

Days of importance for Aboriginal communities

One way to help people feel their culture and identity is respected is to demonstrate respect for things that matter to them. You can show respect by recognising days of importance to the Aboriginal community.

Some key dates are listed below that you can observe in your organisation in your own way. You could plan an activity during Reconciliation Week. During NAIDOC Week staff, volunteers, children and young people and families from your organisation could attend a local activity, such as a flag raising, or march. You could encourage children and young people to research a famous Aboriginal person like Eddie Koiki Mabo and make a poster or share some knowledge with others. You might also want to look at some other organisations to see how they celebrate these key days or weeks.

How you reflect on significant days and pay respect may be different depending on whether you are engaging with children and young people or adults in your organisation's community and depending on the day of importance. For example, the National Apology to the Stolen Generations might be observed in a staff meeting or organisation newsletter, asking people to take a moment to understand its meaning. NAIDOC week activities are great to involve families, children and young people as well as staff and volunteers.

Significant date	Background	Example resources
<p>Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations</p> <p>13 February</p>	<p>In 2008, the Australian Prime Minister made a formal apology to the Stolen Generations and their descendants, acknowledging the pain of past government practices in removing Aboriginal children from their families and attempted assimilation.</p>	<p>National Museum Australia, 2008: National Apology to the Stolen Generations https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/national-apology</p> <p>Reconciliation Australia, The Apology https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Diid-xAzJ0&t=333s</p>
<p>International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination</p> <p>21 March</p>	<p>This is the anniversary of the day police in Sharpeville, South Africa opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid 'pass laws' in 1960. It is a United Nations Day of Observance to recognise the work that still needs to be done to dismantle racism around the world. In Australia, Harmony Week starts on the same day.</p>	<p>United Nations, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day</p> <p>Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, Harmony Day, https://www.harmony.gov.au/</p>
<p>National Sorry Day</p> <p>26 May</p>	<p>National Sorry Day remembers and acknowledges the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families and communities, now known as the Stolen Generations. The first Sorry Day was held in 1998 when the 'Bringing them Home' report was tabled in Parliament. This report captures the work of a National Inquiry into the policies that saw these children be removed.</p>	<p>Reconciliation Australia, National Sorry Day, https://www.reconciliation.org.au/national-sorry-day-2020/</p> <p>Healing Foundation, National Sorry Day – a time for all Australians to commit to healing the nation, https://healingfoundation.org.au/2021/05/25/national-sorry-day/</p>
<p>Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum</p> <p>27 May</p>	<p>On 27 May 1967, Australians voted to change the Constitution so that like all other Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would be counted as part of the population and the Commonwealth would be able to make laws for them.</p>	<p>Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), The 1967 Referendum, https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/1967-referendum</p>





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National Reconciliation Week 27 May – 3 June	<p>This week is 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.</p>	<p>Reconciliation Australia https://www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/</p>
Mabo Day 3 June	<p>Mabo Day commemorates the recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional owners of their lands. The day is named after Eddie Koiki Mabo, who fought for many years to overturn the legal concept of terra nullius, meaning 'land belonging to no-one'. The Mabo decision acknowledged the traditional rights of Indigenous people to their land and waters, and paved the way for native title in Australia. It also formally recognised that Indigenous people occupied Australia before British arrival in 1788.</p>	<p>Reconciliation Australia, The Mabo native title decision, https://www.reconciliation.org.au/commemorating-mabo-day/</p>
NAIDOC Week – from the first Sunday to the second Sunday in July	<p>NAIDOC Week celebrates and recognises the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This week is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories.</p>	<p>National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) https://www.naidoc.org.au/</p>
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day 4 August	<p>Children's Day is a time where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, and all Australians, celebrate the strengths and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Children's Day has been celebrated since 1988.</p>	<p>SNAICC Children's Day https://www.snaicc.org.au/our-work/campaigns/childrens-day/ https://www.snaicc.org.au/our-work/campaigns/childrens-day/what-is-childrens-day/</p>
International Day of the World's Indigenous People 9 August	<p>People from around the world are encouraged to spread the United Nation's message on the protection and promotion of the rights of Indigenous peoples.</p>	<p>United Nations https://www.un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day</p>