

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Baptists renew commitment to reconciliation

Australian Baptist leaders have recommitted their churches to work together with Indigenous peoples to create a more just society and model reconciliation as an expression of Christian mission.

The Australian Baptist Ministries National Council unanimously approved a new statement on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples ahead of National Reconciliation Week which begins on May 27.

The statement, released today, builds on statements made in 1988 in relation to the Australian Bicentennial celebrations, and in 1993 in support of the High Court's Mabo decision.

The statement acknowledges Aboriginal and Islander peoples as the custodians of the land and its resources, expresses deep sadness and regret at the injustice and mistreatment suffered by Indigenous peoples as a result of European colonization, and seeks forgiveness for the wrongs done to Indigenous peoples by Baptists.

"We call on all Baptists in Australia to work together with Indigenous peoples to heal the wounds of the past and to establish Australian society on a more just and harmonious foundation. We call on every Baptist church, Baptist Union and Baptist agency to consider ways in which practical reconciliation might be modelled as an expression of our commitment to Christian mission," Australian Baptist Ministries spokesperson, Reverend Rod Benson, said.

"We urge Federal, State and Local Governments to enact just laws and policies to enhance the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians, with particular attention to health, housing, education and employment," Rev Benson said.

The National Council was exploring practical actions to implement the commitments made in its resolution, and commended the "[Reconciliation Action Plans](#)" sponsored by Reconciliation Australia as a way forward for local communities and churches.

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**Media contact Rod Benson 0412 421 678 (ABM spokesperson on public issues)**