



## Day 1 ... National Reconciliation Week of Prayer

National Reconciliation Week ([NRW](#)) started out as the **Week of Prayer for Reconciliation in 1993** (the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples) and was supported by Australia's major faith communities. In 1996, this became known as National Reconciliation Week.

The NRW dates annually remain the same, always commencing on May 27 to mark the anniversary of the [1967 Referendum](#) and finishing with June 3 the anniversary of the [High Court Mabo Decision](#) on Native Title.

The NRW 2021 theme: **More than just a word. Reconciliation takes action.**

One decisive action of reconciliation that can be identified occurred on 27 May 1967, when the Australian Government held a referendum, in order to address the injustices and inequalities that existed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This was a momentous turning point in Australian history. This 1967 referendum altered the Australian Constitution. More than 90 per cent of Australian voters chose 'Yes' to count Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the census and gave them recognition as Australians citizens and a level of freedom not seen since the colonisations of Australia.

Before 1967, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples did not have the same rights as other Australians under the Australian Constitution. Many aspects of their lives were controlled by the state governments, including the right to:

- Vote in state elections
- Marry whomever they chose
- Move to wherever they chose
- Own property wherever they chose
- Be the legal guardian of their own children
- Receive the same pay for the same work

This became part of a very long journey of healing which continues today, for First Nations peoples.

### Thursday, May 27 | A Prayer for the Journey of Healing

*Tear Australia Reconciliation Action Kit, pg 12*

**Almighty and loving God, you who created all people in your image,  
Lead us to seek your compassion as we listen to the stories of our past.  
You gave your only Son, Jesus, who died and rose again so that sins will be forgiven.  
We place before you the pain and anguish of dispossession of land, language, lore,  
culture and family kinship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have  
experienced.  
We live in faith that all people will rise from the depths of despair and hopelessness.  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families have endured the pain and loss  
of loved ones, through the separation of children from their families.  
We are sorry and ask Your forgiveness.  
Touch the hearts of the broken, homeless and inflicted and heal their spirits.  
In your mercy and compassion walk with us as we continue our journey of healing to  
create a future that is just and equitable.  
Lord, you are our hope.  
Amen**

*By the National and Torres Strait Islander  
Ecumenical Commission ([www.ncca.org.au/natsiec](http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec))  
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For further information on the 1967 Referendum [click here](#)



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## National Reconciliation Week | May 27 – June 3

The above prayer is from TearAustralia's [Reconciliation Action Kit](#), and [Reconciliation Liturgy](#) (developed by the Rev Sally Apolis, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 2008, Port Melbourne, Vic).

These have been designed to support groups in prayerfully moving towards reconciliation.

TearAustralia provides the following acknowledgement on page 2 of their Action kit:

### Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the contributors of the Reconciliation Action Kit: Greg Hewson, Barbara Deutschmann, Dave Andrews and Beth Koch, and to Sue Earl for her photography.

TEAR acknowledges that different communities and organisations prefer different terms when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. TEAR Australia uses "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander" while Concilia uses the term "Indigenous". Please be assured that these terms are used with the utmost respect and it is our hope that they are received in this spirit.