

22 May 2024

Mayoral Message

Dear Residents



Every year on 26 May, Australia stops to observe *National Sorry Day*, a day where we remember the historical mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

National Sorry Day coincides with *National Reconciliation Week* (27 May-3 June) and is a time to reflect on how each one of us contributes to the ongoing journey of reconciliation in Australia. It also provides us with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of our shared histories, cultures, and achievements with the Indigenous community.

You might also be interested to know why *National Sorry Day* falls on this specific date.

On 26 May 1997 the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families resulted in the 'Bringing them Home' report. This report examined the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families, later known as the 'Stolen Generations.'

Details of the report were damning and emphasised the need to acknowledge, apologise and support Indigenous People and their families impacted by the wrongdoings of the past.

The first *National Sorry Day* was held one year later and has been a significant national event ever since.

Reconciliation is a journey for all Australians, families and communities and we can all be a voice for reconciliation in our everyday lives.

I'm proud of our City's rich Indigenous 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 are pioneers in deepening reconciliation in our communities - with the former Bankstown Council being the first ever to establish a Local Reconciliation Action Plan.

Council also runs an annual *National Reconciliation Week Art Competition* for local kids aged 4-17 where children are encouraged to express what Reconciliation means to them and are given the opportunity to contemplate and discuss its importance.

Together with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, let's work to further strengthen our community where everyone is truly equal partners in shaping our vibrant multicultural City.

Regards



Clr Bilal El-Hayek
MAYOR

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