

RECONCILIATION CALENDAR

This calendar has been developed to reflect on our shared history and to map events that have helped shape the reconciliation journey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community. The events in this calendar recognise and celebrate some of the actions and achievements from the past that form the foundation for a shared future and strong relationships built on recognition, respect, trust, and understanding.

JANUARY

26	1788	INVASION DAY - Marks the day the First Fleet arrived at Port Jackson. Aboriginal groups in the Sydney region are the first to experience colonisation by the British.
26	1938	DAY OF MOURNING - On Australia's celebration of the 150 th anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet, the Aborigines Progressive Association declares a 'Day of Mourning'.
26	1972	TENT EMBASSY - The Aboriginal Embassy is established on the lawns in front of Parliament House, Canberra. In 1995 the embassy was listed on the Register of the National Estate; the only site on the Register noted as important due to its political significance to Indigenous Australians. 2022 marked its 50 th anniversary.
26	1976	LAND RIGHTS ACT - The Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) comes into force - the first attempt by an Australian government to legally recognise the Aboriginal system of land ownership. Significant amendments have been made since then.
26	1988	BICENTENNIAL - Over 40 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their supporters march in protest through Sydney during Australia's bicentennial celebrations.

FEBRUARY

1	1921	TINDALE - Norman Tindale began anthropological fieldwork with Aboriginal peoples of Groote Eylandt and the Roper River.
12	1965	FREEDOM RIDES - A group of students from the University of Sydney, led by Charles Perkins, draws national and international attention to the appalling living conditions of Aboriginal people and the racism that is rife in New South Wales country towns.
12	2008	WELCOME TO COUNTRY - The first Aboriginal Welcome to Country is conducted in the opening of Parliament.
13	2008	THE APOLOGY - The Australian Government apologises to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly to the Stolen Generations, whose lives are blighted by past government policies of forced child removal and assimilation.
13	2010	INDIGENOUS ALL STARS NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE (NRL) - The first All Stars game is held on the Gold Coast, celebrating the NRL's commitment to Indigenous Australia in Men's and Women's Rugby League.
26	1968	BOXING - Over 100 000 people attend a public reception in Melbourne for Lionel Rose, a Gunditjmarra (Dhauwurd Wurrung) man, after he wins the World Bantamweight boxing title in Tokyo.

MARCH

5	1990	ATSIC - Established through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission ACT 1989. It is abolished in March 2005, and raises many issues about the future of policymaking and service delivery in Indigenous affairs.
12	1913	MEETING PLACE - Canberra is officially named, believed to be derived from the Aboriginal word 'Kamberra' to describe 'meeting place'.
12	2015	CLOSURE OF COMMUNITIES - Reconciliation Australia releases a statement on the closure of remote Aboriginal communities in WA, asserting that living on Country represents more than a 'lifestyle choice'.
mid March	2007	NATIONAL CLOSE THE GAP DAY - National Close the Gap Day is an annual event that raises awareness and seeks to close the gap with respect to life expectancy, child mortality, educational and employment outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and non-Indigenous Australians.
21	1966	INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION - Every year on 21 March, the United Nations calls on the international community to eliminate racism & discriminatory practices. This day marks the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa.
21	1999	HARMONY DAY - Harmony Day is introduced by the Howard Government and celebrated annually on 21 March. It aims to rebrand the United Nations' International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, from a day of solidarity with people struggling with racial discrimination, to a day of celebrating Australia's cultural diversity.

APRIL

15	1991	DEATHS IN CUSTODY - The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody submits their final report.
17	1993	AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL - AFL player Nicky Winmar's iconic gesture of pride to a negative crowd challenges racism in sporting arenas and across the nation.
25	1988	ANZAC DAY - The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commemorative Ceremony is held after the ANZAC Dawn Service at the memorial plaque on Mount Ainslie.
30	1976	REPATRIATION - After Palawa reclaim Truganini's remains, Truganini is cremated, and her ashes are scattered in a channel close to her birthplace and homeland.

MAY

1	1946	PILBARA STRIKE - An estimated 800 Aboriginal pastoral workers from 27 stations in WA walk off the job for better pay and conditions. The strike lasts 6 years, the longest in Australian history.
26	1997	STOLEN GENERATIONS - Bringing Them Home, a report on the Stolen Generation is released at the Australian Reconciliation Convention, Melbourne.
26	1997	SORRY BOOKS - Representing a 'people's apology', over half a million Australians sign 461 Sorry Books, calling on the Federal Government to make a formal apology to the Stolen Generations.
26	2005	NATIONAL SORRY DAY - Every year on 26 May, National Sorry Day remembers and acknowledges the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families and communities. It is a day to acknowledge the strength of Stolen Generations Survivors and reflect on how we can all play a part in the healing process for our people and nation.
26	2013	CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE - The Journey of Recognition relay begins, led by AFL legend Michael Long. It aims to build support for constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians.
27	1967	THE REFERENDUM - Over 90% of Australians vote 'Yes' in a Federal Referendum for changes to the Australian Constitution.
27	1996	NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK - The week begins on the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum and ends on 3 June, the anniversary of the Mabo Decision.
28	2000	BRIDGE WALK - Over 250,000 people walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge in a public declaration that 'Reconciliation is the work of all Australians'.
29	1992	TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FLAG - The Torres Strait Islander flag was designed by the late Bernard Namok of Thursday Island, to symbolise the unity and identity of Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

JUNE

3	1992	MABO DECISION - The High Court of Australia recognises a group of Meriam people, led by Eddie Koiki Mabo, held land rights over the Murray Islands (which include the islands of Mer, Dauer and Waier) in the Torres Strait. The Mabo Case was successful in overturning the myth that at the time of colonisation Australia was 'terra nullius' or land belonging to no one.
10	1838	MYALL CREEK MASSACRE - Occurs in NSW, leading to seven British subjects being executed for massacring at least 28 Wirrayarayay people.
10	1983	NSW LAND RIGHTS - The Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NSW) comes into effect.
11	1975	RDA ENACTED - The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) is passed by the Whitlam government. The Act makes racial discrimination in certain contexts unlawful in Australia.
11	1988	BARUNGA STATEMENT - An important painted document is presented to the Australian Government calling on it to recognise the rights of Aboriginal people. The statement originated at the 1988 Barunga Sport and Cultural Festival.
21	2007	INTERVENTION - The Northern Territory Emergency Response Intervention (NTER) is announced and implemented immediately. The intervention introduces compulsory income quarantining for all people living in the 73 'prescribed areas' in the Northern Territory, all of which are Indigenous communities.
24	1879	TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS - All the remaining Torres Strait Islands become a part of Queensland.
30	1971	CENSUS - The Census officially includes all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian's population count for the first time.

JULY

1	1871	COMING OF THE LIGHT - A religious and cultural ceremony observed by Torres Strait Islanders to celebrate the arrival of the London Missionary Society, the introduction of Christianity.
1	1957	FIRST CITIZEN - Albert Namatjira and his wife Rubina receive Australian Citizenship, however this does not apply to their children.
1	1971	TENNIS - The Women's Singles title at Wimbledon is contested by two Australians. Wiradjuri woman, Evonne Goolagong defeats Margaret Court to win the title.
1	1994	TSRA - The Torres Strait Regional Authority is established.
12	1971	ABORIGINAL FLAG - What is now known as the Aboriginal Flag is first flown in Adelaide on National Aborigines Day. The flag was created as a symbol of unity and national identity.
14	1995	FLAGS OF AUSTRALIA - Both the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag are officially proclaimed by the Australian government as 'Flags of Australia'.
first Sunday	1975	NAIDOC WEEK - Celebrates the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
20	1971	THE AMS REDFERN - The first Aboriginal Medical Service at Redfern opens.
22	2002	RECONCILIATION PLACE - Located in the Parliamentary Zone, Reconciliation Place is officially opened.
28	1914	WORLD WAR I - World War I begins. Aboriginal soldiers serve despite laws prohibiting persons not of 'substantially European' origin.

AUGUST

4	1988	NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN'S DAY - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's day is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about the crucial impact that community, culture, and family play in the life of every Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander child.
9	1994	INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WORLDS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES - On this day, people from around the world are encouraged to spread the United Nation's message on the protection and promotion of the rights of Indigenous peoples.
14	1963	TRADITIONAL LAND RIGHTS - The first two Yirrkala Bark Petitions are presented to Parliament.
15	1996	AUTONOMY - The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs is asked to inquire into and report on greater autonomy for Torres Strait Islanders.
16	1975	GURINDJI - After negotiations with pastoralists, Gough Whitlam returns a portion of land back to the Gurindji.
23	1966	WAVE HILL STRIKE - Led by Gurindji man, Vincent Lingiari, Aboriginal workers, and their families, begin the Wave Hill strike.

SEPTEMBER

1	1939	WORLD WAR II - World War II begins. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples serve despite not being recognised as citizens.
2	1991	RECONCILIATION - Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation is established. Its functions are replaced in 2000 by Reconciliation Australia.
first week	2010	INDIGENOUS LITERACY DAY - Indigenous Literacy Day is a national celebration of culture, stories, language, and literacy. This day raises awareness of the disadvantages experienced in remote communities and advocates for more access to literacy resources.
13	2007	ANNIVERSARY OF UN DECLARATION OF INDIGENEOUS PEOPLES - The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is adopted by the General Assembly.
15	2000	OLYMPIC CEREMONY - Kuku-Yalanji and Birri-Gubba woman, Cathy Freeman, is the first competing athlete ever to light the Olympic Torch at the Sydney Olympics.
25	2000	400M - Cathy Freeman carries the Australian and Aboriginal flags on her victory lap after winning the 400m Olympic Gold Medal.
30	1982	COMMONWEALTH GAMES - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their supporters begin protests during the games in Brisbane to draw national and international attention to issues such as land rights.

OCTOBER

4	1995	AUSTRALIAN CURRENCY - A new \$50 note is released featuring David Unaipon, Polly and Milerum.
4	2015	RUGBY LEAGUE - NRL players, Johnathan Thurston (NQ Cowboys) and Justin Hodges (Brisbane Broncos) captain both grand final teams.
12	1997	SEA OF HANDS - The Sea of Hands is created as a powerful, physical representation of the Citizen's Statement on Native Title.
26	1985	ULURU - Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park is returned to the traditional owners, the Anangu people.

NOVEMBER

6	1973	HORSE RACING - Frank Reys, the first Aboriginal jockey, rides Gala Supreme to victory in the Melbourne Cup.
16	1996	INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR TOLERANCE - The International Day for Tolerance is an annual observance day declared by UNESCO in 1995 to generate public awareness of the dangers of intolerance.
21	2004	THE LONG WALK - Michael Long and supporters began 'The Long Walk' from Melbourne to Parliament House, Canberra, arriving on 2 December. It raises awareness to improve and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, and life opportunities.

DECEMBER

10	1950	HUMAN RIGHTS DAY - Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December - the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
10	1992	REDFERN SPEECH - Paul Keating delivers a speech at Redfern Park to launch the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples (1993).
19	1972	ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS - The Federal Government creates the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
22	1993	NATIVE TITLE - The Native Title Act 1993 is passed by the Australian Parliament, the purpose of which is 'to provide a national system for the recognition and protection of native title and for its co-existence with the national land management system'.
23	1996	WIK DECISION - Wik Peoples v The State of Queensland is decided by the High Court. This decision determines that Native Title could, in some circumstances coexist with some types of leasehold (such as pastoral).