au/schools-reconciliation-challenge/](http://www.reconciliationnsw.org.au/schools-reconciliation-challenge/)

## Categories & Submission Guidelines

### STUDENT CATEGORIES

#### Reconciliation Stories

**What to submit:**  
Creative or persuasive **written responses** to the theme.

**Possible formats include:**

- Short stories
- Poetry
- Personal reflections
- Persuasive pieces
- Speeches
- Letters
- Hybrid creative forms

**What judges are looking for:**

- Clear connection to the theme
- Depth of thinking about belonging and reconciliation
- Original voice and creativity
- Emotional impact and clarity of message

#### Reconciliation Visions

**What to submit:**  
**Visual artworks** responding to the theme.

**Possible formats include:**

- Painting
- Drawing
- Digital art
- Collage
- Mixed media
- Sculpture

**What judges are looking for:**

- Strong visual interpretation of the theme
- Symbolism and meaning
- Creativity and originality
- Technical effort appropriate to age level
- Clear artist statement explaining the idea

**NEW**

#### Reconciliation on Screen

**What to submit:**  
Short films or promotional-style **videos** showcasing reconciliation in action.

**This may include:**

- Student-led initiatives
- School reconciliation projects
- Interviews or storytelling
- Documentary-style pieces
- Call-to-action videos

**Suggested length:**  
2-4 minutes

**What judges are looking for:**

- Authentic student voice
- Demonstrated impact or initiative
- Clear link to the theme
- Storytelling and structure
- Creativity and collaboration

### AGE DIVISIONS

for Student Categories

Each student category (Writing, Art, Film/Video) can be handed in and is judged across four divisions.

**1** Years 3 - 4

**2** Years 5 - 6

**3** Years 7 - 8

**4** Years 9 - 10

## Categories & Submission Guidelines

### TEACHER CATEGORY

**NEW**

#### Reconciliation in Practice

##### What to submit:

Reflections, case studies, or creative documentation of programs that foster belonging, inclusion, and reconciliation.

##### Formats include:

- Written/Video reflections
- Case studies
- Photo essays
- Visual documentation

##### Focus areas may include:

- Classroom programs that build belonging
- Culturally responsive teaching
- Community partnerships
- Student leadership initiatives
- School-wide reconciliation strategies

##### What judges are looking for:

- Clear impact on students
- Thoughtful reflection
- Innovation or strong practice
- Alignment with reconciliation principles
- Evidence of inclusion and belonging

## SUBMISSIONS GUIDELINES

### SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

- Submitted **online** in digital format
- Correct file naming:  
School\_Title of Artwork\_Student Name  
(Example: BNPS\_MyCountry\_Mary Smith.pdf)
- Includes an **Artist Statement** or **Writer's Reflection**
- Is **original** work (written entries will be checked on AI-generated content)
- Visual artworks are **high-quality** for judging and exhibition
- Submitted by the deadline: **21 August 2026**
- Agreed to the Terms & Conditions as stated in the online portal

### SUBMISSIONS LIMITS

- Schools may submit multiple entries.
- A **maximum of 5 entries** per school (in total, across all categories and divisions combined) will move forward to the finalist stage.

This ensures fairness and broad school representation.

**Tell us. Show us.  
Get inspired!**

**SUBMISSION LINK**

**!** Portal opens July 2026 – giving you plenty of time to create your masterpiece!

## Judging Info

### Process

#### Stage 1 Initial Review

All eligible submissions are reviewed.

Conducted by: Reconciliation NSW Committee

10 entries per division per category are shortlisted.

This results in 120 artworks progressing to judging:

3 categories (Writing, Art, Film/Video) x 4 age divisions x 10 works

10 teachers' submissions go through to judging.



#### Stage 2 Panel Judging Finalists

Judges select 5 finalists per age division per category.

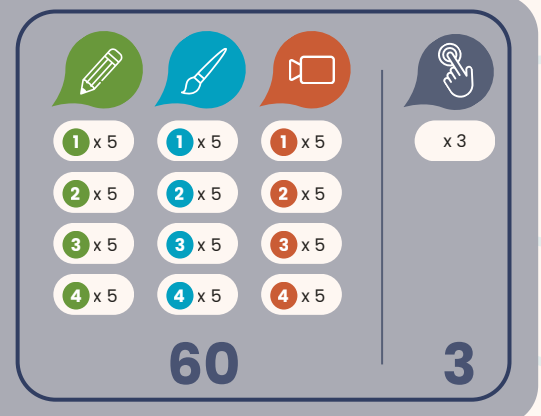
Conducted by: External Judges

This results in 60 student finalists: 3 categories x 4 divisions x 5 works

These finalists:

- Appear in the official exhibition catalogue
- Are invited to the Awards Ceremony

3 teacher finalists will also be selected and recognised.



#### Stage 3 Judges' Choice Awards

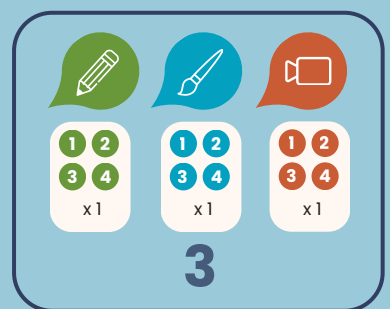
Judges select 1 overall winner per student category.

This is a student category award only.

Conducted by: External Judges

This results in 3 Judges' Choice Winners, 1 per category.

These are selected regardless of division.



#### Stage 4 People's Choice Awards

The public votes to the 60 finalists

1 People's Choice Winner per student category.

This is a student category award only.

This results in 3 Public Choice Awards, one per category. These are selected regardless of division.



## Schools Reconciliation Challenge Theme

### 2026 THEME



### **ALL IN for Reconciliation: Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow**

**ALL IN for Reconciliation: Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow** invites students to consider reconciliation not as a distant goal, but as a shared responsibility lived out in the present. Reconciliation grows when people feel that they truly belong – when their identities, cultures, and voices are respected, valued, and included. Belonging is not passive; it is created through action, courage, and collective commitment.

At its heart, this theme recognises that the future is being shaped right now. The choices we make in our classrooms, schools, and communities determine whether Australia becomes more inclusive, more just, and more united. Reconciliation is strengthened when individuals and communities are “all in” – when we move beyond words and actively contribute to fairness, understanding, and respect.

For First Nations peoples, belonging is deeply connected to Country, culture, community, and identity. True reconciliation honours this enduring connection while ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are central in shaping the nation’s future. When we listen, learn, and act with integrity, we create spaces where everyone can stand strong in who they are.

This theme encourages students to reflect on their role as leaders and changemakers today. Young people hold extraordinary power to influence culture, challenge injustice, and build stronger communities. Through everyday acts of courage, empathy, and responsibility, they help shape a future grounded in shared respect and opportunity.

Belonging is built through relationships – through trust, inclusion, and a willingness to stand alongside one another. When communities commit to fairness and shared responsibility, reconciliation becomes a living practice rather than a single event. It becomes visible in how we treat each other, how we make decisions, and how we imagine our future together.

Through creative expression, storytelling, and bold visual thinking, students are invited to explore what it means to be truly “all in.” Their work can illuminate what belonging looks and feels like, challenge exclusion, and envision hopeful futures. In doing so, they remind us that reconciliation is not only about acknowledging the past – it is about building tomorrow, together.

Belonging starts today. **The future we build depends on the actions we take now.**



QUESTIONS?

[schools@reconciliationnsw.org.au](mailto:schools@reconciliationnsw.org.au)



[SEE FULL LESSON PLAN  
& ACTIVITIES](#)

## Our Partners



### ALL IN for Reconciliation:

Initiatives like the Schools Reconciliation Challenge would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors and partners. We are deeply grateful for your commitment and collaboration.

Your support helps bring this program to life, celebrating the voices, creativity, and achievements of students across the country.

Together, we are fostering reconciliation, inspiring young people, and building a future grounded in respect, understanding, and unity.

### Get involved

If you and your school would like to further support this important educational initiative, we invite you to become an **Educational Supporter**.

By signing up, you'll join a growing network of schools committed to reconciliation and student voice, and gain access to upcoming newsletters, resources, and exciting educational content designed to support learning and engagement in your classroom.

Sign up here: [Educational Supporter](#)



**Tell us. Show us.  
Get inspired!**

# Terms and Conditions

## 1. Eligibility

- 1.1 The Schools Reconciliation Challenge is open to students currently enrolled in Years 3–10 at a primary or secondary school in NSW or the ACT, or students of equivalent age.
- 1.2 Entries must reflect the official 2026 Schools Reconciliation Challenge theme.
- 1.3 Entries must comply with all submission requirements outlined in these Terms and Conditions and in the online entry portal.

## 2. Submission Requirements

- 2.1 All entries must be submitted digitally via the official online portal by 21 August 2026. Late entries will not be accepted.
- 2.2 A completed online entry form and an Artist Statement or Writer's Reflection must accompany each submission.
- 2.3 Entries must be the original work of the student(s).
  - Written submissions may be reviewed for originality, including the use of AI-generated content.
  - Submissions that are wholly AI-generated or that breach originality requirements may be disqualified.
- 2.4 Entries must not have been previously published, self-published, broadcast, publicly exhibited, posted online, or entered into another competition.
- 2.5 Once submitted, entries cannot be amended, replaced, or corrected.
- 2.6 Schools must retain original physical artworks. No physical artworks are to be mailed to Reconciliation NSW unless specifically requested.

## 3. Art Entries

- 3.1 Digital files must be clearly labelled using the following format: School\_Title of Artwork\_Student Name
- 3.2 Artwork must be submitted as a high-quality digital photograph or scan. Preferred file formats: .jpg, .gif, .bmp (or as specified in the portal).
- 3.3 Images must:
  - Be clear and high resolution (Low-quality images may impact judging or exhibition inclusion)
  - Show only the artwork (no students or background environments)
  - Be suitable for reproduction in print and digital exhibition formats

## 4. Writing Entries

- 4.1 Digital files must be clearly labelled using the format: School\_Title of Artwork\_Student Name
- 4.2 Written submissions must not exceed 500 words.
- 4.3 Files must be submitted in PDF or Word format.
- 4.4 Written entries will be reviewed for originality, including potential AI-generated content.

## 5. Video Entries

- 5.1 Digital files must be clearly labelled using the format: School\_Title of Artwork\_Student Name
- 5.2 Video submissions must not exceed the timelimit of 4 minutes.
- 5.3 Files must be submitted in MP4 or MOV format.
- 5.4 By submitting a video entry, the entrant confirms that they have obtained all necessary permissions to film any individuals featured in the video and that all individuals appearing have provided informed consent, including consent for their image, voice, likeness, and story to be recorded, submitted, and published. Where required, a signed media release form should be obtained to confirm this consent.

## 6. Copyright and Licence

- 6.1 Students retain copyright of their work.
- 6.2 By submitting an entry, the student (and their parent/guardian where applicable) grants Reconciliation NSW a royalty-free, worldwide, non-exclusive licence to reproduce, publish, exhibit, communicate, adapt (for formatting or promotional purposes only), and otherwise use the submitted work in all current and future media formats. This includes, but is not limited to, use in print and digital publications (including magazine and report covers), websites, social media, exhibitions, presentations, educational materials, promotional campaigns, public installations, and public art formats such as murals, street art, posters, and signage, as well as the right to reproduce and distribute the work on merchandise or other items for fundraising or cost-recovery purposes, for promotional, educational, exhibition, archival, and reporting purposes.
- 6.3 This licence includes permission to publish the student's name, age, school, and community in connection with the entry.
- 6.4 The entrant warrants that:
  - The work is original
  - They have the right to grant this licence
  - There is no cultural, legal, or other restriction preventing the work from being exhibited, reproduced, or adapted in any of the above forms

## 7. Judging

- 7.1 Entries will be reviewed by a subcommittee of Reconciliation NSW and assessed by independent judges with relevant expertise.
- 7.2 Judging decisions are final and binding. No correspondence will be entered into regarding judging outcomes.

## 8. Acceptance

By submitting an entry via the online portal, the entrant (and their parent/guardian where required) acknowledges that they have read, understood, and agree to these Terms and Conditions.