

Survey Findings

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UNSW Sydney 2024

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Background to the survey

Our survey investigating levels of historical acceptance and the enablers of and barriers to truth-telling was open for responses from 22 May to 16 June 2023, and received 225 valid responses.

If we compare this survey's responses to those obtained in the Australian Reconciliation Barometer survey in 2022, the truth-telling survey's respondents were more knowledgeable about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories (based on their self-assessment) and more highly engaged with and supportive of truth-telling when compared to the Australian Reconciliation Barometer respondents, who were drawn from a representative community sample of Australian residents (Polity Research & Consulting and Reconciliation Australian 2022, p. 7). A much higher proportion of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (55.6%) and non-Indigenous respondents (46.8%) in our 2023 survey had participated in truth-telling activities in the previous twelve months than was identified in responses to the 2022 Australian Reconciliation Barometer, which identified that 43% of First Nations respondents and 6% of non-Indigenous respondents had participated in truth-telling in the past 12 months (Polity Research & Consulting and Reconciliation Australia 2022, p. 110). As such, the historical acceptance and truth-telling survey data set represents a section of the Australian community who appear highly committed to truth-telling, and the findings provide us with valuable insights from those currently most likely to participate in truth-telling.

Both First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents in our survey were most likely to have drawn their information about First Nations peoples from their own personal experience (40.3% of First Nations respondents compared to 37.3% of non-Indigenous respondents). The second most likely source of information about First Nations peoples for First Nations respondents was their parents and family (28.1% of First Nations respondents indicating that this was their main source of information); for non-Indigenous respondents, this was school education and other research (23%).

First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents agreed that the main benefits that would emerge from truth-telling were the development of a shared understanding of Australian history; the hope that truth-telling would deliver healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and the potential of truth-telling to help improve relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. All respondents agreed that truth-telling should involve First Nations' perspectives on the past being presented and a large majority agreed that truth-telling should recognise the diversity of First Nations peoples. While a large majority of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents saw participation in truth-telling as important for all members of the Australian community, a significant minority saw it as something that should take place between Indigenous Australians and those whose ancestors had arrived in Australia during the colonial era.

First Nations respondents were highly committed to truth-telling, although less likely than non-Indigenous respondents to agree that truth-telling might lead to justice for First Nations peoples. Indigenous respondents identified a range of motivations for participating in truth-telling, not exclusively centred on dialogue with non-Indigenous people. Although highly accepting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and aware of and engaged with truth-telling, non-Indigenous respondents still indicated significant uncertainty about how to participate in truth-telling, and lack of clarity around what the appropriate role/s for non-Indigenous people were in truth-telling processes. These and a range of other issues are explored in further detail below.

Respondent Demographics

Respondents by age

All specified ages were represented in the respondent group. The largest respondent groups by age were 55–59-year-olds (12.7% of respondents) and 50–54-year-olds (12.2%), however there was good representation of all specified age groups apart from 18–19-year-olds (0.9% of respondents).

The age profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents was significantly younger. The largest First Nations respondent group by age was 20 to 24-year-olds,

comprising 21% of First Nations respondents. Only 3.5% of First Nations respondents were aged 75 and over.

If we map respondents by age onto ABS generation data (ABS 2022a), the profile is as follows:

<i>Generation</i>	Survey Respondents	Australian population*
<i>Gen Z (10-24 years)**</i>	7.7%	18.2%
<i>Millennials (25-39 years)</i>	26.2%	21.5%
<i>Gen X (40-54 years)</i>	30.8%	19.3%
<i>Baby Boomers (55-74 years)</i>	28.9%	21.5%
<i>Interwar years (75+)</i>	6.3%	7.5%

* Column does not add up to 100% as under 10-year-olds were excluded

** Only respondents aged 18+ could complete the survey

While this survey was restricted to adult respondents only and so unlikely to reach population parity for Gen Z respondents, more targeted recruitment strategies may be needed in future to increase the representation of younger respondents.

Respondents by state

While we did not aim for national distribution of this pilot survey, according to postcode data provided the overwhelming majority of respondents were from NSW (81.3%). 4.9% of respondents were based in Victoria; 2.7% in Western Australia; 2.2% in the ACT; 1.8% in Queensland; 0.9% in the Northern Territory; 0.4% in South Australia. 5.8% of respondents did not provide their postcode details.

Respondents by geographic location

In terms of geographic location, 70.8% of respondents lived in a capital city, 8.2% in a major regional town, 8.7% in a regional town, 8.7% in a rural town, and 3.6% in a remote town or community. This was a slightly higher representation of capital city respondents (70.8%) than the Australian population average (66.9%) (ABS 2021). Remote respondents were also over-represented (3.6%) compared to population parity (1.9%).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' geographic location profile was significantly different from that of non-Indigenous respondents. 47.4% of First Nations respondents lived in a capital city, 12.3% in a major regional town, 14% in a regional town, 19.3% in a rural town, and 7% in a remote town or community.

Respondents by Indigeneity

25% of respondents identified as Aboriginal, 0.45% identified as Torres Strait Islander, 0.45% identified as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and 74.1% identified as non-Indigenous.

The representation of First Nations respondents was well above population parity (3.2%) (ABS 2022b).

Respondents by gender

68% of respondents identified as female; 26.5% identified as male; 4.1% identified as non-binary; 0.9% identified as 'other gender identity'; with 0.5% preferring not to indicate their gender identity.

The gender disparity in responses was less for First Nations respondents: 56.1% of First Nations respondents identified as female, 42.1% identified as male, and 1.8% identified as non-binary.

Respondents by country of birth

23.4% of non-Indigenous respondents were born overseas compared to 29.3% of the Australian population (ABS 2022a).

Language backgrounds other than English

12.8% of respondents identified speaking a first language other than English, compared to 22% of the Australian population (ABS 2022c). 12.3% of First Nations respondents identified speaking a language other than English at home.

The lower response rate from both people born overseas and people from language backgrounds other than English may reflect a community perception that truth-telling is an activity that needs to take place primarily between First Nations people and people whose ancestors arrived in Australia during the colonial era.

Highest level of educational attainment

84.9% of respondents indicated that they held a university qualification; this compares to 50.8% of the wider population who hold a university degree (Statista 2023).

The educational profile of respondents by Indigeneity was as follows:

<i>Highest level of educational attainment</i>	First Nations respondents	Non-Indigenous respondents
<i>University qualification</i>	61.4%	92.6%
<i>Other post-secondary qualification, completed Year 12</i>	17.5%	4.3%
<i>Other post-secondary qualification, did not complete Year 12</i>	15.8%	1.2%
<i>No post-secondary qualification, completed Year 12</i>	5.3%	1.9%

The over-representation of tertiary-educated respondents is likely to reflect the survey's distribution via CAIK's and Reconciliation Australia's networks, which are largely comprised of people employed in professional occupations.

1. Historical Acceptance

It should be noted that responses to the following questions are based on respondents' self-assessment of their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, not an independent assessment of these.

Level of knowledge about the history of colonial Australia

	First Nations respondents	Non-Indigenous respondents
<i>Very high</i>	30 (52.6%)	43 (26.5%)
<i>Fairly high</i>	23 (40.4%)	101 (62.3%)
<i>Neutral / Unsure</i>	3 (5.3%)	11 (6.8%)
<i>Fairly low</i>	0	6 (3.7%)
<i>Very low / no knowledge at all</i>	1 (1.7%)	1 (0.7%)
<i>Total</i>	57	162

93% of First Nations respondents indicated that they had a fairly to very high knowledge about the history of colonial Australia, compared to 88.8% of non-Indigenous respondents. Nearly twice as many First Nations respondents indicated that their level of knowledge about colonial Australian history was “very high” (52.6%) compared to non-Indigenous respondents (26.5%).

Level of knowledge about the histories of First Nations peoples in Australia

	First Nations respondents	Non-Indigenous respondents
<i>Very high</i>	36 (63.2%)	29 (17.9%)
<i>Fairly high</i>	20 (35.1%)	88 (54.3%)
<i>Neutral / Unsure</i>	1 (1.7%)	26 (16.1%)
<i>Fairly low</i>	-	14 (8.6%)
<i>Very low / no knowledge at all</i>	-	5 (3.1%)
<i>Total</i>	57	162

98.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they had a fairly to very high knowledge about the histories of Australian First Nations peoples, compared to 72.2% of non-Indigenous respondents. Non-Indigenous respondents were much more likely to be unsure or have low to very low / no knowledge about First Nations histories (27.8%) compared to First Nations respondents (1.7% unsure, with no First Nations respondents indicating that they had fairly or very low knowledge). It is also interesting to note that non-Indigenous respondents were more than twice as likely to be unsure of or have little to no knowledge of First Nations histories (27.8%) in comparison to their knowledge of Australian colonial history (11.2%).

Level of knowledge about First Nations cultures

	First Nations respondents	Non-Indigenous respondents
<i>Very high</i>	30 (52.6%)	12 (7.4%)
<i>Fairly high</i>	26 (45.6%)	80 (49.4%)
<i>Neutral / Unsure</i>	-	41 (25.3%)
<i>Fairly low</i>	1 (1.8%)	24 (14.8%)
<i>Very low / no knowledge at all</i>	-	5 (3.1%)
<i>Total</i>	57	162

98.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that their level of knowledge about First Nations cultures was fairly to very high, compared to 56.8% of non-Indigenous respondents. Non-Indigenous respondents were much less confident about their knowledge of First Nations cultures, with only 7.4% of non-Indigenous respondents indicating that their knowledge was ‘very high’, less than half the number of non-Indigenous respondents (17.9%) who indicated that their knowledge of Australian First Nations’ histories was ‘very high’.

Main sources of information about First Nations peoples

	First Nations respondents	Non-Indigenous respondents
<i>Mainstream media</i>	2 (3.5%)	14 (8.7%)
<i>Personal experience</i>	23 (40.3%)	60 (37.3%)
<i>School education / other research</i>	3 (5.3%)	37 (23%)
<i>Parents and family</i>	16 (28.1%)	-
<i>Non-Indigenous people known to respondent</i>	-	2 (1.2%)
<i>Social media</i>	-	4 (2.5%)
<i>First Nations media</i>	7 (12.3%)	15 (9.3%)
<i>Other</i>	6 (10.5%)	29 (18%)
<i>Total</i>	57	161

First Nations respondents' main sources of information about First Nations peoples were their personal experience (40.3%), parents and family (28.1%), and First Nations media (12.3%). Non-Indigenous respondents also indicated that their personal experience was a major source of information (37.3%), however they were much more likely to gain information from school education or other research (23%, compared to 5.3% of First Nations respondents) and much less likely to gain information from parents and family (no non-Indigenous respondents listed this as an information source compared to 28.1% of First Nations respondents). Interestingly, non-Indigenous respondents were more likely to draw on First Nations media (9.3%) than mainstream media (8.7%) for information about First Nations people, indicating the growing impact of this sector.

The low number of responses indicating social media as a main source of information (2.5% of non-Indigenous respondents, no First Nations respondents) is likely to reflect the older age profile of the respondent group.

Respondents who selected the ‘Other’ category were asked to identify what their other main source of information was. A number of First Nations respondents spoke about the knowledge acquired from their personal life experiences, for example:

I don’t have one source. I have lived experience of being Aboriginal, I glean my knowledge from a variety of sources such as Aboriginal community members, non-Aboriginal community members, ABC, SBS, NITV, academic papers by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal authors.

My own personal experience as an Aboriginal woman and from my parents and family.

The 18% of non-Indigenous respondents who indicated drawing on ‘other’ sources of information identified books and other First Nations-authored materials, work-based learning (e.g. from colleagues or participating in training), tertiary education (university and TAFE studies), creative arts, and participation in events as their main sources of information about First Nations peoples. One non-Indigenous respondent commented “None. I’m pretty ignorant really.”

Level of agreement with key statements about Aboriginal History

	First Nations respondents			Non-Indigenous respondents		
	Agree	Neutral/ unsure	Disagree	Agree	Neutral/ unsure	Disagree
<i>Aboriginal peoples have lived on the Australian continent for at least 60,000 years</i>	55 (100%)	-	-	157 (98.1%)	2 (1.3%)	1 (0.6%)

<i>At the time of British colonisation, there were at least 250 distinct First Nations, each with their own cultural identities and custodial relations to land</i>	55 (100%)	-	-	160 (100%)	-	-
<i>Frontier wars occurred across the Australian continent as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples defended their traditional lands from European invasion</i>	54 (98.2%)	1 (1.8%)	-	155 (96.9%)	5 (3.1%)	-
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were subject to mass killings, incarceration, forced removal from lands and restricted movement throughout the 1800s</i>	54 (98.2%)	-	1 (1.8%)	160 (100%)	-	-
<i>Government policy in the 1900s dictated where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples could live and be employed</i>	54 (98.2%)	1 (1.8%)	-	158 (98.7%)	2 (1.3%)	-
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples did not have full voting rights throughout Australia until the 1960s</i>	54 (98.2%)	-	1 (1.8%)	155 (96.9%)	5 (3.1%)	-

<i>Government policy enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be removed from their families without permission until the 1970s</i>	54 (98.2%)	-	1 (1.8%)	160 (100%)	-	-
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have actively resisted unjust treatment and have campaigned for recognition of their land, citizenship and other rights</i>	55 (100%)	-	-	157 (98.1%)	3 (1.9%)	-

There was a high degree of agreement with key statements about Aboriginal history among both First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents.

All First Nations respondents agreed with the statements that Aboriginal people have lived on the Australian continent for at least 65,000 years; that there were at least 250 distinct First Nations at the time of colonisation; and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have actively resisted injustice and fought for recognition of their rights.

All non-Indigenous respondents agreed with the statements that there were at least 250 distinct First Nations at the time of colonisation; that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were subject to mass killings, incarceration, forced removal from lands and restricted movements in the 1800s; and that government policy enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be removed from their families without permission until the 1970s. The existence of frontier wars and the limitation of full voting rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia until the 1960s were the historical statements that the highest number of non-Indigenous respondents were neutral or unsure about (3.1%).

Due to the low numbers of survey respondents who disagreed with or indicated that they were neutral or unsure about the range of historical statements, it is not possible to draw meaningful conclusion about respondents by gender, age, educational level or other demographic group.

2. Truth-telling findings

Attitude towards truth-telling

<i>Truth-telling is...</i>	First Nations respondents	Non-Indigenous respondents
<i>Very important</i>	53 (96.4%)	152 (95%)
<i>Fairly important</i>	2 (3.6%)	8 (5%)
<i>Neutral / Unsure</i>	-	-
<i>Fairly unimportant</i>	-	-
<i>Not important at all</i>	-	-
<i>Total</i>	55	160

There was a high degree of consensus amongst both First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents about the importance of truth-telling, with 100% of respondents describing truth-telling as fairly to very important. A slightly higher proportion of non-Indigenous respondents (5%) than First Nations respondents (3.6%) described truth-telling as 'fairly' rather than 'very' important.

Importance of participation in truth-telling

<i>Is it important to you to participate in truth-telling?</i>	First Nations respondents	Non-Indigenous respondents
<i>Very important</i>	46 (85.2%)	121 (75.6%)
<i>Fairly important</i>	6 (11.1%)	25 (15.6%)
<i>Neutral / Unsure</i>	2 (3.7%)	12 (7.5%)
<i>Fairly unimportant</i>	-	1
<i>Not important at all</i>	-	1
<i>Total</i>	54	160

There was however a much larger differentiation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous respondents to the question of whether it was important to them personally to participate in truth-telling. 85.2% of First Nations respondents indicated that participating in truth-telling was very important to them, compared to 75.6% of non-Indigenous respondents; more than twice as many non-Indigenous respondents (7.5%) than First Nations respondents (3.7%) were uncertain about the importance of participating in truth telling, and a small number of non-Indigenous respondents indicated that participating in truth-telling was fairly unimportant (one respondent) or not important at all (one respondent). Some of the reasons that may have contributed to non-Indigenous respondents' views about the importance of participating in truth-telling are explored in further detail below.

Participation in a truth-telling activity

Despite the high importance placed on truth-telling, fewer than half of non-Indigenous respondents (46.8%) had participated in a truth-telling activity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the previous 12 months. This compared to 55.6% of First Nations respondents who had participated in a truth-telling activity in the previous 12 months.

Those who had participated in a truth-telling activity in the previous 12 months were asked in an open-ended question to identify the most important thing they had gained from participating.

Responses to the open-ended question by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people indicated that their participation in truth-telling had enabled others to have an improved understanding of the ongoing impact of the past on contemporary First Nations lives. Others spoke of their role in educating non-Indigenous participants about the struggles endured by First Nations peoples, and the importance of recognising the diversity of First Nations experiences. One respondent commented that the lack of non-Indigenous knowledge about the impacts of colonisation had been “eye-opening”; several respondents identified how their confidence in their own knowledge had been bolstered by the opportunity to share it with others. Some First Nations respondents made a connection between truth-telling and healing (as did a few non-Indigenous respondents). Some specific comments about the benefits of participating in truth-telling from First Nations respondents included:

Catharsis and a shared sense of community built through the truth being shared, understood and commemorated.

It's important to be heard as part of the healing process.

Providing others with an opportunity to see things from a different perspective and encouraging them to question the validity of colonisation within a sovereign Nation.

One First Nations respondent saw truth-telling as a two-way exchange, commenting “How much we can learn by not just sharing or listening but together engaging in conversation.”

There was recognition amongst First Nations respondents that truth-telling could at times be challenging. One First Nations respondent highlighted the need for cultural safety; another commented that truth-telling could be seen by some as “aggressive or negative or angry or all of those.”

It is important to note that for First Nations respondents, truth-telling was not exclusively focused on non-Indigenous participation and education. Respondents commented on the importance of truth-telling in communicating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories to First Nations children and young people. For one First Nations respondent, recognising the commonalities in First Nations experiences despite diversity of geographic location was a key learning. Another respondent suggested that it should not be up to First Nations people to educate the non-Indigenous community:

racism and denial is a non-Aboriginal issue and needs to be internally addressed by the non-Aboriginal community to bring people to the point where they are willing to listen.

For non-Indigenous respondents, key learnings including recognising the importance of truth-telling to First Nations peoples; recognising the diversity among First Nations peoples; improved understanding of the history, cultures, perspectives and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; the opportunity to connect with Elders; understanding the impact of racism, white privilege, intergenerational trauma, and violence on First Nations communities; and improved understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ connection to Country. Others spoke of identifying ways to take appropriate action in support of First Nations peoples; “being a witness”; building solidarity; the importance of accountability; and taking responsibility to achieve change. Non-Indigenous respondents also identified the need for humility; active listening skills, “truth-hearing” and “learning how to hear the uncomfortable truth”; cultural sensitivity; and respect. One respondent spoke about participating in truth-telling to demonstrate their support and understanding. There was recognition from some non-Indigenous respondents that they needed more learning; one respondent

appreciated learning more about the specific First Nations whose lands they lived on, and another spoke about the transformative power of interpersonal connections. Others highlighted recognising the inaccuracies and bias of the history they had previously been taught, the need to “make space for this [First Nations] past to be acknowledged”, and the need to “not assume that truth-telling is a simple process of letting a few stories be told and then move on to business as usual.”

One non-Indigenous respondent commented “Telling the truth is not enough”; another spoke about the difference between “reckoning with history” and reconciliation; while others gained insight into the ongoing impacts of colonisation:

the most important thing I gained was a shocking sense of perspective on just how recent and close to home the events and effects of colonisation is to Indigenous people. What felt like history to me is still very much living memory to others.

For a few non-Indigenous respondents, their main take-aways from truth-telling were positive learnings about the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. One non-Indigenous respondent highlighted “learning more about the beautiful cultural and spiritual dimensions to [First Nations] culture”; another spoke of “the exceptional strength of so many First Nations people mobilising change through self determination.”

Level of agreement with statements about truth-telling

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a range of comments about truth-telling.

	First Nations respondents			Non-Indigenous respondents		
	Agree	Neutral/ unsure	Disagree	Agree	Neutral/ unsure	Disagree
<i>Truth-telling will develop a shared understanding of Australian history</i>	48 (90.6%)	5 (9.4%)	-	145 (91.8%)	10 (6.3%)	3 (1.9%)
<i>Truth-telling will mean that Australia can move on from its colonial past</i>	21 (39.6%)	19 (35.9%)	13 (24.5%)	54 (34.4%)	77 (49%)	26 (16.6%)
<i>Truth-telling will mean that Australia as a nation can be reconciled</i>	25 (47.2%)	25 (47.2%)	3 (5.6%)	75 (47.5%)	78 (49.4%)	5 (3.1%)
<i>Truth-telling will help deliver healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>	46 (86.8%)	6 (11.3%)	1 (1.9%)	136 (86.1%)	22 (13.9%)	-
<i>Truth-telling will help improve relations between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians</i>	38 (71.7%)	15 (28.3%)	-	128 (81%)	29 (18.4%)	1 (0.6%)
<i>Truth-telling will contribute to a more just future for Aboriginal and</i>	42 (79.2%)	9 (17%)	2 (3.8%)	137 (86.7%)	19 (12%)	2 (1.3%)

<i>Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>						
<i>We can't change the past and so truth-telling is a pointless exercise</i>	2 (3.8%)	2 (3.8%)	49 (92.5%)	5 (3.2%)	3 (1.9%)	148 (94.9%)
<i>Truth-telling only tells one side of the story</i>	6 (11.3%)	5 (9.4%)	42 (79.3%)	7 (4.5%)	16 (10.3%)	133 (85.2%)
<i>Truth-telling might emphasise divisions and differences between First Nations and other Australians</i>	32 (60.4%)	9 17%	12 (22.6%)	49 (31.2%)	56 (35.7%)	52 (33.1%)
<i>Truth-telling will not make a practical difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>	8 (15.1%)	17 (32.1%)	28 (52.8%)	12 (7.6%)	35 (22.3%)	110 (70.1%)

Positive benefits that respondents believed would accrue from truth-telling were the development of a shared understanding of Australian history (with 90.6% of First Nations respondents and 91.8% of non-Indigenous respondents agreeing with this statement); the hope that truth-telling would deliver healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (with 86.8% of First Nations respondents and 86.1% of non-Indigenous respondents agreeing with this statement, and only one First Nations respondent disagreeing); and the potential of truth-telling to help improve relations between First Nations and non-Indigenous peoples (with 71.7% of First Nations respondents and 81% of non-Indigenous respondents agreeing with this statement). More contentious, however, was the idea that truth-telling would allow Australia to “move on” from its colonial past and the relationship between truth-telling and national

reconciliation, with high levels of 'unsure' responses and less than half of both First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents agreeing with these statements.

Non-Indigenous respondents were more confident about the potential benefits of truth-telling in delivering justice for First Nations peoples (86.7% compared to 79.2% of First Nations respondents). The greater level of uncertainty about truth-telling's relationship to justice identified among First Nations respondents (17% of First Nations respondents were uncertain about this compared to 12% of non-Indigenous respondents) may reflect a less optimistic assessment of the potential for change by First Nations peoples due to the limited benefits realised by previous initiatives. Despite this concern, more than half of First Nations respondents (52.8%) rejected the proposition that truth-telling would not make a practical difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; once again however, non-Indigenous respondents were much more confident about the practical impact of truth-telling, with 70.1% disagreeing with the statement that truth-telling would not make a practical difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A higher proportion of First Nations respondents indicated that truth-telling only tells one side of the story (11.3% compared to 4.5% of non-Indigenous respondents); this perhaps reflects a desire by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents for truth-telling to primarily centre First Nations stories and experiences as a corrective to 'mainstream' history.

First Nations respondents were also much more likely to agree that truth-telling might emphasise divisions and differences between First Nations and other Australians (60.4% of First Nations respondents, compared to only 31.2% of non-Indigenous respondents), possibly due to greater recognition by First Nations respondents of the range of hard and challenging truths that need to be shared.

Factors promoting participation in truth-telling

Respondents were asked to indicate which factors would make them want to participate in truth-telling.

	First Nations respondents			Non-Indigenous respondents		
	Agree	Neutral/ unsure	Disagree	Agree	Neutral/ unsure	Disagree
<i>To learn more about the resilience and survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>	49 (90.7%)	4 (7.4%)	1 (1.9%)	146 (93%)	9 (5.8%)	2 (1.2%)
<i>To learn about the past treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>	44 (81.5%)	8 (14.8%)	2 (3.7%)	140 (89.1%)	15 (9.6%)	2 (1.3%)
<i>To learn more about the ongoing impacts of the past on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today</i>	44 (81.5%)	8 (14.8%)	2 (3.7%)	148 (94.3%)	7 (4.4%)	2 (1.3%)
<i>To learn more about how I can contribute to reconciliation</i>	40 (74.1%)	10 (18.5%)	4 (7.4%)	137 (87.3%)	16 (10.2%)	4 (2.5%)
<i>To share my own personal or family history or perspective</i>	48 (88.9%)	5 (9.2%)	1 (1.9%)	39 (25%)	51 (32.7%)	66 (42.3%)

<i>To show my support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>	50 (92.6%)	4 (7.4%)	-	153 (98.1%)	3 (1.9%)	-
<i>That truth-telling is about my local community</i>	47 (87%)	5 (9.2%)	2 (3.7%)	104 (66.7%)	42 (26.9%)	10 (6.4%)
<i>That truth-telling takes place in my local community</i>	39 (78%)	10 (20%)	1 (2%)	111 (75.5%)	27 (18.4%)	9 (6.1%)

As the table above indicates, while there are a lot of commonalities there is also some variance between First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents in terms of what would motivate them to participate in truth-telling. For 92.6% of First Nations respondents and 98.1% of non-Indigenous respondents, participating in truth-telling represented an opportunity to show their personal support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. First Nations respondents were also highly motivated to participate in truth-telling to learn more about the resilience and survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (90.7%), to share their own personal or family history / perspective (88.9%), and to focus on truth-telling about their local community (87%). Non-Indigenous respondents were highly motivated to participate in truth-telling to learn more about the ongoing impacts of the past on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today (94.3%), to learn more about the resilience and survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (93%), and to learn more about the past treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (89.1%).

It is interesting to note that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were more interested in truth-telling about their local community (87%) than non-Indigenous respondents (66.7%), and were also much more likely to be motivated to participate in truth-telling to share their own personal or family history or perspective (88.9% of First Nations respondents, compared to only 25% of non-Indigenous respondents). 42.3% of non-Indigenous respondents disagreed with the statement that sharing their own personal / family history or perspective would motivate them to participate in truth-

telling, with a further 32.7% neutral or unsure about this aspect. This potentially speaks to uncertainty about the appropriate role of non-Indigenous people in truth-telling, which we explore in further detail below. Non-Indigenous respondents were much more likely to be motivated to participate in truth-telling to learn more about how they could contribute to reconciliation (87.3%) than First Nations respondents (74.1%).

Barriers to truth-telling

Respondents were asked to identify what would stop them from participating in truth-telling.

	First Nations respondents			Non-Indigenous respondents		
	Agree	Neutral/ unsure	Disagree	Agree	Neutral/ unsure	Disagree
<i>I am not interested in First Nations issues</i>	- (0%)	1 (2%)	50 (98%)	4 (2.6%)	4 (2.6%)	146 (94.8%)
<i>I think too much attention is given to First Nations issues and/or perspectives in Australia</i>	1 (2%)	2 (3.9%)	48 (94.1%)	1 (0.6%)	8 (5.2%)	145 (94.2%)
<i>I am not responsible for the past treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>	6 (11.8%)	15 (29.4%)	30 (58.8%)	10 (6.5%)	17 (11%)	127 (82.5%)
<i>I do not want to be made to feel ashamed or guilty</i>	9 (17.65%)	9 (17.65%)	33 (64.7%)	10 (6.5%)	15 (9.7%)	129 (83.8%)
<i>I want to celebrate the positive aspects of</i>	8 (15.7%)	13 (25.5%)	30 (58.8%)	7 (4.5%)	18 (11.7%)	129 (83.8%)

<i>Australia's history rather than focus on the negatives</i>						
<i>Discussing the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples might cause me to experience distress or trauma</i>	27 (52.9%)	8 (15.7%)	16 (31.4%)	17 (11%)	27 (17.4%)	111 (71.6%)
<i>Participants may question or challenge the accuracy of the perspectives being shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>	21 (41.2%)	13 (25.5%)	17 (33.3%)	32 (20.5%)	48 (30.8%)	76 (48.7%)
<i>Truth-telling might not be culturally safe</i>	18 (35.3%)	19 (37.2%)	14 (27.5%)	30 (19.2%)	62 (39.7%)	64 (41.1%)
<i>I am concerned that the perspectives on history that are shared might be inaccurate</i>	10 (19.6%)	13 (25.5%)	28 (54.9%)	6 (3.9%)	30 (19.3%)	119 (76.8%)
<i>I do not think that improving relations between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians is important</i>	3 (5.9%)	3 (5.9%)	45 (88.2%)	2 (1.3%)	6 (3.9%)	146 (94.8%)
<i>I am unclear about the role of non-Indigenous Australians in truth-telling</i>	6 (11.8%)	16 (31.4%)	29 (56.8%)	36 (23.1%)	36 (23.1%)	84 (53.8%)

<i>I am unclear what the benefits of truth-telling are</i>	4 (7.8%)	10 (19.6%)	37 (72.5%)	9 (5.8%)	17 (11%)	129 (83.2%)
<i>I do not know how to get involved in truth-telling</i>	6 (11.8%)	12 (23.5%)	33 (64.7%)	59 (38.1%)	40 (25.8%)	56 (36.1%)

98% of First Nations respondents and 94.8% of non-Indigenous respondents disagreed with the statement that they lacked interest in First Nations issues and that this would be a barrier to their participation in truth-telling. A similar proportion of First Nations (94.1%) and non-Indigenous respondents (94.2%) disagreed with the statement that too much attention is paid to First Nations issues in Australia, indicating that this would not be a barrier to their participation in truth-telling.

A lack of personal responsibility for the past treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was identified by 11.8% of First Nations respondents as something that would stop their participation in truth-telling, compared to only 6.5% of non-Indigenous respondents. Many First Nations people already know and have lived the reality of the truths that truth-telling might elucidate.

52.9% of First Nations respondents indicated that the fear of experiencing distress or trauma might be a barrier to their participation in truth-telling, with a further 15.7% being neutral or unsure whether this issue would prevent their participation. In contrast, only 11% of non-Indigenous respondents indicated that distress or trauma might be a barrier to their participation. The concern that participants might question or challenge the accuracy of the perspectives being shared was a more significant barrier to participation for First Nations respondents (41.2%) than for non-Indigenous respondents (20.5%), with a further 25.5% of First Nations respondents and 30.8% of non-Indigenous respondents being neutral or unsure about whether this issue would prevent their participation. Cultural safety was another potential barrier to participation for First Nations respondents; 35.3% of First Nations respondents indicated that concerns about cultural safety might stop their participation in truth-telling, with a further 37.2% being neutral or unsure. In contrast, 19.2% of non-Indigenous participants saw lack of cultural

safety as a barrier to participating in truth-telling, with 39.7% neutral or unsure whether this issue would prevent their participation.

94.8% of non-Indigenous respondents disagreed with the statement that improving relations between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians was not important and that this would be a barrier to their participation in truth-telling; this compared to 88.2% of First Nations respondents. As we have discussed previously, the desire to educate or have dialogue with non-Indigenous participants was not necessarily a primary motivator for participation in truth-telling for all First Nations respondents.

Lack of clarity about the role of non-Indigenous people in truth-telling was a barrier to participation in truth-telling for 23.1% of non-Indigenous respondents, with a further 23.1% indicating that they were neutral or unsure about whether this issue would prevent their participation. Lack of knowledge about how to get involved in truth-telling was also a significant barrier for non-Indigenous respondents, with over half of non-Indigenous respondents indicating that this would stop their participation (38.1%) or that they were neutral or unsure (25.8%) about whether it might. First Nations respondents were less likely to indicate that lack of knowledge about how to get involved would prevent their participation in truth-telling, with 11.8% indicating this would be a barrier.

First Nations respondents were generally less certain about the benefits of truth-telling than non-Indigenous respondents; nonetheless, a large majority of First Nations respondents (72.5%) indicated that this would not be a barrier to their participation in truth-telling.

First Nations respondents' concerns about the accuracy of truth-telling led 19.6% to indicate that this might be a barrier to their participation, compared to 3.9% of non-Indigenous respondents.

17.7% of First Nations respondents indicated that concern about feeling ashamed or guilty might prevent them from participating in truth-telling; this compared to 6.5% of non-Indigenous respondents. This suggests the existence of some degree of internalised shame about the difficult and confronting aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

peoples' past history and present circumstances among some First Nations respondents, which would need to be sensitively managed in truth-telling processes.

15.7% of First Nations respondents indicated that their desire to celebrate the positive aspects of Australia's history rather than focus on the negatives might be a barrier to their participation in truth-telling, compared to only 4.5% of non-Indigenous respondents.

Factors important to truth-telling

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of a range of factors to truth-telling.

	First Nations respondents			Non-Indigenous respondents		
	Agree	Neutral/ unsure	Disagree	Agree	Neutral/ unsure	Disagree
<i>That truth-telling is led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>	45 (88.2%)	5 (9.8%)	1 (2%)	136 (87.7%)	17 (11%)	2 (1.3%)
<i>That truth-telling brings First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians together</i>	42 (82.4%)	9 (17.6%)	-	128 (82.6%)	24 (15.5%)	3 (1.9%)
<i>That truth-telling recognises the diversity of First Nations Australians</i>	50 (98%)	1 (2%)	-	153 (98.7%)	2 (1.3%)	-
<i>That First Nations' perspectives on the past are presented</i>	51 (100%)	-	-	154 (99.4%)	1 (0.6%)	-

<i>That truth-telling changes attitudes towards First Nations Australians</i>	47 (92.1%)	3 (5.9%)	1 (2%)	138 (89%)	16 (10.4%)	1 (0.6%)
<i>That truth-telling changes behaviours towards First Nations Australians</i>	49 (96%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	144 (92.9%)	10 (6.5%)	1 (0.6%)
<i>That truth-telling creates shared understandings of the past</i>	49 (96%)	2 (4%)	-	147 (94.8%)	6 (3.9%)	2 (1.3%)
<i>That truth-telling celebrates the resilience and survival of First Nations peoples</i>	50 (98%)	1 (2%)	-	144 (92.9%)	10 (6.5%)	1 (0.6%)
<i>That truth-telling is supported by historical evidence</i>	41 (80.4%)	9 (17.6%)	1 (2%)	93 (60%)	43 (27.7%)	19 (1.3%)

There was strong agreement between First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents in relation to some key aspects of truth-telling. 100% of First Nations respondents and 98.7% of non-Indigenous respondents agreed that truth-telling should involve First Nations' perspectives on the past being presented. 98% of First Nations respondents and 98.7% of non-Indigenous respondents agreed that truth-telling should recognise the diversity of First Nations peoples.

Similar proportions of First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents agreed that truth-telling creates shared understandings of the past (96% of First Nations respondents compared to 94.8% of non-Indigenous respondents). While there was some minor variation in responses between First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents, most respondents felt that it was important that truth-telling was led by First Nations peoples (88.2% of First Nations respondents compared to 87.7% of non-Indigenous

respondents); and that truth-telling brings First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians together (82.4% of First Nations respondents compared to 82.6% of non-Indigenous respondents).

First Nations respondents were more likely than non-Indigenous respondents to agree that it was important that truth-telling changes attitudes (92.1% First Nations respondents compared to 89% non-Indigenous) and particularly behaviours (96% of First Nations respondents compared to 92.9% non-Indigenous) towards First Nations Australians.

First Nations respondents were also more likely to agree that it was important that truth-telling celebrates the resilience and survival of First Nations peoples (98%) than non-Indigenous respondents (94.8%).

Interestingly, the most significant disparity between First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents was in relation to the importance of truth-telling being supported by historical evidence. First Nations respondents were much more likely to agree that it was important that truth-telling was supported by historical evidence (80.4% of Indigenous respondents compared to 60% of non-Indigenous respondents). This has some resonance with the finding discussed earlier that First Nations respondents were more concerned than non-Indigenous respondents that truth-telling be accurate. These two findings relating to accuracy and documentation may reflect the reality that there is a lot at stake for First Nations peoples in truth-telling. Processes such as Native Title claims have required Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to produce extensive documentation to support their claims; and previous truths shared through processes such as the *Bringing Them Home* Inquiry have been questioned or rejected by some non-Indigenous people. These factors may contribute to a more realistic assessment by First Nations respondents that some truths may be challenged or contentious and so are best supported by evidence. However, the desire for historical evidence to support truth-telling is a potential challenge, due to the well-documented limitations of historical records in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Truth-telling processes

Respondents were asked to respond to a series of statements outlining how truth-telling should take place.

<i>How should truth-telling take place?</i>	First Nations respondents			Non-Indigenous respondents		
	Yes	Neutral/Unsure	No	Yes	Neutral/Unsure	No
<i>All participants in truth-telling should have the opportunity to share their perspectives</i>	38 (80.9%)	8 (17%)	1 (2.1%)	90 (61.2%)	46 (31.3%)	11 (7.5%)
<i>Participants should listen respectfully to the truths being shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>	46 (97.9%)	1 (2.1%)	-	145 (98.6%)	2 (1.4%)	-
<i>There should be a formal response or acknowledgement of the truths that are shared, for example by a local dignitary or government representative</i>	34 (72.3%)	10 (21.3%)	3 (6.4%)	83 (56.5%)	55 (37.4%)	9 (6.1%)
<i>Truth-telling should take place in my local community</i>	39 (83%)	6 (12.8%)	2 (4.2%)	101 (68.7%)	40 (27.2%)	6 (4.1%)
<i>Clear information should be provided about how to participate respectfully</i>	44 (93.6%)	3 (6.4%)	-	146 (99.3%)	1 (0.7%)	-

There was a high degree of consensus between First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents that participants should listen respectfully to the truths being shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants (97.9% of First Nations respondents agreed, compared to 98.6% of non-Indigenous respondents).

99.3% of non-Indigenous respondents agreed that clear information should be provided about how to participate respectfully in truth-telling; 93.6% of First Nations respondents agreed with this statement.

First Nations respondents were much more likely to agree that all participants in truth-telling should have the opportunity to share their perspectives (80.9%) than non-Indigenous respondents (61.2%), with over one third of non-Indigenous respondents (31.3%) neutral or unsure about this aspect.

First Nations respondents were also much more likely to agree that there should be a formal response or acknowledgement to the truths that are shared; 72.3% of First Nations respondents agreed with this statement, while 21.3% were neutral or unsure. In contrast, 56.5% of non-Indigenous respondents agreed that official acknowledgement was important, with 37.4% neutral or unsure about this aspect.

It was also more important to First Nations respondents (83%) than to non-Indigenous respondents (68.7%) that truth-telling take place in their local community.

Who should participate in truth-telling?

*Who should participate
in truth-telling?*

**First Nations
respondents**

**Non-Indigenous
respondents**

	Yes	Neutral/ Unsure	No	Yes	Neutral/ Unsure	No
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i>	47 (97.9%)	1 (2.1%)	-	149 (96.1%)	5 (3.2%)	1 (0.7%)
<i>Australians whose ancestors arrived in Australia in the colonial era</i>	42 (85.7%)	6 (12.2%)	1 (2.1%)	129 (83.2%)	17 (11%)	9 (5.8%)
<i>Recently arrived migrants</i>	39 (81.2%)	7 (14.6%)	2 (4.2%)	124 (80%)	23 (14.8%)	8 (5.2%)

Respondents were asked to indicate who they felt should participate in truth-telling. There was nearly universal agreement that truth-telling should involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (97.9% of First Nations respondents and 96.1% of non-Indigenous respondents agreed with this statement).

There was less certainty about participation in truth-telling by Australians whose ancestors arrived in Australia in the colonial era and by recently arrived migrants. While 85.7% of First Nations respondents and 83.2% of non-Indigenous respondents felt that Australians whose ancestors arrived in Australia in the colonial era should participate in truth-telling, 12.2% of First Nations respondents and 11% of non-Indigenous respondents were neutral / unsure about this aspect.

The level of uncertainty increased when respondents were asked about the participation of recently arrived migrants in truth-telling. While 80%+ of both First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents felt that recently arrived migrants should participate in truth-telling, over 14% of both First and non-Indigenous respondents were neutral or unsure

about this aspect, and 4.2% of First Nations respondents and 5.2% of non-Indigenous respondents indicated that recently arrived migrants should not participate.

While we did not collect information from respondents about recency of arrival in Australia, we did ask respondents if they were born in Australia. 80.9% of respondents born in Australia believed that recently arrived migrants should participate in truth-telling, compared to 74.3% of respondents who were not born in Australia. In relation to this question, one respondent commented in the open-ended responses at the conclusion of the survey:

my personal view is that [truth-telling] is relevant to everyone [including] recent immigrants since many of them and their kids will be future decision makers in this country

We did not define what “participate in truth-telling” might entail, so it is possible that some respondents assumed participation meant playing an active role rather than attending and listening to the truths being shared, which might explain the higher levels of uncertainty about non-Indigenous participation in truth-telling. As discussed previously, it is also clear from responses to the open-ended question that several First Nations respondents did not necessarily see truth-telling as focused on non-Indigenous participation and were more interested in the benefits to be gained by sharing information with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Other comments about truth-telling

At the completion of the survey, respondents were asked if they had anything they would like to say about truth-telling that hadn't been covered by the survey.

For one First Nations respondent, truth-telling meant:

Being heard and accepted as Aboriginal people with real connections to this land.

Several respondents spoke to their desire for truth-telling to result in practical change, reflected in the comment:

A lot of “truths” have been told e.g. Deaths in Custody RC NOT MUCH happened!

One First Nations respondent spoke of their reluctance to participate in truth-telling because of the fear they would be judged by other Indigenous people:

As an Indigenous person truth telling can sometimes be difficult because we are scared to be judged or face scrutiny from other Indigenous people. I have had people of higher powers tell me I am not Aboriginal because I have a disconnected past (due to stolen or hidden generations) which makes me question my own identity and wonder whether it is worth the scrutiny of speaking my truth.

Another respondent spoke of their complex identity comprised of Aboriginal, settler and more recent immigrant ancestry, commenting:

I am simultaneously someone who is a newer migrant to this country, a colonial settler and have [I]ndigenous heritage, it's incredibly confusing and doesn't seem to fit within the discourses of truth-telling, reconciliation or any of it.

A First Nations respondent highlighted the need for thoughtfulness, mindfulness and self-reflection in truth-telling:

people need to take responsibility for the perspectives they speak about. It should not be raw emotion and venting or ranting aimed at hurting or blaming the 'other side'; that is not healing or truth telling...trauma without self-understanding or reflection is not truth telling, it is pain and blame, not matter what side it comes from.

Non-Indigenous respondents also recognised that truth-telling might be a painful process, but saw this pain as an essential step that must be taken in building a more just future:

Truth telling is hard and painful and we must deal with the impacts and consequences of truth telling. There is no resolution from truth telling without recognition, reparations, and building a respectful, equal, and lasting relationship with Aboriginal people.

many whitefellas should expect it to be difficult and expect to do the work, it is not for Blakfellas to do the heavy lifting on this.

A few respondents identified the need for First Nations communities and other truth-telling participants to be supported in truth-telling conversations. One First Nations respondent spoke to the hurt truth-telling would surface for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, highlighting the need for Elders and healing specialists to be on hand as with other forms of sorry business. Another First Nations respondent expressed concern about possible backlash from non-Indigenous people arising from shame about the past or rejection of the truths shared; this respondent felt that “everyone needs to be on board” but that Australia “as a country are not at that stage yet.” This concern was reflected in a comment by a non-Indigenous respondent, who wondered about the appropriate timing of truth-telling; for another non-Indigenous respondent, truth-telling was described as:

very heavy and some care and consideration to the new knowledge must be conveyed as a warning as it can be very confronting hearing the truth for the first time and realising the country we live in was based on theft.

There were comments highlighting a degree of uncertainty about what truth-telling involves and recognition of the need for “basic literacy” in the wider population about what truth-telling could amount to, as well as the need for non-Indigenous Australians to reflect on the appropriate ways in which they could and should be involved in truth-telling. Respondents spoke about being uncertain about how to participate in truth-telling, reflected in the comment “most people don't know where to start. It's tricky to navigate.” Although both First Nations and non-Indigenous respondents commented about wanting more information about how to get involved in truth-telling, one respondent indicated that uncertainty about appropriate ways to be involved was a barrier for some non-Indigenous people:

there are a lot of unknowns about truth telling for non-Indigenous Australians and a fear as to whether it is traumatic and what the etiquette is around joining in. It is not very obvious on where and how to engage with truth telling.

Another spoke to the fear that non-Indigenous voices could exceed or silence First Nations voices in truth-telling. However, one non-Indigenous respondent was very clear about the role of non-Indigenous people in truth-telling:

it is time for non-Aboriginal people to listen, reflect and learn.

Others highlighted their lack of opportunity to participate in truth-telling. Non-Indigenous respondents also recognised that the burden of truth-telling should not fall exclusively on First Nations people, and emphasised the need for shared responsibility for truth-telling. Others called for non-Indigenous people and institutions to take accountability, to stand up against racism and take action.

The need for truth-telling to be inclusive of all perspectives was highlighted by a few respondents:

I believe truth-telling is important and all voices need to be heard in a respectful manner not only to understand the truth but also to understand why some groups resist the truth.

It is crucial that truth telling is designed so that the broader community can be reached and educated with the findings of truth telling.

Every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person's and community's experience matters and should be listened to with respect and genuine empathy. We should not compare 'pain', there should not be competition with who has experienced the most pain, there should not be a stingy and inhumane attitude towards compassion.

Truth-telling must be flexible and diverse in delivery to allow and respect the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Another respondent highlighted the transformative impact of personal stories:

The most powerful experiences I have had in relation to truth telling were where Indigenous people shared their personal stories.

One respondent expressed concern about powerful vested interests who they claimed financially discouraged Aboriginal communities from participating in truth-telling as this might threaten their developments on Aboriginal land, creating conflict and tension within community groups.

The need for truth-telling to be embedded in school and university curriculum was an important concern for several respondents, one of whom commented:

This will help keep our Elders / Ancestors stories alive and keep our culture rich and deep in Australia's history.

A non-Indigenous respondent identified truth-telling as

an essential step in shifting colonial attitudes that still dominate discourse and attitudes towards First Nations people.

Reflecting on their work in teacher education, one respondent commented on the change in personal and professional practice they had observed from incorporating truth-telling into their teaching:

'uncomfortable' truth telling such as listening to the Uncles from Kinchela Boys Home has the most impact of all and changes the negative discourse in classrooms and corridors to strength-based language and action to make a difference for future generations.

Several participants spoke about the relationship between truth-telling and history, with one respondent commenting:

Truth-telling is acknowledging a shared history – that you cannot separate black history from white history – it is a road travelled together but as we know, the black history was written out of writing of white history.

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