Reconciliation brings hope to creating change

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is marked every year from 27 May – 3 June. It is an opportunity for Australians to learn and reflect upon our shared histories, culture and achievements and our part to play in achieving reconciliation in Australia.

The dates for NRW also commemorate key milestones in reconciliation in Australia, the successful 1967 referendum (27 May) and the 1992 High Court Mabo decision (3 June).

NRW is preceded by National Sorry Day on 26 May, which remembers and acknowledges the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people forcibly removed from their families and communities, which is now known as the “Stolen Generation.”

NRW 2022 theme and artwork

The NRW 2022 theme is Be Brave. Make Change.

This is a challenge to individuals, families, communities, organisations and government to be brave and tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation so we can make change for the benefit of all Australians. Start with brave actions in your daily lives where you live, work, play and socialise.

This year’s theme builds on the 2021 theme (More than a word. Reconciliation takes action) which encouraged us all to take greater action on reconciliation. We saw unprecedented response to our suggestions for everyday and braver actions.

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey that reminds us that while generations of Australians have fought hard for meaningful changes like these, future gains are likely to take just as much, if not more, effort.

This year’s NRW artwork (see pull- out poster on next page) was done by contemporary Torres Strait Islander illustrator, Tori-Jay Mordey, who shows some of the different faces of Australians working for a just and equal society.

They are a visual reminder that reconciliation is everybody’s business.

“I sought inspiration of what that kind of brave change might look like from many different people; people I know that are around me, people I see every day,” she said.

“And people I see living bravely every day in their own lives – from fierce little kids to older people working with more established mindsets and environments.

“We can make a change. But we can’t do it alone. Be brave and start the conversation today.” Tori-Jay Mordey is an established Indigenous Australian illustrator and artist currently based in Brisbane.

Over the years she has honed her skills in digital illustrations, drawings, painting, print making and film while also expanding her skills as a mural artist. A lot of her work revolves around human connection and exploring her racial identity.

Moving forward

For reconciliation to be effective, it must involve truth-telling, and actively address issues of inequality, systemic racism and instances where the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are ignored, denied or reduced.

While there is greater support for reconciliation from the Australian people than ever before, we must be more determined than ever if we are to achieve a just, equitable, reconciled Australia.

As history tells us, this will only happen through continued and concerted action from those who are already part of the reconciliation movement to those who are yet to join.

Moving towards a braver reconciliation requires a vision for what a just, equitable and reconciled Australia looks like.

Reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians as we move forward, creating a nation

strengthened by respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For more information visit reconciliation.org.au

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