

# 'Too big a story'

For Media

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## INFLUENTIAL AUSTRALIANS ACTIVATE A NATIONAL RECONCILIATION STORY

Songwriter Missy Higgins, AFL star Michael O'Loughlin, and actors Michael Caton and Leah Purcell are among dozens of high profile Australians featured in a new national campaign to mark this month's 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, the most successful in our nation's history.

The Too Big A Story campaign, developed for Reconciliation Australia by Saatchi&Saatchi and supported by media organisations across Australia, is set to spark a frank, nationwide conversation about the importance of reconciliation and how we go about achieving it.

The campaign involves influential Australians from business, sport, the arts, science and communities talking about reconciliation, what it means to them, and what they think we need to do to close the 17 year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

For Missy Higgins, it's about walking on the same soil without feeling divided. Michael Caton believes that until Australians start appreciating the Dreamtime stories, we're not truly part of our own country. For Leah Purcell, it's important for people to appreciate that Indigenous Australians come in "different shades", and have different lives and viewpoints.

For Michael O'Loughlin it's like dealing with any problem – we have to get it into the open so we can talk it through.

That's where the Too Big a Story comes in ...

The campaign involves TV and print advertisements directing Australians to a web-based reconciliation community called [reconcile.org.au](http://reconcile.org.au) where Australians can talk about reconciliation, the hopes and challenges, myths and barriers, who's responsible and where we've achieved and failed so far.



Reconciliation Australia Director Shelley Reys says it's important that the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum not only commemorates the past but inspires Australians of today to realise the vision of equality of all the Australians who said YES in 1967.

The referendum saw 90.77% of voters say YES that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians should be counted in the national census of the population.

It was a remarkable achievement and it came after a decade-long campaign by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who worked side by side to convince Australians to vote YES to move our nation forward.

“Reconciliation Australia approached Saatchi&Saatchi with a tough brief – these issues are complex – and what they’ve come up with is a campaign that challenges, engages and entertains. It doesn’t try to simplify the task of reconciliation but it shows how every one of us is a part of it,” said Ms Reys.

“Too Big a Story stimulates more than a conversation - it’s a call to action. If Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians could achieve what they did in the 1967 referendum, we can achieve truly great things today if we work in partnership like they did.”

Reconciliation Australia is deeply grateful to the brilliant team at Saatchi&Saatchi and director Tim Gibbs for their extensive pro bono effort, and all the people who agreed to be part of Too Big a Story.

**A full list of people featured in the Too Big a Story campaign is attached, as well as selected quotes from [reconcile.org.au](http://reconcile.org.au)**

For the full picture go to [reconcile.org.au](http://reconcile.org.au)

Media contact

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# Too Big a Story creates reconcile.org.au

Foundation talent featured in the new reconciliation community at [reconcile.org.au](http://reconcile.org.au)

**Adam Spencer:** comedian, mathematician, radio presenter

**Andrew O'Keefe:** TV presenter

**Catherine Freeman:** Olympic athlete

**Craig Fitzgibbon,** rugby league player

**David and Stephen Page,** performers

**David Liddiard,** businessman, former rugby player

**Dean Widders,** rugby league player

**Deborah Cheetham,** opera singer

**Deborah Conway,** musician

**Dick Kimber,** historian

**Faith Bandler,** 1967 referendum campaigner

**Fran Kilgariff,** Mayor of Alice Springs

**Faustina "Fuzzy" Agolley,** TV presenter

**Ian Thorpe,** Olympic swimmer

**Jacinta Castle,** singer

**Jared Crouch,** AFL player

**Jeff McMullen,** journalist

**John McFarlane,** chief executive

**Leah Purcell,** actor

**Linda Chellew,** youth worker

**Michael Caton,** actor

**Michael O'Loughlin,** AFL player

**Mick Mundine,** community leader

**Missy Higgins,** musician

**Pat Turner,** chief executive

**Patricia Ansell-Dodds,** elder

**Peter Lowsen,** musician

**Peter Valilis,** Greek community leader

**Raymattja Marika,** linguist and teacher

**Sir Gustav Nossal,** scientist

**Steve Gumerungi Hodder,** radio announcer and poet

**Susan Moylan-Coombs,** radio producer

**Tim Flannery,** environmentalist and Australian of the Year 2007

**Tom Calma,** Social Justice Commissioner

**Vincent Forrester,** teacher/guide

**William Tilmouth,** community leader



# Reconcile.org.au Quotes

## **Missy Higgins**

A reconciled Australia would be an Australia that identifies we have different cultures living on our land but we are able to get along and respect each other - walk on the same soil without feeling divided.

## **Leah Purcell, actor**

We come in different shades, we have different professions, we have different viewpoints, we are a very diverse culture within ourselves. If you call Australia home, this culture is also yours to respect.

## **Michael Caton, actor**

Unless we take the Dreamtime on board, we'll be walking around Australia as strangers.

## **Michael O'Loughlin, AFL player**

Like anything, when there's problems you've got to sit down and talk about it, and obviously be very, very honest and get it out in the open.

## **Tim Flannery, environmentalist, Australian of the Year 2007**

We need to move together, hand in hand to understand this utterly changed land. We need both black and white to move on a journey and rediscover this altered land in ways which will give us a sustainable and long term future together.

## **Dean Widders, Rugby League player**

Although you can't go back and fix it, just to make the statement that things were done wrong and that we hope to move forward would make a great difference in Australia.

## **Craig Fitzgibbons, Rugby League player**

They are the First Australians and we should honour that. We have only been here for 200 years. They've been here for thousands.

## **Faith Bandler, 1967 referendum campaigner**

When you succeed in taking a person's dignity, you've won the battle. That Aboriginal people are still in existence today is nothing short of a miracle.

## **Deborah Conway, musician**

It's important to steer away from scare campaigns and it's important to talk about facts.

## **Sir Gustav Nossal, scientist**

The health programs that work are those which are community based and community inspired.

## **Susan Moylan-Coombs, radio producer**

I don't want people to feel guilty about the past. We can't change what happened. What we can change is how we respond to it and then hopefully we can move into a better future.

## **Ian Thorpe, Olympic swimmer**

For me, reconciliation is a personal thing between individuals.

## **Catherine Freeman, Olympic athlete**

If I have any advice for non-Indigenous Australians in terms of moving forward with Indigenous Australians, it's like any relationship. It's always a two way communication, a two way dialogue. It's always about trusting each other, being honest and respecting one another.

