

Annual Report

2025-26

TRUTH.
RECKONING.
CHANGE.
.....

Reconciliation
Tasmania



TRUTH. RECKONING. CHANGE.

RECONCILIATION IN TASMANIA: A NEW UNDERSTANDING AND APPROACH



Above: Reconciliation Tasmania CEO Pauline Cook at the Nipaluna/
Hobart 2026 National Reconciliation Week Breakfast
Image: Jillian Mundy

What does reconciliation mean for Tasmania today, and what must it become? Tasmanian Aboriginal people have told us unequivocally that the meaning, purpose and approach to reconciliation needs to change.

Many Tasmanian Aboriginal people experience reconciliation not as something they choose, but as a process imposed upon them. Too often, symbolism has substituted for structural change, leaving unaddressed the distinct rights First Peoples have long and consistently called for: treaty, sovereignty and self-determination. To move forward, there is a need for relationships built on honesty and accountability, and made meaningful through tangible action.

Having heard this message consistently, this year we could not look past that tension. We chose to respond to it instead.

If reconciliation is to be a genuine vehicle for equality and justice it must be rebuilt around Tasmanian Aboriginal truth-telling, leadership and sovereignty. It has to confront root causes, not manage their symptoms. And it has to start from a principle we now hold at the centre of our work: Aboriginal people have nothing to reconcile. Reconciliation is a shared dialogue, but it is not a shared burden. It is the responsibility of non-Aboriginal people and Reconciliation Tasmania has a key role to play; through education, advocacy and support across our network and the wider community.

This year, our programs held space for an honest reckoning with the limitations of reconciliation itself. Moving forward requires us to be willing to see clearly where we stand, how far we still have to go and what each of us can contribute.

We now invite you to join us in shaping what comes next.

Pauline Cook
Chief Executive Officer

“the more we share story and acknowledge what story is...the more we can reframe, redefine, revisit, restructure and reform the very concept or what we think or don't think that reconciliation actually stands for.

The word needs a new story. The word needs a new narrative. Our story, the story of the Palawa people of Lutruwita, sits within us all, and it is the compass for real change on this island.

May the new story of Lutruwita be the story of the voices of truth-telling, truth being, truth knowing, treaty, reckoning and change”.

Alison Overeem

A new relationship of equality, respect and trust

This year marked a turning point for Reconciliation Tasmania. Conversations with Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who make Tasmania their home, have helped us redefine our purpose and priorities and shape a new operational plan focused on meaningful outcomes.

At the heart of this shift is a commitment to building a new relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Tasmania, one based on equality, respect and trust, and strengthened through meaningful action.

Our four areas of strategic intent guide where we focus our work and resources. They are interconnected rather than standalone pillars: education builds understanding, advocacy helps create the conditions for change, and a strong and sustainable organisation enables us to continue this work over time.

Relationships connect them all. These four areas shape how we work, who we work with and how we understand our impact.

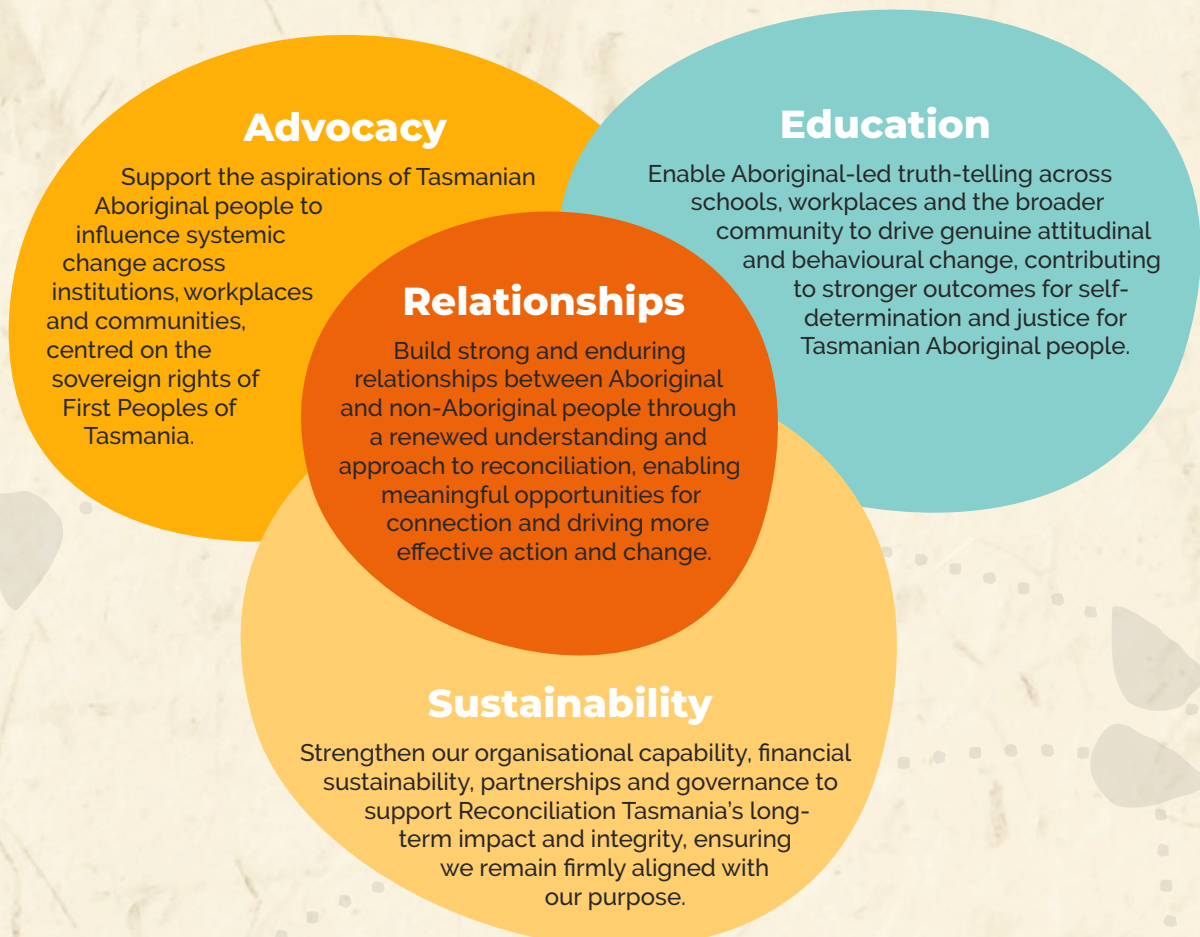
Our purpose

is to work with Tasmanian Aboriginal people for truth, justice and a better future. We do this through education, leadership and advocacy across the wider community.

Our vision

is for a new relationship of equality, respect and trust between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Tasmania, where all can thrive.

Our Strategic Intent



Moving beyond symbolism

Reconciliation Tasmania is well placed to strengthen connections, share knowledge and create opportunities for deeper engagement with Tasmanian Aboriginal people. This shift is reflected in the growing engagement of our members and broader community:



59

organisational members



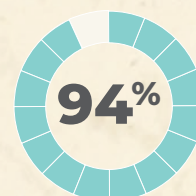
161

individual members

400

engagements in our quarterly online forums –

an increase of



77

member advisory and referrals

5

Local Action Network Dialogue groups

2939

subscribers

5050

social media followers

These figures signal a growing willingness to listen, learn and engage with new ways of working.

Our role is evolving. We have moved from a model focused primarily on facilitating education and RAPs towards one that facilitates connection, grounded in relationships and informed by Tasmanian Aboriginal voices.

We are not a source of Aboriginal knowledge or cultural expertise, nor is it our role to educate on behalf of Aboriginal people. Instead, we create pathways that connect our members directly with Aboriginal Cultural Advisors, Aboriginal-led knowledge, frameworks and expertise.

This keeps Tasmanian Aboriginal voices at the centre, while helping our members build relationships, deepen understanding and put that learning into practice.

“the phrase reconciliation, it speaks to returning to a state of relationship where things were amicable and things were good and equal. And that’s a state that has never existed here in Lutruwita/Tasmania. So what instead we’re looking for is conciliation”.

Cody Gangell-Smith

“Reconciliation has often been used as a substitute for substantive reforms, such as treaties, land rights, cultural heritage reforms and reparations for past wrongs. It has been used by successive governments to try and pacify the Palawa without altering the power dynamics that cause systemic disadvantage while exploiting symbolic gestures over tangible structural change... The Palawa Community simply think it’s time for government to redress the injustices of the past or as this year’s theme suggests, engage in ‘truth, reckoning and change’”

Rodney Gibbins

A new understanding and approach

Jim Everett-puralia meenamatta's keynote address during National Reconciliation Week 2025 gave us a clear and urgent message about the need for change in relation to the meaning and goals of reconciliation. In 2026, we responded to this call across our three NRW breakfast events, when 1,430 Tasmanians came together with Aboriginal leaders and Community members to listen, learn and consider what reconciliation in Tasmania must become.

● Nipaluna/Hobart: **913 attendees**

● Pataway/Burnie: **200 attendees**

● Launceston on Kanamaluka/River Tamar: **317 attendees**

- **261** organisations represented
- **151** First Nations representatives
- **18** parliamentarians and representation from 12 local council areas

What our attendees told us:

- Average overall event rating **4.63/5**
- **93%** reported learning something new
- **85%** reported their perspective on reconciliation had changed or somewhat changed

"It's not about symbolic gestures alone but about real listening, learning, acknowledging truth, and then turning that understanding into meaningful action and change".

Attendee National Reconciliation Week Breakfast, Nipaluna/Hobart

Below: Panel discussion at Nipaluna/Hobart co-hosted by Sinsa Mansell and ABC Hobart's Ryk Goddard, with panellists Cody Gangell-Smith, Rodney Gibbins, Alison Overeem and Professor Tim McCormack



Empowering the next generation

In 2025-26 we engaged with 46 schools and early learning services including:

- Quarterly online Education Circles with school principals and sector leaders
- Quarterly online Teacher Circles
- Narragunnawali Reconciliation in Education outreach
- 521 students and teachers represented at National Reconciliation Week events
- Youth Speak Out, including 17 schools and 73 submissions culminating in student-led presentations at Government House and Parliament House



Above: Ivy Pettit, Grade 5, Dominic College – We Rise.

During **2025–26**, we built the foundations for the **Tasmanian Aboriginal Knowledge Holders School Grants Program**, securing five years of funding from the Tasmanian Community Fund and undertaking significant work to develop the program ahead of its launch. The program provides funding for schools to partner with Tasmanian Aboriginal people, educators, knowledge holders and businesses to deliver culturally appropriate learning experiences that strengthen understanding of Tasmanian Aboriginal cultures and history. Through these partnerships, the program aims to strengthen knowledge, relationships and cultural safety across whole school communities.

60% of program funding will flow directly to Tasmanian Aboriginal educators, knowledge holders and businesses partnering with schools.

Below: DENNI performs with students from St Patrick's College, Launceston at the National Reconciliation Week Breakfast, Nipaluna/Hobart



People driving change



2025 Reconciliation Champion: Kingborough Reconciliation Action Group (Krag)

Krag has become a model for grassroots action, engaging their local community in meaningful conversations and learning about Tasmanian Aboriginal history, culture, and aspirations for justice.

They have shown what's possible when a small group comes together with purpose and passion, and their work is critical as we continue our reconciliation journey – especially at a time when truth-telling and community connection are more important than ever.



2026 Reconciliation Champion: Yabbo Thompson

Yabbo is an educator and dedicated community advocate who has spent her life challenging racism and championing human rights and inclusion across Tasmania.

Guided by close relationships with many early Tasmanian Aboriginal leaders, she has contributed to campaigns for Aboriginal justice for decades, particularly through education. She has volunteered with Reconciliation Tasmania since its inception in 2017, coordinating our work with schools and early learning services. Through her tireless efforts, she has helped carry truth-telling, understanding and respect for Tasmanian Aboriginal people into classrooms and communities across the state.

Our Board



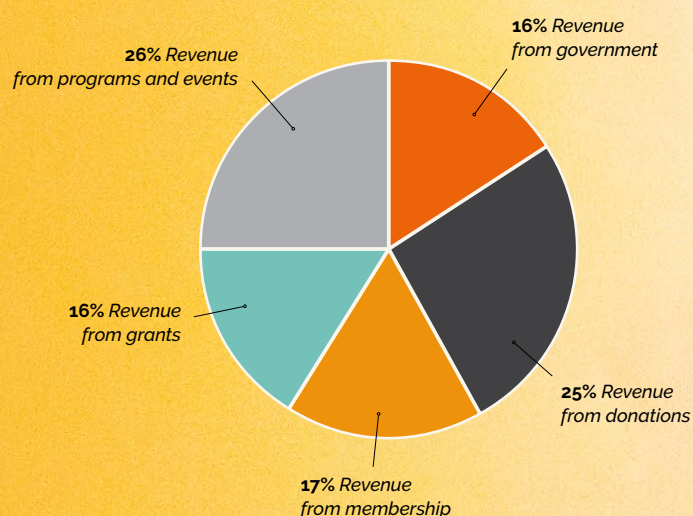
Above: Reconciliation Tasmania Board L-R Top Row: Simon Cook, Bonnie Bonneville, Georgie Crockett, Karen Oborn, CEO Pauline Cook, Board Observer Sonj Hall.
Bottom Row: Co-Chairs Beth Gilligan and Clair Anderson, Simon Gates, Lola Cowle

A sustainable organisation

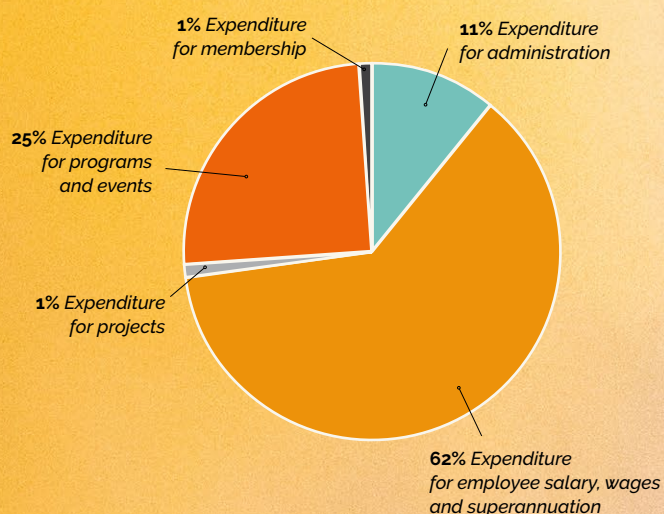
Financial year 2025-26 saw us operate with a surplus of \$37,621

Comprehensive audited Financial Reports can be accessed on our website, www.rectas.com.au.

Total Revenue \$637,930



Total Expenditure \$600,309



Reconciliation
Tasmania



Our Major Supporters:

UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA




Tasmanian
Government


Tasmanian
Community
Fund

We also thank Burnie City Council,
Reconciliation Australia and our
philanthropic partners.

Our National Reconciliation Week Sponsors:

Major

Deloitte

Ochre

Hydro Tasmania, BaptistCare,
Commonwealth Bank, Key Assets,
The Tasmanian Buddhist Academy

Mariner

Discovery Early Learning Centres, Forico,
ERA Advisory, MyState Bank,
Minch Media and Niche Plants

Kelp

CatholicCare Tasmania, Hobart
Airport, Tasmanian Walking Company,
Timberlands Pacific, Wellways and
Peppers Silo Hotel

The Board, CEO and team at
Reconciliation Tasmania extend our
sincere thanks to our members,
volunteers, sponsors, partners and the
wider community. Your support makes it
possible for us to work with Tasmanian
Aboriginal people for truth, justice and a
better future.