



1938

DAY OF MOURNING

The APA and the AAL organised a National Day of Mourning in Sydney on January 26, 1938 – the 150th anniversary of white settlement. A manifesto written by Jack Patten and William Ferguson was read at the event, in which they appealed for full citizenship status, equality and land rights.

Five days later, William Ferguson and other APA members met with Prime Minister Joseph Lyons. They presented him with a 10-point plan for achieving Aboriginal equality. Their proposals were ignored.

1939-1945

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Aboriginal people once again enlisted to fight for their country, as did Torres Strait Islanders. Once again, there was no recognition given to returning Indigenous soldiers or their families.



1945

MORE VOTING RIGHTS

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1949

MORE VOTING RIGHTS

The Commonwealth Electoral Act extended voting rights to Aboriginal and Torres Strait people who were members of the Defence Forces.

1956

THE MELBOURNE OLYMPIC GAMES

The Olympics brought international attention to Australia, and to Australia's treatment of its Indigenous people.

1957

TWO STEPS FORWARD

Jessie Street campaigned for a referendum for including Aboriginal people on the census. She circulated a petition, which was read in the House of Representatives.

Also in 1957, Albert Namatjira and his wife Robina were granted special citizenship rights. Actor Robert Tudwali, who starred in the film *Jedda*, was also granted citizenship rights in 1957.

1958

FCAATSI IS FORMED

The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders was formed in 1958. FCAATSI campaigned for a referendum on Aboriginal issues. A petition was circulated to be presented to Parliament.

1962

MORE VOTING RIGHTS

The Commonwealth Electoral Act gave Aboriginal people in all States except Queensland the right to vote. Queensland did not grant voting rights to Aboriginal people until 1965.

1965

THE FREEDOM RIDES

Inspired by the civil rights movement in America, a group of students led by Charles Perkins drove around country NSW to protest against segregation and poor living and working conditions of Aboriginal people. The Freedom Rides brought international attention to the plight of Aboriginal people, and forced many towns to improve their treatment of Aboriginal people.

1966

WAVE HILL STRIKE

The Gurindji people, who worked on Wave Hill cattle station in the Northern Territory, went on strike, demanding wages and a return of some of their traditional lands. Led by Vincent Lingiari, they set up camp on their traditional lands at Wattie Creek. Their demands were initially refused, but the Gurindji remained and support for their campaign began to grow. Eventually the Gurindji won title to part of their land.

The United Nations' General Assembly approved two Covenants – the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights.

Sir Harold Holt also succeeded Sir Robert Menzies as Prime Minister. As Prime Minister of Australia he signed the United Nations International Accord for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. This meant that he was required to abolish the White Australia policy.

1967

THE REFERENDUM

With the mounting public support and pressure, Prime Minister Holt finally gave in, and called a referendum in 1967. An overwhelming 90.7 per cent of Australians voted Yes to change the Constitution.



PREPARATION BEFORE READING

This timeline outlines the most important events in Australia and overseas that led up to the 1967 referendum. The referendum saw more than 90% of eligible Australians vote YES to count Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the national census of the population and to give the Commonwealth Government power to make specific laws in respect of Indigenous people. This event is often referred to as the first stage of the reconciliation movement in Australia.

The change, after nearly two hundred years of white occupation and over fifty five years of Federation, finally enabled Aboriginal people, like white Australians, to be counted in the national census and to be subject to Commonwealth rather than just State laws.

Read **Timeline to Justice** page 9

ACTIVITY 1: SCANNING FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION

1. In 1938, a National Day of mourning was held in Sydney to put forward a plan for achieving Aboriginal equality.

TRUE FALSE

2. What was one outcome of the 1956 Olympics held in Melbourne?

3. What were the two steps forward in 1957?

4. What does FCAATSI stand for?



5. Which state did not grant voting rights to Aboriginal people in 1962?

6. What was the purpose for the Freedom Rides of 1966?

7. Which significant event occurred in 1967?

ACTIVITY 2: UNDERSTANDING WORDS IN CONTEXT

Write your own meaning for the words from the report in the boxes below.

(Read the words from the report as well as the sentences around them).

Words from the report	My words that mean the same thing
(1938) A manifesto written by Jack Patten and William Ferguson was read.	
(1939 – 1945) Once again, there was no recognition given to returning Indigenous soldiers or their families.	
(1957) Jessie Street circulated a petition, which was read in the House of Representatives.	
(1967) With the mounting public support and pressure, Prime Minister Holt finally gave in, and called a referendum in 1967.	



ACTIVITY 3

1. In what order did these things happen?

- A referendum was held in 1967.
- The Gurindji people went on strike at Wave Hill Station.
- Albert Namatjira and his wife Rubina were granted special citizenship rights.
- Queensland granted voting rights to Aboriginal people.

2. A referendum is a

- policy
 plan
 vote
 petition

3. Who led the Gurindji Strike?

- William Fergusaon
- Robert Tudwali
- Vincent Lingiari
- Jessie Street

4. Charles Perkins is best known for

- leading the National Day of Mourning
- leading the Freedom Rides of 1966
- forming the FCAATSI
- winning a medal at the 1956 Olympics



ACTIVITY 4: REPRESENTING INFORMATION IN A TIMELINE

Look at the changes that have occurred in Australia's history from 1938 – 1967. This explains some of the processes that have led to greater rights and freedoms for Indigenous people.

Organise this information into a timeline of significant dates and events.