

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS III

RECONCILIATION WEEK

Each year National Reconciliation week celebrates and builds on the **respectful relationships** shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. This sentence comes straight from the official Reconciliation Australia website.

I found it very interesting that as a lead school in **Respectful Relationships**, that these two important words were in that opening sentence for Reconciliation week.

Whilst we are celebrating two momentous milestones in the journey of reconciliation;

- **May 27 1967** (50 Years ago) was when 90% of Australians voted to give the Commonwealth the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognise them in the national census.
- **June 3 1992** (25 years ago) the High Court of Australia recognised the special relationship to the land that exists with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Known as the Mabo decision, this paved the way for Native Title.

These milestones were indeed huge although when you look back on them as historical events one wonders why needed to be so big when they are both no brainers.

Whilst we are celebrating these milestones, it needs to be recognised that we still have a long way to go and I hope it doesn't take another fifty years before we are adding the next significant steps in this journey to our celebrations.

New Zealand did not sink in to the ocean when it was the first to give women the vote. Nor did they collapse when they put a female Prime Minister into power. I would mention marriage equality but I am not allowed to get political. If you have seen where they are as a nation with respect to their first peoples you wonder why we can't learn from their example.

I challenge you all to follow this link to listen to 8 and a half minutes of the most powerful speech from Stan Grant. We have come a long way and we have a long way to go.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eA3UsF8yyho>

We have had some great celebrations this week with assemblies led by some of our Aboriginal students and a variety of activities including a wear black, red and yellow casual clothes day today.

Money raised will go to Reconciliation Australia and The Cathy Freeman Foundation who seek to **Stomp out the Gap** in education for indigenous students.

