

The History of Reconciliation in Australia

Since colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have experienced government policies of dispossession, oppression and assimilation. These policies continue to have lasting impacts, including intergenerational trauma and distrust between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

In response, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was established in 1991 as part of a broader people-led movement. Its role was to address Aboriginal disadvantage and support improvements in areas such as health, employment, and economic development. This recognised the ongoing failure of government policy to adequately acknowledge and address these issues.

In NSW, the State Reconciliation Committee was formed in 1997 as the representative body for reconciliation, and later became the NSW Council for Reconciliation in 2001. Today, Reconciliation NSW and the Australian Reconciliation Network continue this work. While we have achieved cultural and systemic change in many areas, there is still a long way to go.



Practicing Reconciliation

Reconciliation is ongoing and requires commitment from all Australians. It is about creating a more just and equitable society that recognises the unique place of First Nations peoples and cultures.

Reconciliation Australia's vision for reconciliation is based on five interrelated dimensions. These dimensions cannot achieve reconciliation in isolation and must be considered together as part of a whole. This reflects a holistic approach, grounded in First Nations ways of knowing, where relationships, systems, and communities are interconnected and work in relation to one another. Reconciliation works under this philosophy as it relies on reciprocal relationships to achieve a common goal. The five dimensions are:



Race Relations



Equity & Equality



Unity



Institutional Integrity



Historical Acceptance