

Telling a Reconciliation Story-Dance

The Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education team have written this resource for teachers interested in developing a Wakakirri Story-Dance with a reconciliation theme.

A Wakakirri Story-Dance is a 3-7 minute performance telling a story through any combination of dance, drama, creative movement, costumes, rear projection, sets and props set to a pre-recorded music soundtrack

Reconciliation Australia judge the National Reconciliation Story Award for Story-Dances that aim to promote reconciliation in their local community and demonstrate pride in, and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.

To be eligible for this National Award and to design and develop a culturally appropriate and meaningful performance, please start by reading this resource.

TIPS FOR ENGAGING IN RESPECTFUL AND TRANSFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- If you and your school already have a deep and ongoing partnership with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and you are interested in telling a story about the local history or the local People from your area, you will need to ask for the guidance and support of the local [Elders and Traditional Owners](#).
- If your school does not have current working relationships with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, or if you are not sure who your local community are, you can reach out to the Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies in [South Australia](#), [Victoria](#), and [New South Wales](#) who may be able to help you contact Elders and Traditional Owners in their jurisdictions. You may also like to consider contacting state reconciliation councils for guidance:
 - [Reconciliation New South Wales](#)
 - [Reconciliation Queensland](#)
 - [Reconciliation Tasmania](#)
 - [Reconciliation Victoria](#)
 - [Reconciliation Western Australia](#))
- The 'Ideas for Action' tab of the Build Relationships with Community RAP Action page on Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali platform provides further information and ideas about the kinds of local people and organisations that may be able to point you in the right direction.
- Relationships can take time and effort. Teachers and schools must show patience and resilience if an invitation to your local Elders or Traditional Owners doesn't go according to your time schedule. The presence of Elders and Traditional Owners in schools is a privilege and honour and will only happen if there is a respectful relationship. This might mean that you need to 'park' your idea to tell a reconciliation story until the following or subsequent years to build a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship with the community first.
- Be considerate when asking community members to contribute time and effort to Wakakirri activities in your school, keeping in mind that supporting your school may not be the immediate or core business of individuals in your community. Be prepared to have a conversation around how they might be recompensed for their commitments to your activities in a way that best suits both parties. Remember to invite them to be a part of the whole process, including rehearsals and the final performances.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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TIPS FOR MAINTAINING AND PRACTICING RESPECT

- Using [respectful and inclusive language and terminology](#) is an essential part of reconciliation and strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community. Being able to tell or base your performance around a First Nations story is a privilege.
- Reconciliation is about working collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their strengths, not doing things 'for them' or 'to them'. Don't lose sight of the story you are telling, and whose perspectives it should be told from!
- Appreciate that reconciliation is everybody's business, and for everybody's benefit, and should be driven in a whole-scale sense (e.g. not only in the Wakakirri component of the [curriculum](#) but also around your wider, everyday educational environment and with the broader school community).
- Draw on a strengths-based approach - recognise the resilience, successes and continued potential of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and contributions.
- Be aspirational and ambitious but also honest and humble, recognising that integrity should be prioritised over innovation.

TIPS FOR ENGAGING IN AUTHENTIC OPPORTUNITIES

- Take the lead from your local Elders and Traditional Owners and respect their guidance and advice, even if that means having to potentially change or rewrite your original idea.
- Personal stories regarding unjust colonial policies and practices can be very sensitive and, given histories of forced separation from Country, culture and community, it is important not to place expectations on Elders and Traditional Owners to share every detail of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures of your local area.
- There may be certain histories and cultures that Elders and Traditional Owners may not be comfortable sharing with staff and students at your school. There are often [distinct cultural respect protocols](#) around what stories and knowledge can be shared by particular community members, and when, where, how and with whom they can be shared.
- Where it may not be immediately feasible or appropriate to tell an actual/true history, or to share a story from the perspective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members specifically, consider framing your reconciliation story around a dramatic representation of what reconciliation means to your school community.
- Some potential inspiration could be found by engaging in these Professional Learning resources on Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali platform:
 - [Reconciliation Yarning Circle](#)
 - [What is Your Vision for Reconciliation?](#)
 - [Reconciliation in Education: Learning, Unlearning, Relearning](#)
- The guiding information and resources in the Narragunnawali [Drama, Music, Dance, Visual Arts](#) and [History](#) subject guides ([all guides here](#)) may also be able to support you in your planning.
- Remember that consultation is more than just 'giving information' and collaboration is about working together. True consultation and collaboration allows time for community members to discuss and consider your ideas with openness, honesty, and a shared sense of safety and trust. Feedback is a gift.

Please remember that the above is only a guide and should not replace advice from your local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community. If, upon consulting with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, you find that their recommendations differ from those above, please actively value your community's advice accordingly.

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