

31 May 2023

Mayoral Message

Dear Residents



I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the significance of this week, as we come together to observe National Reconciliation Week (**27 May-3 June**).

National Reconciliation Week provides us with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of our shared histories, cultures and achievements, and to reflect on how each of us can contribute to the journey of reconciliation in Australia.

You might be interested to learn that the dates of National Reconciliation Week commemorate two significant milestones in Australia's reconciliation journey.

On the **27th of May 1967**, over 90% of Australians voted yes to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be counted in the national census and subject to Commonwealth Laws. The largest ever 'yes' vote in Australian referendum history.

And the **3rd of June** commemorates the 1992 high court Mabo decision – recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander occupation of Australia and acknowledging their rights to their land and waters.

I'm proud of our City's rich aboriginal roots, dating back some 70,000 years, and I can happily say that we have come a long way towards reconciliation. We're a City that

acknowledges the original inhabitants of the land and makes every effort to work closely with this community.

Just last week, we participated in National Sorry Day with a special ceremony held at Bankstown Girls High School. We had the privilege of hearing from local Elders Aunty Noeline Holten and Aunty Jennifer Newman, and reflected on how we can all play a part in the healing process of our people and nation.

For over 20 years, National Sorry Day has been an important time for us to face and acknowledge the actions of our Country's past. It's a time to recognise the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the power of saying 'sorry'.

Reconciliation is a journey for all Australians, families and communities and we can all be a voice for reconciliation in our everyday lives. Together with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, let's work to further strengthen a community where all members are truly equal partners in shaping this vibrant multicultural City.



Clr Bilal El-Hayek
MAYOR

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