

## BE BRAVE AND MAKE A CHANGE DURING RECONCILIATION WEEK

**This years' National Reconciliation Week theme of "Be Brave, Make A Change" is a challenge to the Echuca Moama community to tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation so change can be made for the benefit of all.**

It's a theme that recently appointed Njernda Aboriginal Corporation chief executive officer Tracey Dillon said Reconciliation Week presented an opportunity for local organisations and community members to reflect on the need for healing, and approach it in practical ways.

"One of my passions is reconciliation and community healing – both within the Aboriginal community here in Echuca Moama, and that presents an opportunity for everyone, but particularly with organisations and businesses we work with and alongside every day," Ms Dillon said.

"Reconciliation cannot be a one-way street – it's a challenge to all of us to make brave actions in our daily lives, whether that be at work, at home or socially, that drive change," she said.

Reconciliation Week is held during the week of 27 May to 3 June each year to commemorate two significant milestones in the Reconciliation Journey. It marks the successful 1967 Referendum and the Mabo Decision in the high court in 1992., National Reconciliation Week started as the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation in 1993, with the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation launching Australia's first National Reconciliation Week in 1996.

Ms Dillon said that since taking up her role with Njernda, high on her priority list has been connecting with external organisations such as the Police, schools, health services, community groups and organisations and local business.

"My goal is always to open the pathway for conversations that will create more cultural safety within the services, businesses and groups that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people access, patronise, are part of and work in," she said.

"We need to be working cohesively toward a common goal – and I'm challenging local organisations and people I meet to join in with measures at a practical level. It might be everything from looking at opportunities to employ local Aboriginal people to adopting a Reconciliation Action Plan.

"From our end, we are open for business to partner with the community at every level to achieve practical reconciliation in not just our Echuca Moama communities, but beyond that too.

"Reconciliation centres around building positive, respectful and long-lasting relationships with Aboriginal people so we can work together toward a really important shared goal – closing the gap and achieving a sense of justice and understanding.

"National Reconciliation Week is the perfect time for everyone to reflect and, as this year's theme says 'be brave, make a change'."

Community members are invited to the joint Campaspe Shire Council/Njernda Reconciliation Week flag raising at Hopwood Gardens in High Street, Echuca on Friday May 27, at 10 am.

