

INTRODUCTION

RECONCILIATION – THE WAY FORWARD

On May 30-31, 2005, Reconciliation Australia hosted the National Planning Workshop on Reconciliation. It brought together key stakeholders with the aim of creating a new, honest conversation about the future of the reconciliation process, what needs to be done and who is responsible for making sure that it happens. It also sought to establish and develop effective relationships between the people and groups interested in the process of reconciliation, ensuring that where they exist they are strategic and sustainable. This emphasis on partnerships is based on the premise that the work of reconciliation will only get done through real partnerships based on equality and inclusion.

The papers in this edition were prepared in the lead-up to the workshop and covered the symbolic, substantive, economic, cultural, educational, strategic and aspirational aspects of the reconciliation agenda. These papers, taken together, offer a snapshot of where we are on the issue of reconciliation and what work still needs to be done.

We have also included some of the key speeches given at the workshop. What was apparent then – and can be drawn from the addresses delivered by the Prime Minister John Howard, Senator Amanda Vanstone, Hon. Kim Beasley MP and Patrick Dodson – is that there are very different views as to how we, as a nation, achieve it. These perspectives provide insight into how the debate is currently conceptualised.

We conclude with a reflective piece from Jason Field that suggests what the next steps for continuing a relevant and effective reconciliation movement should be.

Jason Glanville, Larissa Behrendt and Jason Field (editors)