



News of the week

National Reconciliation Week 2022

Expired 5/26/2022

This year we're all challenged to '*Be Brave. Make Change.*' to continue efforts towards achieving meaningful reconciliation in Australia. We caught up with our eSafety colleague [REDACTED] to find out what reconciliation means to her and how she thinks our agency can contribute.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I am a mother of 3 and a wife living on Darkinjung Country [REDACTED] My Aboriginal heritage stems from my mother's side of the family originating from [Gundungurra Country](#), the [Burrargorang Valley](#). This is the valley that was flooded in the 1950s to make way for Greater Sydney's drinking water, Warragamba dam. I have a background as a paramedic and teacher, and now I am now part of the eSafety women's team as the Indigenous Programs Training Lead.

There are quite a few significant dates around Reconciliation Week, can you give us an overview?

- **[National Sorry Day](#) – Thursday 26 May.** It marks the tabling of the [Bringing them Home](#) report on the Stolen Generations. The first Sorry Day was held in 1998.
- **[National Reconciliation Week](#) – begins Friday 27 May.** National Reconciliation Week is held annually and celebrates the rich culture and history of the First Australians. National Reconciliation Week began in 1996 to provide focus for nationwide

reconciliation activities. The week coincides with 2 significant dates in Australia's history that provide strong symbols of the aspirations for reconciliation – 27 May marks the anniversary of the [1967 Referendum](#) and 3 June marks the anniversary of the [High Court's judgment in the 1992 Mabo case](#).

- **Mabo day – 3 June.** This day celebrates [Eddie Mabo](#), who helped overturn 'terra nullius' in a 10-year campaign through the courts, ending in the historic High Court Mabo Judgment. It also marks the end of Reconciliation Week.
- **ACT Reconciliation Day public holiday – Monday 30 May.**

What do all these days and National Reconciliation Week mean for you?

National Reconciliation Day/Week and Mabo Day will have varied meanings to each person. As a whole, it 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.

Personally, it is a time of sadness as I reflect on my family's historical struggles, lost identity, culture and many hardships. It is also a time where my optimism soothes me as I witness the spectrum of incredible First Nations people across our continent strive towards healing and creating positive changes for our future generations.

What would you like to see at the ACMA and eSafety in terms of reconciliation?

I'd like to acknowledge that there's already some outstanding work already underway, particularly with our various grants and research, such as the [technology-facilitated abuse as experienced by First Nations women](#) research.

In keeping with this year's theme of '*Be Brave. Make Change.*' I would like to see the ACMA and eSafety develop their strategic plan to increase the level of engagement in the First Nations space. This might include cultural competency training with a focus on truth telling, prioritising ongoing authentic external partnerships and more employment pathways or opportunities for First Nations Peoples – all of this could be addressed within a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

What is a [Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#) and what does it mean for an organisation to have one?

A RAP is an individualised commitment to the notion of national reconciliation from industry, government and non-government organisations of all sizes. It forms a plan for actioning the principles and purpose of reconciliation in the way they function, engage their staff and interact with the community and other organisations. A RAP's success is measured through 5 interrelated dimensions: race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance. When I started at eSafety, I was astonished that eSafety or the ACMA didn't have one already in place.

Currently only the ACT observes Reconciliation Day as a public holiday, do you think it should be observed nationally?

My personal view is yes, it should be a national day of reflection, recognition and celebration. It's a time to acknowledge First Nations people's strengths despite adversity, passion despite dangers and heart despite hardships. By creating a nation-wide day, it puts First Nations issues on everyone's agenda and calendar. Who doesn't love a day off, right?



Stay tuned for next week's article to find out about our plans to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan!

Main image: [REDACTED] recently presented at the Annual Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum