

SIGNIFICANT DATES

AUSTRALIAN FIRST NATIONS

2024

23 February 2024



SIGNIFICANT DATES - AUSTRALIAN FIRST NATIONS 2024

Strengthening First Nations cultural safety in primary health care. This resource is to support primary health care providers to enhance the cultural responsiveness of their staff, premises and services.

The below ideas can be used to acknowledge, engage and learn more about some of the dates that are significant to Australia's First Nations people.

Australia Day (Survival or Invasion Day) - 26th January each year

Most Australians celebrate Australia Day as the day Australia was founded. In contrast, First Nations people mourn their history and may call it 'Invasion Day', 'Day of Mourning' or 'Survival Day'.



Ideas for Practices

- A sign or poster to acknowledge that this day may be looked upon differently for Australia's First Nations people.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Advertise posters for First Nations events that are happening within the local community.
- Incorporate an Acknowledgement of Country into your team meetings.
- Add Australia Day/Invasion Day as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the day to plan activities.
- Ask a staff member to research First Nations views on Australia Day and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.

Anniversary of the Apology – 13th February each year

The day Kevin Rudd delivered the apology to the nation.

Ideas for Practices

- A sign acknowledging the day.
- Display the apology which can be found at National Apology: A significant day in Australia's history | News | Everymind.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Add *the Anniversary of the Apology* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the day to plan activities.
- Ask a staff member to research the *National Apology* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting the week of the Anniversary of the Apology.



National Close the Gap Day – 21st March 2024

National Close the Gap Day is observed on the third Thursday of March every year. It is a National Day of Action to pledge support for achieving First Nations health equality by 2031.

CLOSE THE GAP

Ideas for Practices

- Hold a morning tea – invite your First Nations clients and discuss what you can offer e.g.: MBS 715 Health Check, GPMP, TCA, Allied Health visits and ask the community for their input and advice on access to health care.
- Display the Close the Gap goals and how your practice is working towards them. Information can be found at Closing the Gap targets and outcomes | Closing the Gap.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Source posters and other resources to promote the day available at Home | Closing the Gap.
- Add *National Close the Gap Day* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the day to plan activities
- Ask a staff member to research the *Close the Gap Initiative* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.

Harmony Day – 21st March each year

(International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UN)). A day to accept diversity of other cultures and the multiculturalism in Australia 'Everyone Belongs'

Ideas for Practices

- Sell and wear the Harmony Day ribbons Harmony.gov.au.
- Wear a splash of orange on the day.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Add *Harmony Day* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the day to plan activities.
- Ask a staff member to research *Harmony Day* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting the week of. If you have diversity in staff cultures, ask your staff to share their cultural stories at the meeting.



Youth Week - 11th to 21st April 2024

Celebrates young people and their contribution to their local communities. It is now the largest annual youth participation event in Australia. Youth Week is a week that provides young people with an opportunity to express their views and act on issues that affect their lives.

Ideas for Practices

- Promote the MBS 715 Health Check to First Nations clients aged 12-24 years.
- Check out www.youthweek.nsw.gov.au for some ideas on engaging youth at your practice.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Add *Youth Week* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the week to plan activities.
- Ask a staff member to research *Youth Week* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.



National Sorry Day - 26th May each year

A day to remember. This day gives people the chance to come together and share the steps towards healing for the Stolen Generations, their families, and communities. Stolen generations refer to First Nations Australians who were forcibly removed from their families and communities, and the mistreatment that occurred.

Ideas for Practices

- Wear and sell in your practice, the Stolen Generation flower from www.kimberleystolengeneration.com.au in solidarity for the day (order at least 2 weeks ahead).
- Hold a lunch/morning tea for your community.
- Raising the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags ceremony.
- Start a 'Sorry Book' at reception people can sign (ask your Local Aboriginal Land Council for advice).
- Light a candle on the day in memory of the Stolen Generation.
- Check out Healing Foundation - National Sorry Day for more ideas www.healingfoundation.org.au.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Read some excerpts from the Bringing Them Home Report (www.humanrights.gov.au).
- Add *National Sorry Day* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the day to plan activities.
- Ask a staff member to research *National Sorry Day* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.



Reconciliation week - 27th May to 3rd June each year

This 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.

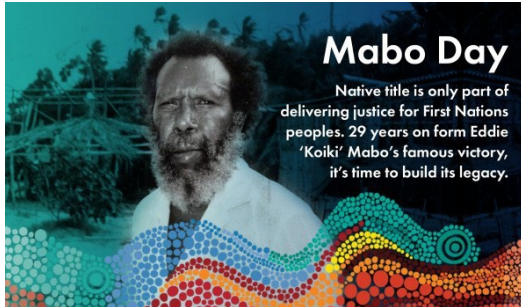
Ideas for Practices

- See reconciliationnsw.org.au for posters and other resources.
- Review or create a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for your practice. See link on how to develop one: www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans.
- Host a staff film night for an opportunity to bring people together to develop a deeper understanding of Australia's First Nations perspectives, histories, and cultures, to ignite conversation and spark change. It's also a platform to engage staff in your organisation's RAP (Reconciliation Action Plan) www.sbs.com.au/nitv/reconciliationfilmclub.
- Hold a morning tea/lunch for your local community to acknowledge Reconciliation Week.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Incorporate an Acknowledgement of Country into your team meetings .
- Find an event in your area Upcoming Events – National Reconciliation Week 2023 or better yet, host your own.
- Join the Reconciliation Week conversation on Facebook (@ReconciliationAus), Instagram (@reconciliationaus), and Twitter (@RecAustralia).
- Post an Acknowledgement of Country on your practice Facebook page or website to mark the opening of National Reconciliation Week www.facebook.com/ReconciliationAus/.
- Take these actions and reflect on how you are going to move from safe to brave on issues affecting Australia's First Nations peoples, beyond Reconciliation Week. Share with your community, family, and friends. Ask others to take their awareness and turn it into action on reconciliation.
- Add Reconciliation Week as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the week to plan activities.
- Ask a staff member to research Reconciliation Week and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.



Mabo Day – 3rd June each year

On the 3 June 1992, the High Court of Australia decided that terra nullius should not have been applied to Australia. This decision known as the Mabo decision recognised that Australia's First Nations peoples have rights to the land rights that existed before the British arrived and still exist today.



Australia's First Nations people have stewarded, nurtured, and cared for Australia's diverse environment and waterways for over 80,000 years. Environmental knowledge and activism must prioritise First Nations rights to manage and self-determine their own Country.

Acknowledging Country shows you accept and understand that no matter where you are across this nation, you are on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander lands. It is a cultural practice, and a political act.

Ideas for Practices

- Know whose Country you are on – resources like the AISTSIS Map of Indigenous Australia www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia are a useful starting point. You can purchase this for your practice.
- Find out the difference between an Acknowledgement of Country and a Welcome to Country
- Acknowledge Mabo Day via a sign/poster.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Educate yourself and staff about Mabo Day, and the details and history of First Nations Land Rights www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/land-rights and Native Title www.aiatsis.gov.au/about-native-title in Australia.
- Support Australia's First Nations perspectives and systems of knowledge on our natural environment, including www.seedmob.org.au, the www.abcfoundation.org.au, www.firesticks.org.au and www.yerrabingin.com.au/projects
- Learn about how climate change is going to directly affect Australia's First Nations Peoples: www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/dec/18/too-hot-for-humans-first-nations-people-fear-becoming-australias-first-climate-refugees.
- Include the name of Country when posting letters and parcels. Encourage businesses you buy from to add an address section for this on ordering forms: www.auspost.com.au/about-us/supporting-communities/rachael-mcphail-making-traditional-place-names-part-of-mailing-addresses.
- Support current calls by First Peoples such as treaties www.antar.org.au/treaty, constitutional reform, and the Uluru Statement from the Heart www.niaa.gov.au.
- Add *Mabo Day* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the day to plan activities.
- Ask a staff member to research *Mabo Day* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.

Coming of the Light Festival (Torres Strait Islander) – 1st July each year

The Coming of the Light is a holiday celebrated by Torres Strait Islanders on 1 July each year. It recognises the adoption of Christianity through island communities during the late nineteenth century. Activities include church services and a re-enactment of the landing at Kemus on Erub Hymn singing, feasting and *Ailan dans* strengthen community and family ties.

Ideas for Practices

- Acknowledge the day via a sign/poster.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Add *The Coming of the Light* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the day to plan activities.
- Ask a staff member to research *The Coming of the Light* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.



NAIDOC Week - 7th to 14th July 2024



**KEEP THE FIRE
BURNING!
BLAK, LOUD
AND PROUD**
7-14 JULY 2024

This week is an occasion for all Australians to come together to celebrate the history, culture, and achievements of Australia's First Nations Peoples.

This year's theme chosen by the National NAIDOC Committee, is **Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud & Proud.**

The theme honours the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture – with fire a symbol of connection

to Country, to each other, and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The PHN provides grant funding to support general practices and community service organisations to present NAIDOC Week activities. Information will be available from the PHN [Grants Program web page](#) in late March – April.

Ideas for Practices

- Wear NAIDOC shirts the month of NAIDOC week. BW Tribal and Kulture are 100% First Nations owned organisations.
- Hold a NAIDOC morning tea for community.
- Celebrate and display posters of any achievements of local First Nations community members.
- Display NAIDOC or some of Australia's First Nations role models posters in your workplace.
- Get some First Nations themed balloons for the kids during this week.
- Honour and celebrate your practice's Aboriginal Health Worker, Practitioner, or First Nations advocate within the practice if you have one. Display a sign and photo to recognise the work they do for First Nations clients within the community/practice.
- Commission an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artwork for your practice. Contact your Local Aboriginal Land Council www.alc.org.au/land_council for local artists. See below link regarding art and authenticity: www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/art-and-authenticity.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Attend the local NAIDOC celebrations in your area. This is a great way to engage the local community
- Find out some local Aboriginal words and their meanings.
- Research the traditional owners of your area or contact your Local Aboriginal Land Council on how to do this www.alc.org.au/land_council/.
- Visit www.naidoc.org.au for resources and other ideas.
- Add *NAIDOC Week* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the week to plan activities in advance.
- Ask a staff member to research *NAIDOC Week* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.

National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day - 4th August each year

The day is an opportunity for all Australians to show their support for Australia's First Nations children, as well as learn about the crucial impact that culture, family, and community play in the life of every child.

Ideas for Practices

- Promote children's MBS 715 Health Checks for the day.
- Have some First Nations children's books in the waiting room for clients.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website.
- Check out www.aboriginalchildrensday.com.au to find out more information and access resources



- Learn more about Australia's First Nations children and the issues which may affect them at www.snaicc.org.au.
- Share and support the Raise the Age initiative www.raisetheage.org.au.
- Add *National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the day to plan activities in advance.
- Ask a staff member to research *National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.

International Day of the World's Indigenous people - 9th August each year

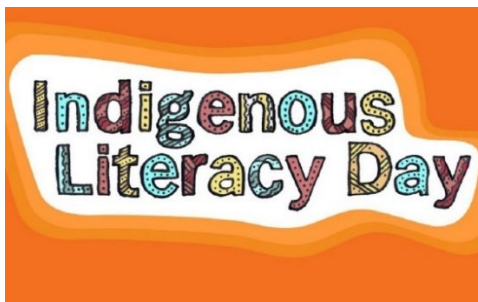
This is a day commemorated as the **International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples** in recognition of the first meeting of the **United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations** in Geneva in 1982.

Ideas for Practices

- Check out [International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples | United Nations](#) for ideas.
- Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website
- Display posters in your workplace.
- Commission an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artwork for your practice. Contact your Local Aboriginal Land Council www.alc.org.au/land_council for local artists. See below link regarding art and authenticity: www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/art-and-authenticity.
- Language is inseparable from culture, and culture is empowerment. There are more than 250 Australian First Nations languages, including about 800 dialects.
- Know your local area language(s) of the Traditional Custodians of the land on which you live. Where available, organise for a Traditional Custodian to teach some of this language to your workplace or community group. Find local languages here: www.abc.net.au/indigenous/features/gambay-languages-map
- Find out more about Australia's First Nations diversity here: www.shareourpride.org.au/sections/first-australians.
- Actively support First Nations language revival programs. Know and use First Nations placenames, and petition councils and governments to use placenames. Make First Nations languages visible in public spaces.
- Add *International Day of the World's Indigenous People* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the day to plan activities in advance.
- Ask a staff member to research *International Day of the World's Indigenous People* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.



Indigenous Literacy Day – 4th September each year



Indigenous Literacy Day aims to help raise funds to raise literacy levels and improve the lives and opportunities of First Nations Australians living in remote and isolated regions.

Your support is needed to help raise funds to buy books and literacy resources for children in these communities.

Ideas for Practices

- Find out more about Indigenous Literacy Day at www.ild.org.au.
 - Post information on your practice's Facebook page/website
 - Raise funds at your practice for literacy resources for First Nations children in remote communities.
 - Have some First Nations children's books in the waiting room for clients.
 - Add *Indigenous Literacy Day* as a meeting agenda item in the lead up to the day to plan activities in advance.
 - Ask a staff member to research *Indigenous Literacy Day* and do a 5 min presentation at the staff meeting.
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Quality Improvement Activity

All GPs, general practice staff (Practice Managers, Practice Nurses, Receptionists) may complete the RACGP accredited [cultural awareness online training available here](#)

PHN First Nations Health Access Team

Contact the PHN's First Nations Health Access Team for a cultural support visit to your practice.

Phone: 1300 859 028

Email: First-Nations-Health-Access@thephn.com.au

<https://thephn.com.au/what-we-do/first-nations-health>

