

God of all, we thank you for greater understanding and acceptance of the original inhabitants of our Land; for land rights granted, for apologies made, and for new opportunities in education and employment.

Forgive our past mistakes and help us to be rid of our remaining prejudices. We pray for those who work to overcome violence and substance abuse, and for all who live in difficult conditions in remote communities. We pray too, for indigenous leaders as they continue to address the many challenges ahead. Lead us to a new appreciation of the rich culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the insights which they bring to our faith communities. Amen.

From A Worship and Prayer Book for MU Australia
Prayer 71

RECONCILIATION- a shared journey

This year marks 30 years since an inquiry into Aboriginal deaths in custody. The royal commission made hundreds of recommendations, including a need to achieve reconciliation. Have things changed? Since that report, there have been over 470 deaths in custody reported including five in recent weeks.

Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders do not die at a faster rate than other prisoners, they are far more likely to be in prison in the first place. Indigenous people are about 12 times more likely to be in custody than non-indigenous Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up slightly more than three percent of the Australian population but almost thirty percent of the prison population, a reality which comes about as a result of systemic problems and disadvantage faced by Aboriginal people.

Our First Nations people are also over represented in other areas of concern. When we look at domestic violence, we learn Aboriginal women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised and 10 times more likely to be murdered. At the 2016 census, over 116,000 Australians were homeless, and 20 percent of those identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Curriculum Australia has made some progress in the improvement of education opportunities but more work is needed to 'close the gap.'

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) from 27 May to 3 June marks twenty years of Reconciliation Australia. The theme this year is 'More than a word.' The dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey-the anniversaries of the successful 1967 referendum and the High Court Mabo decision.

NAIDOC week 2021 will be celebrated 4 July - 11 July (includes Friday 9 July as National Aboriginal Day). The theme for this year is 'Heal Country! Heal our nation.'

We all have a role to play in reconciliation to help build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures, and futures. AMUA members are committed to supporting families at all times. Perhaps this year we could pay particular attention to the reconciliation journey of all people of our nation?

The prayer in the sidebar is from our worship book. Could you include it in your worship during Reconciliation week? Are you aware of any local activities you could support or participate in?

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Social issues and Action

*May we always see the world through the eyes of Christ,
speak to those we meet with the words of Christ,
and take with us on our journey the peace of Christ*

