

Aboriginal calendar of significant events – 2017

January

1 1993 Native Title Act proclaimed

Native title is a term used to express that Indigenous Australians are entitled to land which had been given to white occupiers. Legislation requires Aboriginal people to prove that they had a continuous ownership with the land they can claim under the act (which often proved difficult).

This act was a response to the Mabo High Court decision. Native title can co-exist with non-Indigenous proprietary rights and in some cases different indigenous groups can exercise their native title over the same land.

The Act was extensively amended in 1998 following another High Court decision about native title (Wik, 1996), which confirmed that native title rights and interests may exist over land which is or has been subject to a pastoral lease.

The Act establishes the National Native Title Tribunal and governs how native title is dealt with across Australia.

26 1993 Invasion Day (Australia Day)

26 1972 Tent Embassy established in front of Parliament House, Canberra

February

5 1972 Tent Embassy Petition to Parliament

8 1972 Woodward Land Rights Inquiry established

12 1965 The Freedom Ride bus leaves Sydney for country NSW.

13 2008 National Apology Day: Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised to the Stolen Generations

March

19 2006 On National Close the Gap Day

Organisations and Community's come together to improve the health of Aboriginal people, hold events and raise awareness of the Aboriginal health crisis.

21 1999 Harmony Day

Celebrates Australia's cultural diversity. It's about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone. It coincides the *United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*.

23 2005 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) abolished

April

- 1 1897 Resistance leader Jandamarra killed in WA
- 5 1997 "Bringing Them Home" Stolen Generations Report
- 15 1991 Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission Report

May

- 1 1946 Pilbara Aboriginal Stockmen's strike, WA
- 3 1990 ATSIC established
- 8 1997 Wik '10-Point-Plan' announced
- 26 1998 National Sorry Day

National Sorry Day is a day to remember the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. A chance for all Australians to recognise the pain thousands of Aboriginal people went through. The children affected are now known as the Stolen Generations.

- 27 1967 Australian 1967 Referendum

The anniversary of the 1967 Referendum recognises the 97% 'yes' vote in the Referendum of 1967. It changed the constitution to allow Aboriginal people to be counted in the census and to enable the Commonwealth government to make laws *for* Aboriginal people.

- 27 The day also marks the start of the annual National Reconciliation Week.
- 27 1997 National Reconciliation Convention.
- 28 2000 250,000 people walk for reconciliation in Sydney
- 29 1992 Torres Strait Islander flag launched
- 30 1980 Tiwi receive title to Tiwi Islands

June

- 3 1992 **Mabo Day**

The celebration of the 1992 High Court decision that ruled in favour of Eddie Koiki Mabo and other claimants that their people had occupied the island of Mer in the Torres Strait prior to the arrival of the British. This historic decision effectively recognised the existence of Native Title rights and rejected the concept of 'Terra Nullius', which claimed Australia was a land belonging to no-one prior to British occupation.

- 4 2000 50,000 people walk for reconciliation in Brisbane
- 10 1838 Myall Creek Massacre, NSW, and Myall Creek Massacre Memorial Ceremony
- 11 1988 Barunga Statement presented to Prime Minister Hawke
- 21 2007 PM John Howard declares the Northern Territory intervention

July

1 1871 Missionaries of the London Missionary Society arrive in the Torres Strait.

Introducing Christianity to the region. The Coming of the Light festival marks this important day for Torres Strait Islanders, who are mainly of Christian faith. They celebrate the day with cultural and religious activities.

2 1971 Evonne Goolangong Cawley wins Wimbledon

5 NAIDOC Week

The first week of July and celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal people. NAIDOC originally stood for 'National Aborigines and Islander Observance Committee', which was responsible for organising national activities for NAIDOC Week.

8 1998 Discriminatory Native Title amendments passed

12 1971 Aboriginal Flag first flown

The Australian Aboriginal Flag was designed by artist Harold Thomas and first flown at Victoria Square in Adelaide, South Australia, on National Aborigines Day, 12 July 1971.

The Torres Strait Islander Flag was designed by the late Bernard Namok in 1992 as a symbol of unity and identity for Torres Strait Islanders.

After a period of public consultation, in July 1995 both flags were proclaimed a 'Flag of Australia' by the Australian government.

23 2000 25,000 walk for reconciliation in Hobart

August

4 1998 National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day (NAICD)

The day aims to focus on themes related to Aboriginal children like poverty, education access and pride in culture, and recognises their strengths and culture.

9 1982 First meeting of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Geneva.

9 1994 International Day of Indigenous Peoples

First declared by the United Nations, the International Day of Indigenous Peoples aims to strengthen international awareness and cooperation for solutions to the problems faced by Aboriginal people in areas such as human rights, development, the environment, education and health.

14 1963 Bark Petition from Yirrkala to Parliament

16 1975 Return of land to Gurindji, NT

16-30 1928 Conniston Massacre, NT

18 1978 Tiwi Land Council established

24 1996 Gurindji walk-off, Wave Hill Station, NT

September

- 1 1998 Sea of Hands, Uluru
- 1 Indigenous Literacy Day is celebrated on the first Wednesday in September.
- 2 1991 Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation established

- 25 2000 Cathy Freeman's Olympic Gold Medal
- 28 1983 John Pat dies in police custody. Memorial services or protest marches held annually.

October

- 12 1997 First Sea of Hands, Canberra
- 26 1985 Uluru returned to traditional owners
- 28 1834 Battle of Pinjarra, WA
- 30 1975 Racial Discrimination Act takes effect

November

- 26 1986 Pope John Paul II addresses Aboriginal people in Alice Springs

December

- 2 2000 350,000 walk for reconciliation in Melbourne and Perth
- 4 2000 Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Final Report
- 16 1976 Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act passed
- 23 1996 High Court Wik Native Title decision