**First Peoples of Australia - Timeline**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is the oldest surviving culture in the world. DNA of hair from ‘First Peoples’ questions that humankind came out of Africa and suggests that Australia may be the cradle of the human race. Firestick farming used by Australia’s First Peoples can be dated back at least 180 000 years but I suggest, will increase once more accurate dating techniques are developed. Aboriginal people refer to this longevity as the ‘Dreaming’ whereas Torres Strait Islanders believe this to be ‘Before, Before time’. Over many thousands of years Australia’s First people’s lives were impacted by varying seasons and it is believed that they lived through both the rising of sea levels as well as the drying out of the continent.

Indigenous stories tell of ‘creation’ happening on this continent and in complete contradiction to those views who propose that Australia’s First Peoples came via a land bridge. Estimates put the population, prior to colonisation at approximately 600 000 and possibly over a million. The First Peoples occupied the whole of the continent and managed it through complex ‘farming methods’ to ensure that they lived in harmony with it. Over 250 language groups were divided into 600 dialects that used farming techniques that allowed these peoples to live in harmony with nature and to ultimately ‘care for country’ for their existence and survival. This was supported by extensive trade routes which were governed by ‘lore’ and influenced by art, dance, song and ceremony through a spiritual connection to country.

In the last 230 years Australia’s First peoples have endured and survived through destructive changes to their cultures, languages and ways of life since the arrival of the Europeans in 1788. Colonies were formed in New South Wales from 1788, followed by Tasmania in 1803, Queensland in 1824, Western Australia in 1829, South Australia in 1836 and the Northern Territory in 1869.

The following timeline is an extensive order of events which helps us to understand the cause and effect of such occurrences thus allowing us to step back to view the ‘big picture’ on the history of Australia. The aim is to see how these events have impacted upon people and how they influence each of us today. It is not about blaming anyone but to reinforce how we can all work together in the spirit of Reconciliation and to ultimately ‘Close the Gap’ for Australia’s First Peoples.

400 000 Hair DNA of Aboriginal Australian questions out of Africa theory suggesting humankind originated in Australia.

180 000 Great Barrier Reef – Firestick Farming (This could mean that Aboriginal people were practicing ‘Firestick Farming’ as a survival technique - according to analysis of pollen and charcoal)

120 000 Core sample from Lake George Basin (NSW) shows evidence of humankind by significantly increased burning of country (firestick farming)

65 000 Stone tools and ochre remains found at Madjedbeb in Arnhem Land (NT)

45 000 Rock engravings make in South Australia – the earliest dated petroglyphs

38 000 Fire hearth at Lake Mungo (NSW) indicates existence of Aboriginal society Aborigines consuming megafauna (DNA found of giant kangaroo and Diprotodonts)

35 500 Mussel shell remains found in a midden at Willandra lakes (NSW)

30 000 Male remains stained with ochre found at Lake Mungo - one of the oldest burials in the world

Cuddie Springs Grinding Stones – Aborigines may have been the first peoples on the planet to grind seeds to bake bread

29 500 Ornamental bone beads found at Devils Lair (WA)

26 500 Female remains found burnt, crushed and stained with ochre at Lake Mungo provides evidence of the world’s oldest cremation

25 000 Rock engravings on Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park NSW

24 000 Aboriginals are mining flint and leaving groove designs at Koonalda Caves (SA)

23 000 Ground-edge grooved axes found in Arnhem Land (NT)

18 000 Art at Kakadu depict the now extinct Thylacine (Tasmanian Tiger) and Zaglossus (long neck echidna)

15 000 The Kow Swamp people (Vic) are wearing kangaroo teeth headbands

13 000 Tasmania possibly separates from mainland Australia

12 000 Volcanos in Victoria cease erupting

10 000 Wyrie Swamp (SA) people using returning boomerangs

Humans cultivate first crops in the Middle East

9 000 Earliest visible evidence of the Rainbow Serpent. This is recognised as the oldest continuous belief in the world

8 500 Microlyths (stone tools) used in the Sydney area for animal skins & woodwork

8 000 Earliest evidence of tooth extraction as part of an initiation process

7 000 178 Thylacine teeth necklace from 47 different animals found at Lake Nitchie (NSW) Bogong moth feasts in Alpine Vic and NSW.

Middens in the Torres Strait Islands

6 000 New Guinea separates from Australia

5 000 Wheel is developed in the Middle East

First recorded writings in the Middle East Pyramids built in Egypt

Stone Hench is being erected in Britain

4 000 Malaysia invades Indonesia

3 000 Dugout canoes being used across Northern Australia

2 800 Rome founded

2 000 Jesus walks the earth

8 (AD) Chinese began settling in Indonesia

100 Hindu-Buddhist people from South India begin to colonise Indonesia

1271 Marco Polo visits China

1432 Chinese explorer Ch’eng Ho visits Western and Northern Australia Macassan fishermen begin trepan (sea cucumber) fishing across Northern and Eastern Australia

1451 Dutch explorers document the arrival of Macassan fisherman in Australian waters. This practice continued until 1906.

1520 Ferdinand Magellan (Portuguese) finds a new way to the Pacific Ocean around Cape Horn (South America) Muslims invade India and most Hindu states in Indonesia are taken over by Muslims

1522-67 Portuguese and Spanish ships sail and map most of Australia and the world Desliens (Portuguese) and Dieppe (France) maps reinforce such

1606 Willem Janszoon (Dutch) sometimes referred to as Jansz was sent to find gold and to map Papua New Guinea but mapped Cape York Peninsula instead

1607 Luis Vaz de Torres (Galician and Portuguese) sails through the Torres Strait Islands The first colony in America founded at Jamestown Virginia.

1616 Dirk Hartog (Dutch) maps Western Australia

1642 Abel Tasman (Dutch) sent to explore the Great Southern Land but lands in Tasmanian and calls it Van Diemen’s Land after the governor general of Batavia Abel Tasman sails to New Zealand

1688 William Dampier (English) anchors at King Sound (WA)

1699 Dampier returns and maps Western and Northern Australia and New Guinea

1768 James Cook sets sail from Tahiti in search of the Great Southern Land

1770 Cook arrives at Botany Bay April 28th

1771 Cook maps Antarctica on his second voyage

1776 British colonies in America revolt refusing to take any more British convicts

1779 Cook killed in Hawaii on his third voyage

1783 The government in the United States declares independence from Britain

1786 The British decide to now send convicts to Australia

1788 The first fleet arrives in Botany Bay between the 18th and 20th of January On the 26th January Captain Arthur Phillip sailed into Port Jackson, raised the British flag to proclaim the colony of New South Wales

Arabanoo kidnapped

1789 Smallpox and Influenza kills over half of the First peoples in the local area Bennelong and Colebee (local Aboriginal resistance fighters) kidnapped

1790 Pemulwuy and Tedbury lead resistance. Governor Phillip speared

Second fleet arrives

Hawksbury River and Nepean Aboriginal Resistance Wars (1790 – 1816)

1792 Bennelong and Yemerrawanyea go to England with Governor Phillip Yemerrawanyea dies of pneumonia and is buried in Eltham London The non-Indigenous population in Australia reaches 4 000

1795 Bennelong returns to Australia

Governor Macquarie declares martial law in the Hawksbury River area

1796 Pemulwuy leads resistance in Parramatta. In 1802 he was killed, decapitated and his head was preserved in spirits and sent to England

1799 Two aboriginal boys killed, five men charged over the crime, this was the first known trial for killing Aborigines. Governor Hunter wanted them charged over their crimes but it was taken out of his hands. Later Governor King pardons them.

1803 Flag raised on Tasmania and non-Indigenous invasion begins in Van Diemen's Land

1805 Judge Advocate’s Office states that Aboriginal people are not fit to be bought to court but should be given the treatment they deserve

Dharug continues resistance in the Sydney area, this leads to martial law being declared once more

1814 Governor Macquarie establishes the first ‘Native’ institution. In 1823 it was relocated to Blacks Town Reserve (current Blacktown in Western Sydney)

1815 Governor Macquarie establishes an annual meeting with local Indigenous groups

1816 Proclamation by Governor Macquarie prevents free movement of Aboriginal peoples except those given passports/certificates only if conduct themselves in a suitable manner, to show they are officially accepted by Europeans

1819 Indigenous girl at Native Institution in Parramatta comes first in public examination

1820 More than 300 Indigenous leaders attend a gathering to decide the fate of all Indigenous peoples in in the Sydney area. Some cross the Blue Mountains to attend

1824 Martial law declared in the Bathurst area, as conflict with local clans becomes a serious threat to white settlement/invasion

1825 Penal Colony established at King George Sound (WA) Yagon and Midgegooroo (Indigenous leaders) lead local resistance

1830 Governor Arthur establishes the ‘blackline’ where 500 men line up across Tasmania in an attempt to move the Tasmanian Indigenous clans onto the Tasman Peninsula. They only manage to find one adult and one child. Later that year the authorities move people to Flinders Island and later onto Cape Barren Island

1831 43 years after the arrival of the First Fleet to Australia, the first assisted migration begins with workers from Britain encouraged to apply

1834 The Henry Brothers establish a settlement at Portland Bay, Victoria

1835 John Bateman attempts to make a land treaty in the Melbourne and Geelong areas with the local Aboriginal elders. In exchange for 250 000 hectares of land Bateman gives goods to the value of 52 pounds. He also gives a commitment to pay rent and to protect and civilise local people. This has been the only time in Australia where a treaty has been drawn up with Indigenous peoples. Governor Bourke deemed it invalid. Australia is the only Commonwealth country that does not have a treaty with its Indigenous peoples

1836 Settlers arrive at Kangaroo Island in South Australia

1837 A British Select Committee is established to inquire into the treatment of all Indigenous peoples within the British Empire. Australia is severely criticised. The inquiry recommends that protectors be appointed. Saxe Bannister, Attorney General of New South Wales argues for a treaty for Indigenous peoples

1838 The Myall Creek Massacre occurs near Inverell (NSW). For the first time in history non-Indigenous people were sentenced to death for murdering Aborigines. Thirteen men were charged with killing and burning 28 women and children. Aboriginal accounts reflect upon many more than what was reported at the time. Seven non-Indigenous men were hung but the remainder were set free after a public outcry

1848 NSW police troopers and ‘blacktrackers’ are sent to Queensland to open the land up for settlement. This includes killing anyone who gets in the way. The National Board of Education states it is impracticable to provide any form of education to Indigenous peoples

Compulsory schooling for Indigenous Queenslanders did not occur until 1967

1851 The state of Victoria is established. The Aboriginal Protection Board in this state is established and operates until 1957. The Gold rush in Queensland begins

1854 Eureka stockade occurs. Miners protest over licences and taxes. Fight lasts 20mins

1859 Queensland is proclaimed a state

Publication of Darwin’s ‘origin of the species’ (evolution theories and survival of the fittest). He renounced many prior to his death

1860 Victorian Central Board established to protect Aboriginal people. Replaced in 1869 by the Protection Board and in 1957 by the Welfare Board and abolished in 1967

1861 Parliamentary inquiry called into the unprovoked attacks by native mounted Police on Aboriginals in Queensland (Cullin La Ringo and Hornet Bank massacres)

1868 150 Aboriginal people killed for resisting arrest in the Kimberley (WA) The first Australian cricket team to tour England was all Aboriginal. They surprised their competitors with their sporting prowess, winning 14, losing 14 and drawing 19 of their 47 matches. One dies of tuberculosis & pneumonia and is buried in England.

1871 London Missionary Society sends missionaries to Darnley Island in the Torres Straits The Coming of the Light ceremony is celebrated on the 1st July each year

1872 Overland telegraph line connecting Darwin to Adelaide completed

Western and Central Torres Strait Islands become part of Queensland

Legislation excludes Aboriginal people from voting if they do not own land

1873 Palmer River Gold Rush in North Queensland began

1874 Cummeragunja Reserve, Station or mission established on the Murray River (NSW)

1876 Truganini dies

1877 Hermannsburg Mission (west of Alice Springs) established in the Northern Territory

1879 Eastern Islands of the Torres Strait become a part of Queensland

1883 New South Wales Protection Board established. From 1915 to 1940 the Board has the power to remove ‘half-caste’ children for education and training purposes. In 1969 it was renamed Aborigines Welfare Board until it was abolished in 1969 Principals had the power to remove Aborigines from schools if parents complained

1884 Kalkadoons defeated at Battle Mountain (Mt Isa NW Qld)

1885 Queensland Elections Act excluded all Indigenous people from voting

1890 Beginning of Depression. Maritime, shearers and miners’ strike.

1894 Jandamarra (resistance fighter) delays settlers moving in the Kimberley area (WA) Women given the right to vote in South Aust followed by Western Aust in 1896 Aborigines at point McLeay vote in the South Australia election

1897 Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of Sale of Opium Act Qld. The Welfare Board has the power from 1939 – 1971 to remove Aborigines between reserves/missions, place children into dormitories, remove children for training purposes and to send them to work as domestics and station hands

1898 The Torres Strait Islands were visited by the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition led by Alfred Haddon (this continued until 1899)

1899 Island Councils established in the Torres Straits to replace the Island leaders

1901 The establishment of the Federation. The constitution states that Aboriginals are a state responsibility so therefore excludes them from the census – continues to 1967

1902 Constitution allows men and women to vote except Aborigines

1904 Truganini’s remains on public display in Hobart until 1947

The Torres Strait Islanders become subject to the Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act

1905 Aboriginal protection Acts of Western Australia make the protector the legal guardian of all Aborigines under the ages of 16. South Australia and the Northern Territory follow in 1911

1908 Invalid and aged pensions were payable to Australians except Aborigines

1909 Native Police abandoned in Queensland

Protection Boards in New South Wales were given the power to remove Aboriginal children from their families

1912 Maternity allowances payable to Australians except Aborigines

1914 Against government policy Aborigines enlist and fight in World War 1 (1914 - 1918)

1918 Palm Island Mission in Queensland established

The Aboriginal Ordinance Act in the Northern Territory forbids mining on Aboriginal reserves

1920 QANTAS (Queensland and Northern Territory Air Service) formed in Winton Qld

1925 Aborigines Progressive Association established by Fred Maynard in NSW. It was relaunched by William Ferguson in 1937. This collaboration with the Australian Aborigines' League lead to a [Day of Mourning](https://dictionaryofsydney.org/event/day_of_mourning_1938) conference on the 26 January 1938

1931 Arnhem land Aboriginal Reserve established in the Northern Territory

1935 William Cooper collects signatures outlining the living conditions under which Aborigines live. The government refused to pass the petition onto King George V

1938 On the 26 January and official ‘Day of Mourning’ conference was held to highlight the deplorable living conditions for Aborigines - 150 years since 1788

1939 Australian ‘Act to Marry’. Once married many Aboriginal people gained an exemption from the ‘Protection Acts’ if they proved they were worthy of citizenship

1939 – 1945 World War II

1940 Cummeragunja Reserve walk-off in protest of living conditions - people walked from NSW into Victoria where the laws are more progressive for Aboriginal people

1941 Aboriginal Welfare Board Replaces the Protection Board in NSW Child endowment paid to Australians except nomadic or dependent Aborigines Aboriginal Sunday celebrated on the nearest Sunday to Australia Day

1942 Darwin bombed and many Aboriginal people in Northern Australia (including the Torres Strait) are evacuated and further restrictions placed upon them

1943 Exemption Certificates (dog tags/beer tickets) introduced in NSW

1945 Department of Immigration formed. The White Australia Policy begins

1946 Aboriginal Children in NSW are required to obtain a medical certificate prior to entering school

1948 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by UN with the support of Aust

1949 Australian Citizenship established by law which includes Aborigines, who are able enrol to volt in the NSW, SA and Victoria elections

1951 Assimilation policy for Aborigines affirmed at a national conference

Minimum award wages set in the cattle industry in the NT – Aboriginal workers come in 1966

1953 Atomic testing at Emu, SA. More tests at Maralinga in 1956 and 1957

1955 National Council of Churches proposes additional activities be included with Aboriginal Sunday to highlight a positive culture

1956 Australian Council of Social Services formed

1957 NAIDOC committee established Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines (FCAA) formed. It became FCAATSI in 1964 by adding Torres Strait Islanders

1959 Margaret Williams-Weir and Geoffrey Penny become the first Aborigines to graduate from an Australian university. Weir graduated as a PE teacher at the University of Melbourne and Penny at the Graylands Teachers Collage (Edith Cowan University) in Perth.

1961 Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies formed

1962 Voluntary voting for Aborigines in Qld, NT and WA. Assimilation polices began in SA

1963 Police evict and burn down houses at Old Mapoon (near Weipa NQ) to allow mining Residents were moved to New Mapoon near Bamaga NQ Yirrkala people present a bark petition to authorities to oppose mining sacred lands

1966 Gurindji strike at Wave Hill station in the Northern Territory

Land Trusts established in SA

1967 National referendum to include Aborigines on the census and for the Federal Government to legislate for Indigenous peoples rather than the individual states Arbitration allocates equal pay to Aborigines who work in the pastoral industry Compulsory schooling for Aborigines in Qld

1968 Lionel Rose becomes World Bantamweight champion

1969 Abstudy is introduced Aboriginal Welfare Board abolished & replaced by an Aborigines Welfare Directorate

1971 Noonkanbah Cattle station strike

Evonne Goolagong- Cawley wins Wimbledon

Aboriginal flag (Harold Thomas) first flown on the lawns of parliament house Neville Bonner becomes the first Aboriginal to sit in the Australian parliament Aborigines lose the Gove land rights claim which began in 1968 Some of the living areas established for Aboriginal pastoral workers were no longer needed as Aboriginal stockmen were supposed to be paid equal wages

1972 Self-determination policies begin

Federal Dept of Aboriginal Affairs DAA established

The tent embassy erected on 26th Jan but pulled down by police on the 20th July Principals can no longer exclude Aboriginal students in NSW due to ancestry Homelands movements picks up as thousands move back to their traditional lands The White Australia policy ends as others are now allowed entry into Australia A freeze is placed on mineral exploration leases on Aboriginal reserves

1973 National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC) established. This was changed to the NAC in 1976 where members had to be elected Australia lowers voting age from 21 to 18yrs (drinking age lowered to 18 in 1974)

1975 World Council of Indigenous Peoples founded

Whitlam sacked by Governor General

Aboriginal Land fund set up to buy freehold lands for dispossessed peoples Gurindji people given leasehold title to Wave Hill Station Federal Government passes the Racial Discrimination Act

1976 Aboriginal Land Rights Act in the NT is passed

Truganini’s remains cremated

Sir Douglas Nicholls becomes governor of South Australia Queensland Indigenous Education Advisory Committee QATSIECC established. In 1998 it becomes MACATSIE, in 2000 the QIECB and more recently QATSIETAC The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEAI) first established

1977 Launch of National Education Consultative Committee NAEC

NSW AECG’s formed

1978 NT self-government

Land Trusts set up in NT for 15 Indigenous communities

PNG gains independence (the Torres Strait remains part of Qld and Australia)

1979 Aboriginal Devt Commission (ADC) formed. It becomes part of ATSIC in 1989 Paul Coe loses his High Court Challenge over British sovereignty in Aust National Aboriginal Congress (NAC) calls for a treaty/makarrata Aboriginal Councils established in Aurukun & Mornington Island in Nth Queensland Noonkanbah protests in WA

1980 Link-Up NSW formed, Qld in 1988 and now operates in SA, NT and WA NT sacred sites Act passed

1981 Pitjantjatjara people are handed back their lands

Human Rights Commission set up

World Council of Churches reports on the bad treatment of Australia’s First Peoples National Aboriginal Congress works on a draft Makarrata/treaty with United Nations

1982 Mabo, D Passi, S Passi, Rice and Salee prepare to take the Qld and Aust governments to court over the Murray Island group and thus begins the ten-year Mabo case Protests occur at the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane

Freedom of Information Act passed by Commonwealth

1983 A 5 person Aboriginal delegate travel to Geneva to attend a United Nations meeting on Indigenous peoples human rights

New South Wales Land Rights act established

1984 Interim protection gained under the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Heritage Act Charles Perkins becomes the first Aboriginal to head a Federal Govt department Royal commission into ‘nuclear testing’ begins

1985 Uluru handed back to the traditional owners on 26th October. Arthur Malcolm becomes the first Aboriginal Bishop

Mabo case begins in court

NAC disbanded – Aboriginals now vote for their local ATSIC representative Deeds of Grant in Trust DOGIT allowing for reserves/missions to elect local councils

1986 Imparja TV services transmitting into NT, SA, WA and western Qld & NSW Pope John Paul visits Alice Springs and makes a human rights plea for Aboriginals

1987 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) (1987 – 1991) Voting now becomes compulsory for Indigenous peoples of Australia Torres Strait Islanders threaten to succeed from Australia unless they have more control over their own affairs

1988 Aboriginal peoples protest through the streets of Sydney over 200yrs since invasion Barunga statement says the government will work towards a treaty Human Rights Commission says that conditions for Indigenous Australians are among the worst in the world

1989 NAEC abandoned. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission ATSIC set up Land rights given to Maralinga traditional owners (atomic testing 1955 – 1963)

1991 Royal Commission in Aboriginal Deaths in Custody hand down recommendations The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation gains support from all parties in parliament

1992 The High Court of Australia hands down the Mabo case decision on the 3rd June Redfern statement delivered by Prime Minster Paul Keating in Redfern First meeting of the National Reconciliation Committee ( a 10yr legislated period) Torres Strait Islander flag designed by the late Bernard Namok

1993 International Year of Indigenous Peoples

Native Title Act passed to begin Jan 1 1994

Catholic Church offers a formal apology for its past treatment of Aboriginal peoples National Education Policy presented to government (also known as NATSIEP)

1994 Cathy Freeman wins 2 gold medals at Commonwealth games and flies Aboriginal flag Uniting Church offers an apology to Indigenous people Aboriginal Encyclopaedia published

1995 National enquiry into Aboriginal Stolen Generations begins (Bringing Them Home) Commonwealth Government amends ‘Flag Act’ to include both Indigenous flags Hindmarsh Islands matters begins royal commission into Sacred Women’s business National Strategy on Indigenous Education written MCEETYA (Hughes Report)

1996 Wik judgment states that native title could co-exist with pastoral/mining leases Cape York land agreement signed by pastoralists, traditional owners and others First National Reconciliation Week celebrated

1997 Stolen Generations report ‘Bringing them Home’ tabled in parliament Howard’s ‘10 point plan’ passed by government – this legislation overrides the Mabo High Court decision and virtually extinguishes native title for Indigenous Australians

Australian ‘Reconciliation’ Convention is held in Melbourne Koiki Mabo remains buried on Murray Island as his tombstone was vandalised in Townsville

1998 First National Sorry Day held on the 27th May

1999 Launch of Draft Document for Reconciliation

2000 Reconciliation Walks over bridges around Australia (tens of thousands take to the streets to support Reconciliation). A final march held in Melbourne on 3rd December Sydney 2000 Olympics - Cathy Freeman wins gold in the 400 metres race Aboriginal legal service in Qld collects testimonial over ‘Stolen Wages’ during Protection and Segregation era’s

2001 A privately funded body Reconciliation Council to replace Reconciliation Committee

2002 Qld govt makes an offer of $55.6 million to pay $4000 or $2000 in Stolen Wages

2003 Review into ATSIC

2005 ATSIC abolished to be replaced by ICC’s in local areas

2006 Victoria formally recognises Aboriginal servicemen

A federal court grants native title to Perth and its surrounds (three times the size of Tasmania) to the Noongar Aboriginal people

Tasmania establishes Stolen Generations compensation scheme

2007 Sexual abuse report in NT paves the way for the intervention   
National Indigenous Television (NITV) – 24hr Aboriginal television service starts

Stolen Generations compensation handed down in Australian courts

The High Court rejects legislation which denies prisoners the right to vote

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (except Australia) National Aboriginal Alliance (NAA) forms in NT as a response to the intervention

Marion Scrymgour becomes the first Aboriginal person to lead a state/territory govt

2008 Ngaanyatjarra Elder Mr Ward dies in the back of a prison van with no water

A Welcome to Country is performed for the first time in federal parliament

The Australian Parliament (led by Kevin Rudd) [apologises to the Stolen Generations](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/politics/sorry-apology-to-stolen-generations)

Patrick Dodson receives the Sydney Peace Prize.

ACT votes for an Aboriginal body to advise on the lives of the Aboriginal population

Nathan Jawai drafted into America’s National Basketball Association (NBA)

Blue Mud Bay fishing licenses allows revenue to flow to Aboriginal people instead of the government (Northern Territory)

The Canberra suburb of Bonner names public places and roads after Aborigines

High Court Chief Justice Robert French acknowledges traditional owners in speech

Karlu Karlu (Devils Marbles) is handed back to traditional owners

COAG funds ‘Closing the Gap’ in Aboriginal Health and sets targets with funding The Queensland government announces a new Aboriginal Advisory Council

2009 The NT government ends a 34 year bilingual program in the Northern Territory

WA govt forms a Board to improve social & economic status of Aboriginals

Aboriginal law professor Mick Dodson receives the Australian of the Year

The Cox Peninsula native title claim settled in favour of the Larakia people

Reconciliation Australia releases the Australian Reconciliation Barometer

The High Court gives land rights to the Adnyamathanha people in Flinders Ranges

Australia supports the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

The Northern Territory releases homelands and outstations policies

The Tangentyere Council hands over land for 40 years in lieu of better services in NT

The Ampilatwatja people walk off into the desert due to home sewerage issues

The Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma advocates for a new Indigenous body

Prime Minister Rudd offers a formal apology to the Stolen Generations (1930 – 1970)

**First Nations Original Peoples Party**(FNOPP) formed - all candidates are Aboriginal

National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples (NCAFP) formed

Land returned to the Maralinga Tjarutja people in SA (former atomic testing site)

2010 Saltwater/Freshwater festival in Coffs Harbour reclaimed as a positive inclusive day

Queensland Indigenous Sports Hall of Fame launched

The Indigenous All Stars team plays the National Rugby League All Stars

Preamble to include Indigenous Queenslanders in Constitution approved Generation One is launched – it aims to end Indigenous disadvantage

Veteran Aboriginal rights activist, Charles ‘Chicka’ Dixon, dies aged 81

Megan Davis (academic) is the first Aboriginal person appointed to a UN body

Julia Gillard becomes the first female Prime Minister of Australia

Noongar man Ken Wyatt becomes the first Aboriginal in the House of Reps

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) delivers a damning report on Australia’s failure to meet international commitments

NSW preamble recognises Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people in Constitutional

Cummeragunja walk-off in 1939 turned into opera sung in Yorta Yorta language

The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) purchases the resort at Yulara, near Uluru. Aboriginal author and lawyer Larissa Behrendt is named NSW Australian of the Year

The Salvation Army apologises to survivors of Salvation Army Girls and Boys Homes

Canada & USA sign up to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

2011 Australia appears before the UN regarding human rights issues for treatment of asylum seekers, Aboriginal peoples, multiculturalism and racism

Australia Post launches their Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

The Lowitja Health Institute opens in Melbourne

The establishment of the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples

Aboriginal people included in Anzac Day march in Canberra re: Frontier Wars

Benson Saulo is Australia’s Youth Representative to the United Nations

Aboriginal boxer Lionel Rose dies aged 62

The first Aboriginal elected to ACT Legislative Assembly – Chris Bourke

Aboriginal author - Dr Aunty Ruby Langford Ginibi dies

Legislation to continue the NT Emergency Response measures for a further 10yrs

2012 The Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra celebrates its 40th anniversary

Aboriginal dormitories in NSW added State Heritage Register

Matthew Myers is the first Aboriginal appointed to the bench of the High Court

Aboriginal people set up ‘tent embassies’ in Brisbane, Moree and Perth

The first Aboriginal-owned biobank opens in the Hunter Valley

Western Australia renames the Foundation Day public holiday - first Monday in June

Aboriginal country musician Jimmy Little dies aged 75

The Aboriginal Provisional Government issues Aboriginal passports

Aboriginal dancer Ella Havelka joins the National Ballet Company

NITV – Aboriginal free-to-air service begins transmitting Aboriginal content

Queensland govt returns Murray Island land title back to the Meriam people

2013 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Bill 2012 passes

Kamilaroi man Adam Giles first Aboriginal to head an Australian government (NT)

Murrawarri Republic declares sovereignty of their lands in Northern NSW

The first uranium mine in Western Australia is approved

Aboriginal AFL player Adam Goodes called an ‘ape’ during a game

Yothu Yindi lead singer Mandawuy Yunupingu dies of kidney disease, aged 56

The largest Australian Aboriginal public artwork in the world opens in Paris

Australia Post honours Aboriginal people on a stamp collection

The Victorian Govt appoints a Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Youth

Tiwi Islander Rob Collins wins the role as Mufasa in the musical *The Lion King*

The Euahlayi Nation of SW Qld and NW NSW declares independence

Nova Peris becomes the first Aboriginal woman to enter federal parliament

Western Australia govt compulsorily acquires Aboriginal land for gas exportation

Aboriginal Singer Jessica Mauboy wins an ARIA as best female artist

2014 Adam Goodes (AFL football legend) becomes Australian of the Year

Townsville Council celebrates [Survival Day (24th Jan) and Australia Day (26th Jan)](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/australia-day-invasion-day)

The late Dr Mandawuy Yunupingu receives Order of Australia medal

The Australian government introduces legislation to repeal aspects of the Racial Discrimination Act - after massive protests it repeals the legislation

Indigenous Fashion Week (AIFW) showcasing Aboriginal fashion is held in Sydney

Jack Charles wins a lifetime achievement award at the Victorian Green Room Awards

Sydney artist Daniel Boyd wins the Bulgari Art Award

Euahlayi claim that land was illegally transferred to the Crown rejected in court

Aboriginal singer Jessica Mauboy performs at the Eurovision Song Contest

The Aust govt axes millions of dollars from Aboriginal programmes in the budget

National Indigenous Human Rights Awards held at the NSW state parliament

The federal government stops the funding to remote homeland communities

The Uni of Sydney suspends Prof Spurr after sending racist emails – he later resigns Gough Whitlam dies aged 98 - Gurindji peoples call him Kulum (respect for the dead) Defence returns the remaining Woomera lands back to traditional Aboriginal owners Rosalie Kunoth-Monks named the NT Australian of the Year (lead role in Jedda)

Aboriginal Peoples from across Australia gather in Alice Springs to declare independence, sovereign power and authority of their nations, lands and peoples

Amendments to the Police Acts in the NT allow police to detain people without cause. These laws disproportionally impact upon Aboriginal peoples

2015 Leeanne Enoch becomes the first Aboriginal woman elected to Qld parliament

Aboriginal people begin sit-ins at Parliament House over human rights violations

Protests held against forced closures of remote Aboriginal communities in WA Robert Isaacs (Clontarf Foundation) named WA of the Year

Denise Champion becomes the first Aboriginal woman to be a Christian minister

Koiki Mabo honoured by having a star named SSSC star Koiki, constellation: Crux

The ‘I Stand with Adam’ Goodes campaign begins to help stamp out racism in sport

PM visits the gravesite of Eddie Koiki Mabo on Murray Island in the Torres Strait

Anthony McAvoy becomes first Aboriginal person appointed to senior counsel

MP Ken Wyatt becomes the first Aboriginal to reach the frontbench

Australia appears before the Human Rights 2nd Working Group for a review

2016 Aboriginal languages become a new High School Core subject in NSW

Inaugural Indigenous Football Week to promote Aboriginal soccer players is held

The Kenbi land claim for Larrakia & Belyuen peoples near Darwin settles after 37yrs The Redfern Statement launched which calls for a new approach to Aboriginal Affairs

13 Aboriginal candidates run for the federal election Linda Burney becomes the first female Aboriginal MP in the House of Reps

‘Four Corners’ airs documentary on abuse of children in NT detention

Amnesty International outlines abuse of Aboriginal youth in QLD detentionThe Australian Psychological Society apologises to Aboriginal people over mistruths Jessica Mauboy becomes the first Aboriginal lead actor in *The Secret Daughter*

The Federal Court finds police were racist during the 2004 riots on Palm Island

Preamble to the Constitutionin Tasmania writtento recognise Aboriginal peoples

2017 Ken Wyatt is appointed Minister for Aged Care and Indigenous Health

Redfern Statement presented to parliamentary leaders in Canberra

June Oscar becomes the first female Social Justice Commissioner of HR commission

NITV launches Aboriginal animated children’s series - [Little J & Big Cuz](https://www.littlejandbigcuz.com.au/).

Aboriginal leaders gather at Uluru for constitutional recognition of Aboriginal people

The Council of Trade Unions establishes the First Nations Workers Alliance for the Community Development Employment Program CDEP (working for the dole)

The High Court awarding exclusive rights over Pilbara land to the Yindjibarndi people

City of Yarra (Melb) vote unanimously to no longer refer to 26 Jan as Australia Day

Clinton Pryor arrives at Parliament House (Canberra) after walking from Perth

NSW Parliament introduces Bill to revive traditional languages

Mungo man Aboriginal remains buried on country (western NSW)

Cynthia Lui becomes the first Torres Strait Islander elected to office in Queensland

The first Aboriginal team competes in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race

2018 Evonne Goolagong-Cawley is made a Companion of the Order of Australia. She was Australian of the year in 1971 and given an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1983

The Prince of Wales visits Nhulunbuy where he was presented with a ‘Letter Stick’ to acknowledge sovereignty and promote a pathway to Treaty

Gurrumul’s - [Djarimirri (Child of the Rainbow) album makes ARIA number 1 record](https://www.creativespirits.info/resources/music/geoffrey-gurrumul-yunupingu)

NT signs historic Barunga agreement to begin Indigenous treaty talks WA Police Commissioner apologises over the mistreatment of Aboriginal people

The Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park board declares that no one can climb ‘Uluru’

**References:**

[https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/cultures/atsi-collection/timeline](https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/cultures/atsi-collection/timeline/)

<https://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/off_the_walls/timelines>

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