

## LCA Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

### A message from the LCA/NZ Bishop, John Henderson

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The peace of the Lord be with you.

*I acknowledge that our loving Creator God first gave the land on which I stand to the peoples of the First Nations, who walked on and cared for this land before the beginning of recorded time.*

*I thank God for these Traditional Custodians and pay my respects to their elders – past, present, and emerging – as we embark on a journey of reconciliation in our country, Australia.*

I'm John Henderson, bishop of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand. I'm speaking to you today to emphasise the importance of the work of developing and implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan for our church in Australia.

Human beings are made in God's own image. Jesus Christ is that image. He gave his life for the world so that all may have life.

God's Word, in Galatians 3:28, tells us how Christ unites us as one people in him:

*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free,  
there is no longer male and female;  
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*

These words are written for all believers, of all cultures – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians alike. Jesus is our Lord, and he made himself our servant, transcending all the boundaries we humans try to erect. He shows us how we are to treat each other, with the same submission and humility he showed us. Every life is precious, equal in worth and dignity.

Sadly, despite believing that Christ gave his life equally for all of us, too often we have allowed negative forces to drive us apart. Consciously or unconsciously, we are drawn into a world misshapen by ungodly notions of power, greed, status, wealth and influence. In such a world, Christians need to work doubly hard to remain true to their faith in Jesus.

We admit we fail, all too often, but because of Jesus we can confess our sin and ask for forgiveness. Reconciliation with God means we have strength, through his grace, to resume our journey as human beings who are reconciled to one another in Christ. This is how we treat all people.

Developing and implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan promises to help us in our part of that journey. It's a chance for us to pause, listen, consider, grow in understanding, and change how we think about and relate to one another. The history of First Peoples and other Australians has often, but thankfully not always, been tragic and broken. Through God's grace, we can continue to build a better way, a living way, to wholeness of life and community.

The journey began way back when God created us all equal. It took a big stride forward when God so loved the world that he sent his Son to be our Saviour, without discrimination. We can continue the journey today by stepping out together, side by side, to listen and learn from one another, accept one another in love, share our faith and deepen our relationships, rediscovering who it is we are meant to be and do.



5 May, 2020  
John Henderson

*Bishop, Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand*