



EMBARGOED TO TUESDAY 23 MAY 2017

ARE WE READY?

New campaign asks all Australians to reflect and connect on reconciliation

A new campaign launched today to coincide with National Reconciliation Week showcases how all Australian's can benefit from a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures through the spirit of friendship and mutual respect.

The 'Are We Ready?' campaign, launched by not-for-profit organisation Culture is Life, asks all Australians to deepen their connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures by reflecting on the ways friendship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people has reshaped individual perspectives and enriched lives.

The campaign features several Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends talking about their friendship, the enrichment their relationship has provided them, and how their friendship has affected their sense of our nations' identity.

The nature of these friendships and the lessons learned reveal powerful insights into what is required to achieve meaningful reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and what all Australians stand to gain.

"At a time when we acknowledge significant anniversaries and milestones on the Reconciliation journey - these moments give us an opportunity to reflect and think about our values and consider our willingness to deepen our relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people," says Culture is Life CEO, Belinda Duarte.

"The campaign poses the question: are we ready to authentically connect with each other as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people? Are we ready to truly consider the history of this nation, and reconsider our own personal choices and role in creating a more united nation?"

Several interviews with campaign supporters will be shared on social media, along with a series of digital postcards. Campaign supporters include former Australian of the Year Mick Dodson, mental health campaigner and former NRL footballer Joe Williams, Richmond FC player Daniel Rioli and coach Damien Hardwick and Jeremy Marou and Tom Busby of the band Busby Marou.

"Through our different cultural perspectives, we can share our ideas about the world, our personal values and they all contribute to better mateship. As a nation, there is unity and strength in our diversity," says Professor Mick Dodson AM.

Culture is Life is a recently established not-for-profit organisation that supports and promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led solutions to affirm and strengthen culture to prevent youth suicide.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people aged 15 to 24 are five times more likely to commit suicide than non-Aboriginal young people.

“There is a shift happening in the way Australians are understanding and learning about the history of their country – it’s the conversations and relationships when we’re helping each other to understand, that is going to heal and unite us all,” says Joe Williams.

Culture is Life recently launched two campaigns: ‘We Thrive’ campaign to mark National Youth Week (March 31 – April 9) inviting all Australians to celebrate the abundance of talent in our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people; and the ‘What’s Missing’ campaign launched on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and National Harmony Day (March 21), inviting every Australian to reject racism and deepen their connections with the long and impressive story of the first Australians.

For more information on Culture is Life and campaigns to date, visit www.cultureislife.org

To join the campaign online, use the hashtags #areweready #cultureislife

If you need help or support, you can call Lifeline on 13 11 14 (24 hours-a-day) or contact your local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.

Note to media: Please include this number in all stories.

Interview: Culture is Life CEO, Belinda Duarte is available for interview.

Photo: Culture is Life Elder Uncle Max Harrison and Founder David Prior’s digital postcard from the campaign.

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