

National Reconciliation Week is celebrated all across Australia each year commencing on the 27th of May till the 3rd of June. The theme of this year's National Reconciliation Week is "Grounded in Truth - Walk Together with Courage". During this week two significant stages in the reconciliation journey are remembered—the anniversaries of the successful referendum in 1967 and the High Court Mabo decision. The Mabo decision was named after Eddie Mabo, who was the man who challenged the Australian legal system and fought for recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the Australian land. This week supposedly just passes by just as any other normal week and we don't tend to take note of the value reconciliation week has towards us as much as it impacts Aboriginals and non-Indigenous people. Whether if there is an abundance of obligations that we have to commit to from either work or school, we still need to make time to realise how important reconciliation is, in terms of raising unity between all.. Amalgamating as one community means that there is unity. In unity, there is strength. So, what is the importance of reconciliation and how can we as Australian, achieve reconciliation?

Many people mention that reconciliation is important, but why? To define reconciliation, it can be stated as strengthening relationships between Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people. Reconciliation is so important for us to have, due to the fact that the Aboriginals land was invaded. More than 200 years ago, the English invaded the Aboriginals land and they so erroneously entitled Terra Nullius. It seems that much has changed for the worse, and very little has changed for the better for the original people, the First Australians. In a period of 50 years, Aboriginal people went from being masters of their domain and land, to being supplicants and slaves in their own land, with a population loss of over 80%. To this day we still live in Australia and we plan for Australia to be a future home for the next few generations. So, the least we could do is influence peace and harmony between Torres Strait Islanders, Aboriginals and the non-indigenous. Many of Australia's most valuable influences have a indigenous backgrounds, such as Jessica Hilda Mauboy. She was born on 4 August 1989 and raised in Darwin, Northern Territory. Many of her songs have been noticed on the top 100 charts. Giving ownership to the land that was once their own will encourage peace and harmony. Hence, reconciliation is extremely important to show our respect of what we have done to the rightful owners of the land.

The nation's progress towards reconciliation is only as strong as how much effort we put into reconciliation. The active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures, encourages unison. Majority of Australians understand and accept the wrongs of the past and the impact of these wrongs and try at our full potential to fix these wrongs. During National Reconciliation Week, Australians can participate in lots of activities and events that focus on the value of recognition of the land that was once owned by just the Indigenous. Reconciliation is encouraged at schools and work by providing activities such as, basket weaving, TV films, Indigenous painting and drawing and even through face painting and traditional music. Traditional practices, such as flag raising ceremonies, are a major part of reconciliation week. Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags is a highly visible symbol of respect. This act demonstrates Australia's recognition of its First Peoples and

promotes a sense of community partnership and a commitment to reconciliation. Typically, the local council will launch National Reconciliation Week with flag raising before sunrise. It is always ensured that both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are raised, as they represent two distinct cultures. It's important to recognise that even within each group, various languages and traditions are practiced across Australia. All of these activities aids people to understand how much effort we have to put into reconciliation to continue this phenomenal progress .

To achieve reconciliation, we need to develop strong relationships that are made upon trust and respect, and that do not discriminate. It is thought that almost all Australians believe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is important and that cultural diversity makes us stronger. There are many ways to achieve reconciliation, even if it is small, it still shows our respect and our forgiveness.. We never know when the next major world danger will strike. The more people we have helping one and other, the stronger we become. As mentioned earlier, In unity there is strength. People use the term "I am here for you" a lot of the time. But what does it really mean? It means to provide someone with comfort and care when they are in difficult situation. Practicing looking out for one and other will soon become a habit that endures. Helping others not only makes an individual feel satisfied with their work, but also makes the other person feel welcomed and safe. We need to "be there" for the Aboriginals and Torres Strait islanders, make them feel like they belong in their own country. To achieve reconciliation, you must go beyond making peace with your adversary and make peace with yourself. As much as reconciliation with others is extremely important, if you haven't found yourself first and where you stand, then it is pretty hard to create peace with others. Letting go of your own anger and negativity in your life will then break the barrier of selfishness and allow to make peace. Thus, it is important to create relationships with others of different race and culture as cultural diversity makes us a stronger and more efficient community.

Without a doubt, it is clear that reconciliation is fundamental and necessary towards all Australians. This strong bond we create with the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders has so many benefits not only to them, but also towards us. Reconciliation allows us to create close connections with those of different culture. The progress made so far is only a start on what we can continue to do to achieve reconciliation. We need to come together and make alliance with one another. There is a phrase that is used in the english language, "The more the merrier", which is exactly the case of reconciliation. The more people we have supporting each other, the better and efficient we are as a community. So, why not put justice into hand and establish all that we benefit from this chance of peace and righteousness.