



Uniting Church in Qld Resource & Event Guide

National Sorry Day, 26 May 2026

and National Reconciliation Week 27 May - 3 June 2026

[Click on this link](#) for learn more about reconciliation and National Sorry Day.

27 May 1967 a referendum was held to change the Australian Constitution so that the Australian Government could make specific laws that applied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that could assist in addressing inequalities. [Learn more here.](#)

3 June is Mabo Day is a celebration of the successful effort by Mer Island man Eddie Koiki Mabo to overturn the legal 'fiction' of 'terra nullis' or 'empty land'. Eddie Mabo challenged the Australian Government in the High Court to recognise the Traditional Ownership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and won. This legal decision recognised First Nations people's ownership of and unique connections to Land. [Learn more here.](#)



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Let's talk...

Sorry Day



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

Sorry Day (26 May) is a time to remember the past policies of forced child removal, and reflect on the sad and painful stories of the Stolen Generations.

It is a time to recognise the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the power of saying Sorry.

Did you know?

- The first Sorry Day was held on 26 May 1998—exactly one year after the [Bringing Them Home Report](#) was presented to the Parliament.
- The *Bringing Them Home* Report was the result of an inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, and recommends both an apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and reparations.
- The term “Stolen Generations” refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were forcibly removed as children from their families by government, welfare, or church authorities, and placed into institutional care or with non-Indigenous foster families.
- The forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children began as early as the mid-1800s and continued until the 1970s.

Key timeline

“We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians...For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.”¹



Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, 13 February 2008

¹<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansardr%2F2008-02-13%2F0003%22>

1909: the Aborigines Protection Act gave the Aborigines Protection Board legal sanction to take Aboriginal children from their families in New South Wales.²

1937: All Australian States adopt policies to 'assimilate' Aboriginal children of mixed descent.³

1950s: During the 1950s and 1960s, great numbers of Aboriginal children were removed from their families in the name of assimilation. They became known as the Stolen Generation.⁴

1970s: Aboriginal children continue to be removed from their families into the 1970s. Aboriginal groups begin to receive funding to challenge these very high rates of removal.⁵

26 May 1997: The *Bringing Them Home* Report is tabled in Federal Parliament. This report talked about the painful history of the Stolen Generations, and made 54 recommendations for moving forward including holding a national Sorry Day every year.

26 May 1998: The first official Sorry Day is held to acknowledge the impact of forcible removal policies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

28 May 2000: The Corroboree 2000 Bridge Walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge shut down traffic and made national headlines as hundreds of thousands of people walked in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.⁶

13 February 2008: Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologises to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for the policies which 'inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these, our fellow Australians'. This is why each year on 13 February, we now celebrate the anniversary of the Apology.

Some statistics...

- The Corroboree Bridge Walk in 2000 saw over **250,000 people** walking across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in support of reconciliation, and saying sorry to the Stolen Generations.
- **24,763** personal apologies were made to Aboriginal and



² http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/num_act/apa1909n25262.pdf

³ <https://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples>

⁴ <https://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples>

⁵ *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families.* Commonwealth of Australia 1997

⁶ <https://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples>

Torres Strait Islander people at the first Sorry Day in 1998.⁷

- The *Bringing Them Home* Report found that between **one in three and one in ten** Aboriginal children were removed from their families as a result of government policy.
- The Inquiry which culminated in the *Bringing Them Home Report* received over **777 submissions**, including **535** from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations.

The Healing Foundation

“It never goes away. Just ‘cause we’re not walking around on crutches or with bandages or plasters on our arms and legs, doesn’t mean we’re not hurting. Just ‘cause you can’t see it...I’ll carry these sorts of wounds ‘till the day I die.”

Confidential Evidence 580, Queensland. Bringing Them Home Report

For many members of the Stolen Generations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Sorry Day is official recognition of a dark history of forced removal that was, for a long time, denied. To assist with the healing process for the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected, the Healing Foundation was established one year after the Apology. For many members of the Stolen Generations, as well as their children and families, healing is a complex process. The Healing Foundation is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation with a focus on building culturally strong, community-led healing solutions.

Colonisation, forced removals, and other past Australian government policies have resulted in trauma and grief for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, across generations. Many people have spoken of the ongoing pain they feel as a result of past government practices. The Healing Foundation sees a future in which those affected by the legacy of past forced removal policies have broken the cycle of abuse, and have enhanced their capacity as communities, families, and individuals, to sustain their wellbeing and that of future generations. To achieve this future, the Healing Foundation supports and promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing initiatives across Australia.

The Healing Foundation works with members of the Stolen Generations to create their own healing responses, supports children and young people to improve their own social and emotional wellbeing, provides trauma related workforce education and training, assists communities to access information on trauma and healing, and develops evidence for best-practice Indigenous healing.

We encourage everyone to learn more about [the story of the Healing Foundation](#), and we hope that by helping to recognise the wrongs of the past, we are moving forward towards a reconciled, just and equitable Australia.

⁷ <https://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples>

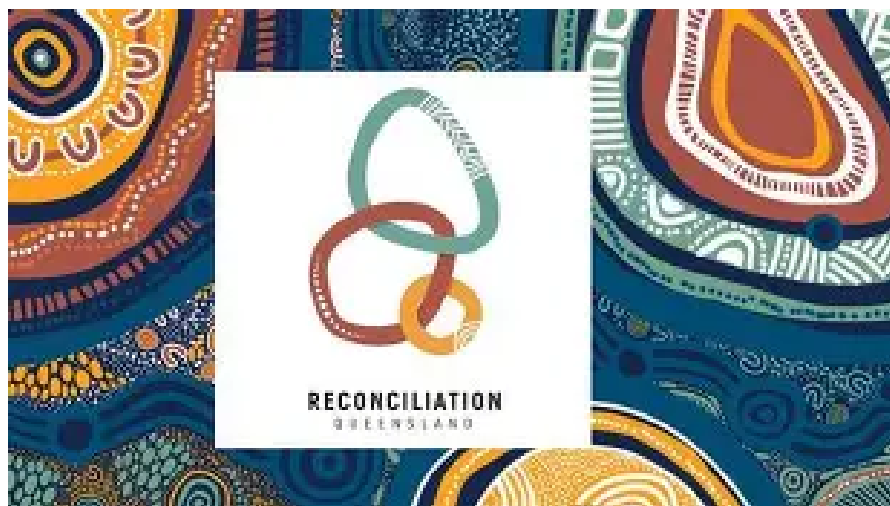
Take action

“In true reconciliation, through the remembering, the grieving and the healing we can come to terms with our conscience and become as one in the dreaming of this land.”⁸

Evelyn Scott Chairperson, Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 27 May 2000.



- Deepen your understanding of our shared histories and cultures via Reconciliation Australia’s online learning resource [Share Our Pride](#).
- Read the harrowing [testimonies](#) of members of the Stolen Generations via the Australian Human Rights Commission.
- Watch [this animation](#) from the Healing Foundation about intergenerational trauma.
- Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and achievements by hosting an [event](#) for [National Reconciliation Week](#).
- Watch the short documentary [The Apology](#) to better understand why this moment was so important to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Watch [Rabbit Proof Fence](#) or [Radiance](#) which both share stories of family, connection to land, and the impacts of removal.
- Listen to Archie Roach’s iconic song [They Took the Children Away](#), or the amazing reinterpretation by Gurrumul and Briggs [The Children Came Back](#)
- Share this factsheet.



Reconciliation Qld is the representative body for collective reconciliation action across our state.

[Click here for more information.](#)

2026 National Reconciliation Week Events

'National Reconciliation Week: How Do We Be All In for Reconciliation?'

Allyship Network
Lunch and Learn

Join the UnitingCare First Nations Allyship Network in person or online for our May Lunch and Learn session where we discuss the National Reconciliation Week 2026 theme of *All In*, and how we can unite as First Peoples and allies in ensuring that the work of reconciliation as individuals and an organisation is a priority for all.

This theme makes clear that reconciliation is not a spectator sport and that all Australians must step away from the sidelines and take action to make change every single day.

Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights isn't a passive activity and this theme calls on us to be *All In* for reconciliation.





Venue:

T5.03, 192 Ann Street,
and [Online via Teams](#)

Date/Time:

Thursday 28th May,
12:30pm-1:30pm



<p>'FaDS Annual NRW BBQ'</p> <p>Annual NRW BBQ hosted by the Coolamon Group</p>	<p>The annual FaDS NRW BBQ is an opportunity for the FaDS First Nations Leaders within the Coolamon Group to come together to acknowledge the NRW theme and host key guests from across UnitingCare Community.</p>	<p>Venue: Hows Road, Nundah</p> <p>Date: Wednesday 27th May</p> 
<p>'Unite on Country at the Jellurgal Cultural Centre'</p> <p>Cultural Immersion on Kombumerri (Yugambeh Language) Country</p>	<p>The RAP Team are hosting a Unite on Country experience connecting where beach meets mountain at Burleigh Heads with Jellurgal Cultural Centre.</p> <p>Immerse in the rich First Nations culture at dreaming mountain, Jellurgal. To a land where time stands still and white sands meet mangroves below the Dreamtime giant, Jabreen.</p> <p>We'll be taking a guided walk along the beachside and discover Kombumerri and Yugambeh language group history and culture including traditional life, bush tucker, fishing and ecological practice that have been passed through generations.</p>	<p>Venue: Jellurgal Cultural Centre, Burleigh Heads</p> <p>Date/Time: Wednesday 3rd June, 9:30am-11:30am</p> 
<p>'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid'</p> <p>AMHFA Workshop Gold Coast</p>	<p>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid (AMHFA) course is delivered face to face over two days by an accredited AMHFA instructor from UnitingCare Queensland's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Team.</p> <p>It will inform participants how to assist Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who may be experiencing a mental health problem or crisis until appropriate professional support is received or the crisis resolves, using a practical, evidence-based Action Plan.</p> <p>Register for the workshop at this link.</p>	<p>Venue: BlueCare Community Arundel</p> <p>Date/Time: Thursday 4th June and Friday 5th June, 9:00am-4:30pm</p> 
<p>'Dedication of the Gumbi Gumbi'</p> <p>Dedication of the re-planting of St Stephen's Hospital's cultural medicinal tree, the Gumbi Gumbi</p>	<p>St Stephen's Hospital holds a commitment to their cultural footprint on Butchulla Country which includes the planting and maintenance of native gardens and trees.</p> <p>The Gumbi Gumbi cultural medicinal tree planted during NAIDOC's <i>Heal Country</i> Week five years ago has come to the end of its journey, and we will be dedicating the planting of a new tree during this National Reconciliation Week.</p>	<p>Venue: St Stephen's Hospital, Hervey Bay</p> <p>Date/Time: Thursday 4th June, 11:00am-11:30am</p> 

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2026

27 MAY – 3 JUNE

ALL IN

FOR RECONCILIATION



25 YEARS OF
RECONCILIATION
AUSTRALIA

#NRW2026

RECONCILIATION.ORG.AU

Walking Together. Learning Together.

Celebrating the Achievements of First Nations peoples and exploring the benefits of cultural capability for everyone!

**At Wesley Mission Queensland Queensland
on The Green and in Ule Hall**

(accessible on foot via 930 Gympie Road Chermside)

27th & 28th May 11-1pm

- 27th** 'Voices of the Covenant Art Exhibit', AFL Footy stars, food, games and more!
- 28th** Open space to yarn and eat with local elders, hosted by Zilmere Uniting Church members.



First Nations Allyship Network Lunch and Learn

Topic: National Reconciliation Week 2026 Theme - All In

All In makes clear that reconciliation is not a spectator sport and that all Australians must step away from the sidelines and take action to make change every single day.

Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights isn't a passive activity and is not solely the responsibility of First Nations peoples, who have carried the weight of championing, explaining and acting for far too long.

Date: Thursday 28 May 2026

Time: 12:30pm - 1:30pm

Location: T5.03, 192 Ann Street
and online via Teams [link](#)



Jellurgal Unite on Country

The RAP Team will be hosting a Unite on Country this National Reconciliation Week, immersing in the rich Kombumerri culture at Dreaming mountain, **Jellurgal**. On a guided walk through a beachside rainforest, our participants will discover the fascinating First Nations history and story of Dreamtime giant, Jabreen, as he watches over Burleigh.

Date: Wednesday 3 June

Time: 9:30am to 11:30am

Places for this cultural tour are now full,
email reconciliation@ucareqld.com.au to be placed on a Cancellation List.





ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID Ed. 3.1

Facilitated by:
UnitingCare RAP Team



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Mental Health First Aid
2 Day Workshop, Gold Coast
Thursday 4 June 9:00 AM - 4.30 PM
Friday 5 June 9:00 AM - 4.30 PM

Cost: Free to all UnitingCare staff and
Uniting Church congregation members



BlueCare Community Arundel
29 Melbourne Road, Arundel 4214



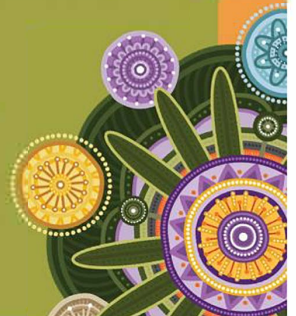
The **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid** course will teach you how to assist Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who may be experiencing a mental health problem or crisis until appropriate professional support is received or the crisis resolves, using a practical, evidence-based Action Plan*. The course is delivered face to face over two days by an accredited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid instructor from UnitingCare Queensland's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Team.

Register via Eventbrite [link](#)

For any further enquiries contact:

Jess Abernethy, RAP Manager
jessica.abernethy@ucareqld.com.au
0475 110 004

*This course is based on guidelines developed through the expert consensus of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with lived experience of mental health problems as well as professionals



NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2026

27 MAY – 3 JUNE

ALL IN

FOR RECONCILIATION



#NRW2026

RECONCILIATION.ORG.AU



25 YEARS OF
RECONCILIATION
AUSTRALIA

Walking Together for Justice in Reconciliation Webinar

*please join members from the Uniting Church Queensland Synod
and Victoria / Tasmania Synod*

Kym Korbe, EO UAICC & Covenanting Qld

Natalie Clements, Social Justice & Advocacy Qld

Tim Molineux, Social Justice Officer Vic / Tas

Date: 2 June 2026

Time: 6:30pm to 7:45pm

*We will discuss how the
United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
(UNDRIP) can inform
our posture towards reconciliation, and
explore how place-based steps
towards self-determination is
shaping positive change across our nation.*

*Further enquiries can be directed to
covenanting@ucaqld.com.au*



Meeting link here
Meeting ID: 418 811 098 106 35
Passcode: WB6GZ72k

