

National Reconciliation Week Kerang Community Walk Wednesday 27 May 2026

Case Study

Background:

National Reconciliation Week is held annually from 27 May to 3 June. The week commemorates two significant milestones in Australia's reconciliation journey: the successful 1967 Referendum, which removed discriminatory provisions from the Constitution, and the 1992 Mabo decision, which formally recognised the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their traditional lands. It provides an opportunity for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements, and to reflect on how each of us can contribute to reconciliation.

In 2026, Kerang hosted its 12th annual Reconciliation Week Community Walk. The event brought together schools, community members and organisations to strengthen relationships, foster understanding and celebrate Aboriginal culture. The walk concluded with a community gathering at the Glasshouse Meeting Room and Yarning Circle at the Sir John Gorton Library in Kerang.

The annual event is delivered through a partnership between the Kerang Elders and Emerging Leaders Group, Gannawarra Shire Council, Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) and Northern District Community Health (NDCH). The 2026 National Reconciliation Week theme, "All In", emphasises that reconciliation is a shared responsibility. It encourages all Australians to take meaningful action by demonstrating respect, learning from First Nations cultures and histories, and working towards a more united and inclusive future.

Event Aims:

- Show a strong, shared commitment to reconciliation across Gannawarra.
- Support Aboriginal Elders and Leaders to plan and co-host the event.
- Build stronger relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations.
- Help people understand the importance of National Reconciliation Week and key events in Australia’s reconciliation journey.
- Respectfully include and celebrate Aboriginal culture, customs and protocols, such as a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony.
- Increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures, histories and connection to Country through activities like music, storytelling and art.
- Give children and young people from local schools and kindergartens opportunities to take part in learning and community activities focused on reconciliation.





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Event Aims *continued*:

- Help build understanding, respect and strong connections between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members.
- Encourage people to keep learning, reflecting and taking action beyond National Reconciliation Week.



What did the event deliver?:

- The 12th annual Kerang Reconciliation Week Walk was the largest to date, with around 400 children, students and community members attending.
- More than 270 children from Kerang Technical High School, Kerang Primary School, Kerang South Primary School, St Mary's Primary School Cohuna, St Joseph's Primary School Kerang, Kerang South Kindergarten and the Gannawarra Children's Centre attended.
- Transport support was provided to help a primary school and kindergarten attend the event.
- GLAM partner agencies attended the event.
- A Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony were led by Barapa Elder, Hack Webster.
- Four young people presented and shared the cultural meaning of the plants used in the Smoking Ceremony.
- Participants experienced cultural storytelling and interactive didgeridoo music by Gunnai and Yorta Yorta man, Wayne Thorpe.
- Victoria Police supported the event by managing traffic to ensure safe road crossings during the community walk.





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What did the event deliver?: *continued*

- A recording of Barapa Elder, Aunty Lil Murray reading "Sharing" written by Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson delivered a message on how sharing strengthens us and supports how we care for Country.
- A display of over 200 National Reconciliation Week colouring competition entries, and awarding of winning certificates and prizes.
- Support of local hospitality businesses including catering for a morning tea and 200 message cookies, "All In" and #NRW2026.
- The StoryWalk [R] experience of "Sharing" by Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson displayed in Atkinson Park, Kerang for four weeks following the event.











Event Reflections:

- Starting the event at 10am helped schools arrive on time to the event in Victoria Square.
- The Glasshouse worked well as a new venue, with the Yarning Circle providing a strong focus for the Smoking Ceremony and enough space for the large crowd.
- Local Laws Officers and Victoria Police helped keep everyone safe by managing traffic at key crossings.
- the length of the event at the Glasshouse was appropriate.
- Involving children and young people in the Smoking Ceremony was valuable, helping share cultural knowledge across generations.
- Aboriginal music was a great way to engage the large number of young children.
- The sound systems at all three locations worked well.
- A group photo could be included in future events, possibly taken by drone at the Yarning Circle to include all attendees and create a record of community support for reconciliation.
- The amount of morning tea provided was adequate (2 trays sandwiches, 2 trays slices, 2 bags cubed cheese, 4 packets savoury biscuits, 2 variety dips, bag of grapes).
- Displaying the colouring competition entries behind the guest speaker highlighted strong participation from local children and schools.
- The library activities provided an added opportunity for schools to stay on, including National Simultaneous Storytime and a soccer clinic linked to the story "Luna Roo".
- Future events could be strengthened by giving children and young people more opportunities to be involved, including through storytelling, music, art and speaking roles.



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