

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2023

2 MAY — 3 JUNE

# BE A VOICE FOR GENERATIONS

TEACHING & LEARNING  
RESOURCE

#NRW2023

[NRW.RECONCILIATION.ORG.AU](http://NRW.RECONCILIATION.ORG.AU)

# DHARAWAL COUNTRY

Shellharbour City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Dharawal Country and recognises their continued connection to the land.

We pay our respects to Elder's past, present and emerging and the contribution they make to the life of this city.

# NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

# TEACHING & LEARNING RESOURCE

This resource has been designed to support lesson plans and facilitate class discussions about reconciliation. In particular, this resource explores how this applies in a local context.

Your students and teachers can take part in learning and celebrating reconciliation anywhere. Shellharbour City Council hosts an annual Reconciliation Walk, bringing together local students, Aboriginal Elders and community, in an aim to enhance the student experience, empathy and understanding.

The ideas, themes and images used in this guide are a representation of Aboriginal culture sourced from a wide range of quality sources.



National Reconciliation Week is celebrated at the same time each year:  
27 May to 3 June

[www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au)  
#NRW2023

# BE A VOICE FOR GENERATIONS

Reconciliation is about improving the relationships and understanding between Australia's First Nations' peoples and non-indigenous people. It encourages Australians to consider the impact of their own actions towards achieving reconciliation in Australia.

This year, Reconciliation Australia urges Australians to keep the momentum for change in our everyday lives. In doing so, Australians will honor the work paved by past generations who fought for justice

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You can access free posters and resources for your classroom on the Reconciliation Australia website.

<https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au/posters-and-resources/>

# CLASSROOM CREATIVITY

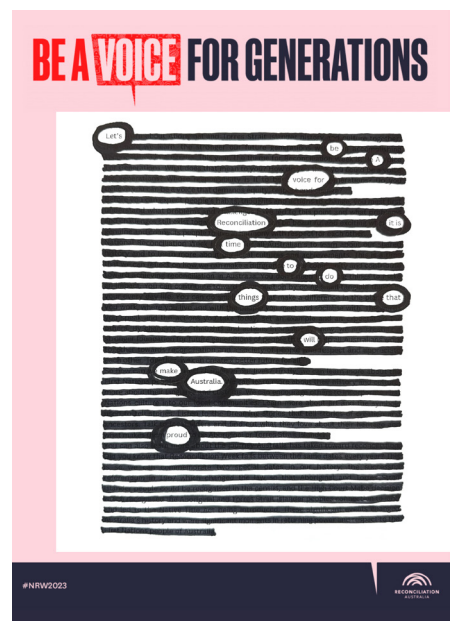
## CHANGE THE NARRATIVE!

Download and print the [BLOCK OUT POETRY](#) template provided by Shellharbour City Council. The template tells a story about what Reconciliation means to Australia and what individuals can do to make an impact.

Ask your students to re-write the narrative using block out poetry. Select words from the text and circle or underline them until a poem, phrase or sentence is created. The poem should positively reflect the theme of being a voice in reconciliation.

When students have uncovered which words they will use in their poems, use a black marker to block out the rest of the words on the page. Students might also create patterns in the blank spaces on the page that help highlight the remaining words.

Encourage students to share their work. Block out poetry looks visually effective hung in the classroom.



# CHANGE THE PICTURE

Use the link below to download and print the CREATIVE CHALLENGE templates. Complete the picture by giving the character facial features, clothing, accessories and a background that tell a story about being brave and making change.



BE BRAVE.  
MAKE CHANGE.



Shellharbour City Council is an equal opportunity employer. All other things being equal, we will accept applications from people of all backgrounds and ethnicities.



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# RECONCILIATION SCHOOL FLAG WALK

Every year, Shellharbour City Council proudly hosts the Reconciliation School Flag Walk in partnership with our local schools.

**This year's flag walk will be held on Monday 29 May 2023.**

The event symbolises the shared journeys of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the non-indigenous communities of Australia.

On the journey, students will walk alongside Aboriginal Elders, Civic Leaders and community members.

The event incorporates a Welcome To Country, Smoking Ceremony, dance and an official exchange of flags.



# A BRIEF HISTORY

National Reconciliation Week falls between the same dates each year; 27 May to 3 June. The dates commemorate two significant dates in Australia's history and journey toward reconciliation.

## 27 May 1967 | The referendum

The Australian Constitution is a general law to govern the country that cannot be changed, except by the people of Australia who vote in a referendum. This document came into effect on 1 January 1901, establishing the Commonwealth of Australia and is notoriously difficult to change.

A referendum is a vote by the Australian people to change the constitution. A single question is proposed which usually carries a 'Yes' or 'No' answer. Before a referendum can take place, Parliament must approve the proposed changes that will be put to the Australian public. A referendum is only passed if the majority of voters are in favour from the majority of all states.

In 1967, Australia's most successful referendum took place, where more than 90% of Australians voted YES to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the census.

The 1967 referendum also gave the Australian government power to make laws specific to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that could aim to assist in addressing inequalities.

Unfortunately, the result of the referendum did not guarantee equality or end discrimination. It did, however, signify a change in the mindset of Australia's majority. This symbolised that change was possible and the people of Australia were willing to fight for it.

Although there have been 19 referendums and 44 proposed changes since 1901, the 1967 referendum is one of only 8 changes that have been approved to the Constitution.

## 3 June 1992 | The Mabo case

The Mabo case, short for Mabo And Others v Queensland (No 2) (1992), was a significant legal case named after Eddie Mabo where the High Court of Australia recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have rights to the land.

Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo was a Torres Strait Islander who believed the Australian laws on land ownership were wrong and fought to change them. In 1981 he delivered a speech at James Cook University in Queensland where he explained his beliefs. His speech was heard by a lawyer who proposed that Eddie should challenge the Australian Government in the court system. The case would decide who the true owners of land on Mer (also known as Murray Island) were- his people or the Australian Government.

The legal case challenged the idea of 'terra nullius' in Australia. During the British colonisation, the land was deemed terra nullius- 'land belonging to no one', justifying the British occupation without treaty or payment.

The Mabo case, short for Mabo and others v Queensland (No 2) (1992), ran for 10 years. The High Court of Australia determined that terra nullius should not have been applied to Australian land and as such, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have rights to the land, rights that existed before the British arrived and still exist today.

The Mabo decision was an important moment in Australia's history. The ruling not only acknowledged the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples connection to the land, it also led to the Native Title Act being introduced in 1993.

Unfortunately, Eddie Mabo died before the court made its decision and he never found out the result of the case.

# MAKING CHANGE IN AUSTRALIA

Understanding Australia's history and evolution towards reconciliation allows students to develop understanding and respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and experiences. To be effective participants in change, we must understand why change is important.

Shellharbour City Council have developed free resources for local classrooms. The resources are designed to help you engage students in Reconciliation Week activities that align with the curriculum. You can download templates from the Shellharbour City Council website:

<https://bit.ly/SCCreconciliation>



# TIMELINE OF CHANGE

This activity takes students on a brief exploration of Australia's journey toward reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The timeline snapshots significant moments that stimulated change and evolution in Australia's culture and mindset.

## INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- o What is significant about the dates National Reconciliation Week falls on each year?
- o How do you think Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people felt when strangers arrived and claimed their home as their own land?
- o Do you think Eddie Mabo was brave in his actions? What risks could he have faced?
- o Who else do you think has shown bravery in their actions toward reconciliation in Australia?
- o Do you think Australia has 'achieved' reconciliation or does our journey continue?
- o What does reconciliation look like today?
- o What difference can you make?

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

This activity helps students work towards the following outcomes:

- o Describes and explains the struggles for rights and freedoms in Australia, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*
- o Identifies change and continuity and describes the causes and effects of change on Australian society*



# RELIABLE ONLINE RESOURCES AND CONTENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**ABC Education** – Free online teaching resources  
[https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/topic/494038/  
aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures](https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/topic/494038/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures)

**AIATSIS** – Free online resource  
<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>

**Australians Together** – Free online curriculum resources  
<https://australianstogether.org.au/education/curriculum-resources>

**Bass Point Heritage Walk Brochure**  
Local historical information presented by Shellharbour City Council  
[https://cdn.shellharbour.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Living\\_here\\_documents/  
basspointheritagewalkbrochure\\_0.pdf](https://cdn.shellharbour.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Living_here_documents/basspointheritagewalkbrochure_0.pdf)

**Behind The News** – Free online teaching and learning resources  
<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/indigenous-culture/10576610>

**BOSTES** – Free online teaching and learning resources  
<https://ab-ed.nesa.nsw.edu.au/go/home>

**Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation**  
Free resources, glossary & Dreaming Stories  
<https://www.coomaditchie.org.au/resources>

**Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation** – Local information and services  
<https://www.iac.org.au/official-artwork>

**Indigenous Weather** – Free online resource  
<http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/index.shtml>

**Narragunnawali** – Free online curriculum resources  
<https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/curriculum-resources>

**Reconciliation Australia** – Free information and resources  
<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

**SBS Learn** – Free online teaching and learning resources  
<https://www.sbs.com.au/learn/resources/explore-australian-identity-and-histories>

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FOR VOICE  
GENERATIONS**

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AUSTRALIA



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