

National Reconciliation Week

The annual timing of National Sorry Day (26 May), and the week it begins, National Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June), never changes. The reason for this continuity lies in various significant dates within this week that annually commemorate events enshrined within our history.

On May 26, 1997, the report *Bringing Them Home*, saw the national acknowledgment of “The Stolen Generation”, the forcible removal by authorities of Indigenous children from their families from the first days of European colonization.

On 27 May 1967, overwhelming support was behind the success of the referendum that officially recognized Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as Australian citizens within the National Census and in the right to vote.



And the third event on 3 June commemorated the landmark Mabo Decision in 1992 which recognized that Indigenous Australians were the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Australian continent, so initiating the right to claim Native Title.

The theme for National Reconciliation Week in 2022 is “Be Brave. Make Change!” The organizing Committee succinctly explains further, highlighting that it is “a challenge to all Australians— individuals, families, communities, organizations, and government—to *Be Brave* and tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation so we can *Make Change* for the benefit of all Australians ... 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.” (2)

How appropriate is it that May 26 in 2022 also coincides with the celebration of Ascension Day within the Christian calendar! This is the occasion on which Jesus (traditionally 39 days after his Resurrection on Easter Sunday) ascends to God in heaven, the day symbolizing the successful completion of Jesus’ ministry on earth. May we see in every National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week affirmation that we, as the Australian people, continue to rise above the sadness within our past, to confront its legacies and so together, bring about continued success (and hopefully the completion) of the Reconciliation process.

Holy Father, God of Love,

You are the Creator of all things.

We acknowledge the pain and shame of our history and the sufferings of Our peoples, and we ask your forgiveness.

We thank you for the survival of Indigenous cultures.

Our hope is in you because you gave your Son Jesus to reconcile the world to you. We pray for your strength and grace to forgive, accept and love one another, as you love us and forgive and accept us in the sacrifice of your Son.