



What is *Reconciliation?*

About reconciliation

Jesus is the love of God breaking into the world, reaching out beyond the barriers that separate people from each other and offering reconciliation and peace. Those who were marginalised by others around him were accepted and loved by Jesus. Those who had suffered persecution and isolation from the world around them, found in Jesus freedom and hope and the courage and strength to transform their lives.

Reconciliation is based on Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians coming to an honest understanding of our shared history, a commitment to building cooperative partnerships based on trust and respect and a recognition of the distinctive rights of Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation requires commitments and action from governments and the community.

The theme for National Reconciliation Week in 2012 is

Let's Talk Recognition

It is an opportunity to talk about recognition in all its forms and how we might better acknowledge the status of Indigenous Australians.

Reconciliation Australia has said:

Over the next couple of years recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Constitution will be on the agenda as the Federal Government has indicated that there will be a referendum on it, on or before the next election. When people go to vote, we want them to feel confident and capable of making an informed decision. To do this it is important to start the conversation about the value of recognition for us all and why it is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in particular.

But recognition isn't just about the referendum, it's much broader, and has a lot to do with reconciliation. During NRW 2011 we're asking all Australians to think about the value of recognition, what it means to you personally and its importance to the nation.

National Reconciliation Week and Week of Prayer for Reconciliation - 27 May to 3 June

The Week of Prayer for Reconciliation gives us the opportunity to reflect, through prayer, thought, discussion, and act on what still needs to be done in reconciliation. Week of Prayer for Reconciliation was started in 1993, and expanded to become National Reconciliation Week in 1996, becoming an Australia-wide focus point for reconciliation activities.

National Reconciliation Week and the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation coincide with two important dates in Australia's history:

- 27 May marks the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum in which more than 90 percent of Australians voted to remove clauses from the Australian Constitution which discriminated against Indigenous people.
- 3 June marks the anniversary of the judgement in the 1992 Mabo case in the High Court, which recognised the Native Title rights of Indigenous people as the original inhabitants of Australia and overturned the belief that the land was unowned and empty – terra nullius – prior to the arrival of Europeans in 1788.

You can read more about the Uniting Church's own experiences with recognising Indigenous people in the Preamble of our Constitution on the [Covenanting](#) page of these resources.