

Recent history

1. 2000

March: Australia appears before the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The committee criticises the government's inadequate response to recommendations from the Bringing Them Home Report.

27 May - 3 June: **Corroboree 2000** is held at Sydney Opera House to mark 10 years of work on Reconciliation. Here, the Council for Aboriginal reconciliation presents to the nation Corroboree 2000 - Towards Reconciliation which includes the documents 'Australian Declaration towards Reconciliation' and 'Roadmap for Reconciliation'. The roadmap outlines four national strategies to advance reconciliation.

28 May: More than 300,000 take part in the **People's Walk for Reconciliation** across the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Cathy Freeman wins gold in the women's 400m at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. The opening and closing ceremonies celebrated Indigenous cultural identity and history and provided some deft political comment on contemporary Aboriginal issues.

An **Aboriginal Tent Embassy** is set up in Sydney during the Olympic period to attract world media attention to Australian Indigenous issues.

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation ceases to operate by the end of 2000. It is to be replaced by a new national body, Reconciliation Australia, in 2001.

2. 2001

The Northern Territory overturns its mandatory sentencing laws.

The **Yeperenye Federation Festival** outside Alice Springs becomes the largest corroboree ever staged in Australia, involving more than 25,000 people of 40 Indigenous nations. The programme is a celebration revolving around the theme of the Yeperenye (Caterpillar) Dreaming story and federation as seen from an Aboriginal perspective.

Aden Ridgeway is the first Aboriginal person to be elected as a Parliamentary Leader when he holds the position of Deputy Leader of the Australian Democrats from 2001 to 2002.

Carol Martin (Australian Labor Party), becomes the first Aboriginal woman to be elected to a state parliament when she wins the seat of Kimberley in the Parliament of Western Australia.

3. 2002

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Dr William Jonas, presents the **Social Justice Report 2001** and **Native Title Report 2001** to Parliament. In the report he questions: What happened to reconciliation? Both reports express serious concerns about the nation's progress in achieving the exercise of Aboriginal rights.

The Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee commences an inquiry into the Progress Towards National Reconciliation and is due to report by September 2003.

The **first member of the Stolen Generations is awarded compensation** in the NSW Victims Compensation Tribunal for the sexual assault and injuries she suffered after authorities removed her from her family.

4. 2004

The government starts using **Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs)**, voluntary written agreements, which set out what outcomes are to be achieved, and the agreed roles and responsibilities of governments and Aboriginal communities in relation to particular projects or activities.

The Commonwealth government establishes a **memorial to the Stolen Generations** at Reconciliation Place in Canberra.

November: Mulrunji Doomadgee dies in a police watch house on Palm Island, 70 km north of Townsville in north Queensland. His death sparks violent riots during which the police station and officers' quarters are burnt down. Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley is found guilty of causing Mulrunji's death, but in late 2006 Queensland's Director of Public Prosecutions, Leanne Clare, opts not to prosecute him. In February 2007 the Premier Peter Beattie orders a judicial review of the case and Hurley is charged with manslaughter, the first time ever in Queensland that a police officer is charged over the death of an Aboriginal person. In June 2007 an all-white jury finds him not guilty. Hurley returns to work after having been suspended on full pay. An Aboriginal man, Lex Wotton, was found guilty on 24 October 2008 of "rioting with destruction" and sentenced to six years in prison.

The **National Indigenous Council** is appointed to be an advisory body to the Australian government, chaired by Dr Sue Gordon, a Western Australian Magistrate. It winds up in early 2008.

21 November: Casey Donovan, at just 16 years of age, becomes the youngest and first female winner of *Australian Idol*. She releases *Listen to Your Heart* a few days later.

Michael Long, a former Australian Rules footballer of partial Aboriginal descent, sets out on foot from Melbourne to Canberra to speak to Prime Minister John Howard and raise awareness of the plight of Aboriginal Australians. His walk becomes known as **The Long Walk**.

5. 2005

The organisation 'Stolen Generations Victoria' is set up as a result of the 2003 report of the Stolen Generations taskforce. Its purpose is to establish a range of support and referral services that will assist Stolen Generations people to reconnect with their families, communities, cultures and lands (<http://www.stolengenerationsvictoria.org.au>).

The **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) is dismantled** by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Amendment Act 2005 and replaced by a Commonwealth government-appointed advisory board.

The first official **Sorry Day ceremony outside Australia** is hosted in Lincoln Fields, London, on 25 May 2005.

6. 2006

17 May: Boxer Danny Green loses to Aboriginal man Anthony Mundine by points decision over 12 rounds. The fight remains one of the most watched bouts in Australian boxing history.

31 May: Victoria is the first state to formally recognise the **sacrifice and service of Aboriginal servicemen** during the inaugural Honouring Victorian Indigenous Returned Service Men and Women Shrine of Remembrance Service. The service is held each year since.

19 September: A federal court ruling grants one of the **nation's largest native title claims** to Perth and its surrounds (three times the size of Tasmania) to the Noongar Aboriginal people. The West Australian government instantly appeals the ruling.

October: The first **Stolen Generations compensation scheme** in Australia is set up in Tasmania by the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal Children Act 2006 (Tas).

1. 2007

Intervention & punishment

- 15 June:* Pat Anderson and Rex Wild release the **Little Children are Sacred** report which reports 'widespread sex abuse' of children throughout communities of the Northern Territory. The report makes 97 recommendations.
- 21 June:* Prime Minister John Howard and Indigenous Affairs Minister Mal Brough announce the **Northern Territory intervention**. Staged as a response to the 'Little Children are Sacred' report, the intervention is widely criticised because it also legislates to remove the permit system for access to Aboriginal land, abolish the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), quarantine 50% of welfare payments, compulsorily acquire Aboriginal land and subject Aboriginal children to mandatory health checks. While the intervention receives bipartisan political support, many opponents label it an 'invasion' and promise a 'Little Children are Scared' report.
- 1 July:* The Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act comes into effect, aiming to strengthen governance and management of Aboriginal corporations with consistent practices and standards.
- 13 July:* National Indigenous Television (NITV), **Australia's first national 24-hour Aboriginal television service**, starts.
- 24 July:* Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarra's painting *Warlugulong* breaks all sales records for Aboriginal paintings when it is sold at an auction for \$2.4 million.
- 1 August:* [Bruce Trevorrow](#) is the first person to receive **Stolen Generations compensation** by a court. A court justice awards him \$525,000 for 'pain, suffering and false imprisonment' [1].
- 30 August:* The High Court rejects legislation passed by the Howard government which denied all **prisoners the right to vote**. This law was challenged by Vickie Roach, an Aboriginal prisoner in Melbourne. But the Court upheld the validity of the law providing that prisoners serving a sentence of three years or longer are not entitled to vote.
- 13 September:* 143 member states adopt the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**. Along with Canada, New Zealand and the United States, Australia is one of four nations to vote against the declaration, while 11 nations abstain.
- 14 September:* The **National Aboriginal Alliance (NAA)** forms in Alice Springs as a response to the intervention of the government in the Northern Territory. It describes itself as completely independent of government and committed to Aboriginal people's right to self-determination [2].
- 24 November:* **John Howard loses the federal election** in a landslide ('Ruddslide') defeat against the Australian Labor Party's candidate Kevin Rudd. Rudd promises to say sorry to the Stolen Generations and to consult with Aboriginal people.
- Marion Scrymgeour becomes the first Aboriginal person to lead a state or territory government when she becomes Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

2. 2008

- January:* Ngaanyatjarra Elder **Mr Ward dies in the back of a prison van** because the two officers failed to give him water and offer him breaks while driving 320km through 42-degree heat in Western Australia. ⇒ [Deaths in custody](#)
- 12 February:* For the first time in government history Aboriginal people perform a **Welcome to Country** as the federal parliament opens after the break.

- 13 February:** **The Australian Parliament apologises to the Stolen Generations.** Both the government and the opposition support the apology and say ‘sorry’ to Aboriginal people who were taken away from their families from 1900 to the 1970s.
- 1 May:** South Australia creates the **SA Aboriginal Advisory Council (SAAAC)** which advises the government on programmes and policies on Aboriginal people. The council is meant to fill the void left by the abolished ATSIC.
- 20 May:** Patrick Dodson is the second Australian to receive Australia’s only international peace prize, the **Sydney 2008 Peace Prize.**
- June:** Aboriginal people in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) vote for Australia’s **first elected Aboriginal representative body** since ATSIC’s demise in 2005. Seven representatives will be elected every three years to advise the ACT government on policy that effects the lives of the ACT’s Aboriginal population.
- 27 June:** **Nathan Jawai** is the first Indigenous Australian basketball player to be drafted into the National Basketball Association (NBA). He will play for the Toronto Raptors.
- 3 July:** 400 Aboriginal men take part in an Aboriginal male health summit and issue the **Inteyerrkwe Statement**, an apology from men to women for violence and abuse.
- 31 July:** The High Court hands down its **Blue Mud Bay decision** which says that the Northern Territory government could not grant commercial fishing operators licenses for areas within the boundaries of the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act. This affects 80% of the NT’s coast and tidal rivers where revenues of licenses flow now to Aboriginal people instead of the white government.
- August:** The Canberra suburb of **Bonner names public places and roads** after prominent Aboriginal leaders and their supporters. The suburb itself was named after Neville Bonner, the first Aboriginal person to sit in federal parliament as a Senator for Queensland from 1971 to 1983.
- 1 September:** In his swearing-in speech, High Court Chief Justice Robert French acknowledges the Ngunnawal people present as the ‘traditional people’ of the area and pays tribute to Aboriginal culture and history. It is believed to be the first time such comments came from Australia’s highest legal seat.
- September:** Freddie Timms’ ‘Wunubi Spring’ is the **world’s first chemically protected Aboriginal artwork** which uses a chemical fingerprint to protect the painting.
- 28 October:** The Devils Marbles (Karlukarlu) site is handed back to traditional owners after a 28-year native title battle. Its owners consider Karlukarlu as one of the most significant sacred sites.
- 29 November:** Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting where state and federal heads announce they will contribute \$806 million (federal) and \$772 million (all states) into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health over the next four years, the **biggest single injection of Indigenous health spending in decades.**
- 13 December:** The Queensland government announces a new **Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council.** The council should provide a direct link between Indigenous people and the government. The 14 members are appointed for a two-year period.

3. 2009

- 1 January:** The NT government rules that the first four hours of education in all NT schools will be delivered in English, putting an **end to 34 years of bilingual education** in the Northern Territory by ending the nine remaining bilingual programs.
- 9 January:** The Western Australian government announces the formation of the **Indigenous Implementation Board** to improve social and economic outcomes for Aboriginals. The nine-member board aims to ‘enhance Indigenous involvement in local decision-making and strengthen corporate and non-government contribution to Indigenous affairs’. Members are chosen for their expertise, not as representatives.
- 26 January:** Aboriginal law professor **Mick Dodson** receives the 2009 **Australian of the Year** award for his lifetime commitment to improving the lives of Aboriginal people and in helping to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

30 January: The Northern Territory government and traditional owners settle one of the longest native title claims over the **Cox Peninsula**, about 30 kms west of Darwin. 80% of the area will be designated Aboriginal land for the Larrakia people.

February: Reconciliation Australia releases the **Australian Reconciliation Barometer**, a first-ever study on how Aboriginal and other Australians see and feel about each other.

30 March: The Federal Court makes the **largest native title determination in South Australia's history** when it recognises rights of the Adnyamathanha people to land in and around the Flinders Ranges.

3 April: Australia supports the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**. After 20 years of negotiations, the declaration was formally adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007 with the support of 143 member states and the opposition of four (Australia, Canada, USA, NZ). The Howard government had rejected the declaration fearing a separate customary law.

May: The Australian government allocates the **largest amount of funding** for a single year in the history of federal budgets to **Indigenous affairs**: A\$4.8 billion. The biggest single item with A\$106 million is for the Canberra bureaucracy to manage the income of Aboriginal people under the Northern Territory intervention. The Football Federation Australia announces a ten-year **Indigenous Football Development Program** to give soccer a higher profile in the Indigenous community and to lift the percentage of Indigenous players in the sport's elite level.

Boxer **Anthony Mundine claims his third world boxing title.**

The Northern Territory releases its first-ever **policy for homelands and outstations**, setting out how the government intends to provide services and infrastructure to assist communities living on Aboriginal-owned lands. ⇒ [Aboriginal homelands](#)

July: After months of pressure Tangentyere Council reluctantly agrees to hand over Aboriginal community land to the Australian government for 40 years, in return for A\$100m to upgrade housing and services in town camps in Alice Springs.

15 July: When their community's sewerage system fails and raw sewage floods the street many members of the **Ampilatwatja people walk off** to camp in the desert during the Australian winter. ⇒ [Aboriginal houses](#)

27 August: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma outlines the proposed model for a **new national Indigenous representative body** to fill the void since the demise of ATSIC in 2004. The model enables representation by Indigenous land councils, peak bodies and other Indigenous organisations, as well as a place for leaders operating at all levels. It has a 50/50 gender rule for representatives and an overseeing role of an ethics committee.

16 November: The Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says **sorry to the Forgotten Australians** which include migrants and Indigenous people who were victims of abuse in orphanages and institutions between 1930 and 1970. The Forgotten Australians suffered similar abuse as the members of the Stolen Generations.

17 November: Marianne Mackay and Glenn Moore found the **Aboriginal Political Party**, where every candidate identifies as Aboriginal.

22 November: The government announces its support of the new representative body for Aboriginal people, called the **National Congress of Australia's First Peoples (NCAFP)**.

17 December: 50 years after nuclear testing was carried out on their lands the South Australian **Maralinga Tjarutja people** are returned their land. ⇒ [Native Title](#)

4. 2010

January: The Aboriginal Political Party and the Ecological and Social Justice Party unite to become the Western Australia-based **Ecological, Social Justice, Aboriginal Party (ESJA)** with its inaugural President Glenn Moore.

26 January: About 12,000 people attend the inaugural **Saltwater Freshwater Festival** in Coffs Harbour, reclaiming Australia Day as a positive inclusive day for the Gumbaynggirr community.

12 February: Indigenous Sport Queensland launches the **Queensland Indigenous Sports Hall of Fame**.

13 February: The **Indigenous All Stars team plays the National Rugby League All Stars**, two years after Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generations.

17 February: Singer and actress **Ruby Hunter dies** of a heart attack aged 54.

23 February: The Queensland Parliament **amends the Constitution of Queensland to include a preamble** honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians. The preamble now reads: "The people of Queensland, free and equal citizens of Australia... honour the Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share; and pay tribute to their unique values, and their ancient and enduring cultures, which deepen and enrich the life of our community..."

19 March: Australia's richest man, **Andrew Forrest, launches GenerationOne** in the presence of the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and celebrities such as Cate Blanchett and Russell Crowe. The campaign aims at convincing Australians to help end Indigenous disadvantage.

Australia changes with each one of us making a change... Let's change Australia for the better.—Prime Minister Kevin Rudd launching GenerationOne [4]

20 March: **Charles 'Chicka' Dixon dies** aged 81. An activist, Charles was active in the FCAATSI and its campaign for the 1967 Referendum, an active participant of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in the 1970s, and played a major part in establishing Australia's first Aboriginal legal and medical services. He received a state funeral on March 31st.

19 April: **New Zealand signs the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, leaving the USA and Canada as the only remaining countries rejecting it.

May: Aboriginal academic Megan Davis becomes the **first Aboriginal person appointed to a UN body** when the Australian government nominates her for the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The left wing Ecological, Social Justice, Aboriginal Party unites with the First Nations Original Peoples Party to form the federally registered **First Nations Political Party**.

28 May: **Michael Leslie** wins the \$50,000 **Red Ochre Award** for lifetime achievement in Indigenous dance.

June: 19-year-old Aboriginal model **Samantha Harris** makes it to the cover of Vogue Australia's June issue. Harris got her first break into modelling after entering a competition in the Australian teenage magazine *Girlfriend* in 2003, aged just 13.

9 June: The **Resale Royalty Right for Visual Artists Act** is introduced, entitling all artists to a 5% royalty whenever their work is re-sold. Thousands of Aboriginal artists can benefit from the scheme. ⇒ [Aboriginal art profits](#)

12 June: Timana Tahu, an Aboriginal player of the Parramatta Eels rugby club, walks out of the NSW Origin team camp in response to racist comments by the team's assistant coach Andrew Johns, sparking a media debate about [racism against Aboriginal players and people](#).

24 June: **Julia Gillard**, previously Deputy Prime Minister, becomes the **first female Prime Minister** of Australia after Kevin Rudd lost the confidence of his party. Rudd served the shortest period of any Prime Minister so far.

Noongar man Ken Wyatt becomes the first Indigenous Australian in the House of Representatives in the federal parliament when he wins the Perth seat of Hasluck for the Liberal Party.

27 June: French-born tourist Alizee Sery, 25, outrages Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people by walking to the top of Uluru and performing a **strip show** which she sees as a 'tribute' to Aboriginal people. ⇒ [Threats to Aboriginal land](#)

29 July: The West Australian government approves \$3.2 million, **one of the largest ex-gratia (voluntary) payments ever made in Australia** to the family of an Aboriginal Elder who died of heatstroke in the back of a prison van two years ago. ⇒ [Aboriginal deaths in custody](#)

28 August: The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) delivers a damning report on Australia's failure to meet international commitments on eliminating [discrimination](#).

8 September: NSW becomes the third Australian state, after Victoria and Queensland, to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their Constitutional preambles. The Aboriginal flag is also permanently hung in the NSW Parliament.

We are enshrining today fundamental truths, the truth that Aboriginal people are the first peoples of NSW, the truth of the spiritual, economic and cultural ties that bind Aboriginal people to the land.—Kristina Keneally, Premier of NSW [5]

30 September: The **National Gallery of Australia opens 11 new Indigenous galleries** and art spaces that will house the majority of the gallery's huge collection of Indigenous art, reportedly the largest collection of its kind in the world. ⇒ [Aboriginal arts](#)

9 October: The opera *Pecan Summer* premieres telling the story of the Cummeragunja Aboriginal walk-off of 1939. It is the first opera to be partly sung in Yorta Yorta language.

15 October: The Indigenous Land Corporation announces it had **purchased the Ayers Rock Resort at Yulara**, near Uluru. The deal covers all resort hotels, accommodation and infrastructure.

14 November: Poet and author **Dr Roberta 'Bobbi' Sykes dies** aged 67. In the 1980s she became the first Aboriginal Australian to attend Harvard University, gaining a PhD in education, and in 1994 was awarded the Australian Human Rights Medal. Sykes is also a co-founder of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

25 November: Aboriginal author and lawyer **Larissa Behrendt is named NSW Australian of the Year**. She is given the award in "recognition of her passionate and articulate advocacy for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders".

7 December: The **Salvation Army apologises** to survivors of Salvation Army Girls and Boys Homes of Australia, the "forgotten children". They lived in orphanages and homes until the early 1990s, and many were abused. 40% of them were Aboriginal [6].

16 December: The USA are the last country to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Canada joined on November 12, 2010.

5. 2011

January: Australia experiences its **worst flooding on record** affecting Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania. The floods claim the life of at least one Aboriginal person, delay land claim hearings and put further pressure on people on housing waiting lists. Many don't accept help or play down their loss. Aboriginal musician Troy Cassar-Daley loses his farm near Brisbane.

Golden Guitars are pretty sturdy, like the artists that get them.—Troy Cassar-Daley, commenting about the Golden Guitars he won which were muddied by the floods [7]

6 January: The Australian Electoral Commission registers the **First Nations Political Party** which now can elect an executive and pre-select candidates.

2 February: **Cyclone Yasi** crosses over north Queensland causing billions of dollars of damage. Palm Island loses its over 100-year-old Old Fig Tree, a story place of the community. People as far as 700 km away feel the force of the storm which triggers the biggest domestic deployment of the defence forces.

February: **Australia Post** becomes the first Government Business Enterprise to create a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). It celebrates it with the release of an invitation-only commemorative stamp featuring Ellen Pangerian (1847-1877), also known as Helen Mary Cuper, who was the **first Indigenous Post Mistress** in Australia.

16 March: **Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation** releases the video *FMG's Great Native Title Swindle* showing Fortescue Metals Group head Andrew Forrest addressing a remote Pilbara community meeting. The video

shows how powerless and unsupported Aboriginal people are when negotiating with a multibillion-dollar corporation. The video causes big waves in the media.

24 March: The **Lowitja Institute opens in Melbourne**, the first national body solely committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. Its naming patron is Aboriginal woman Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue from the Luritja clan.

17 April: Yindjibarndi woman Jodi Broun and Butchulla man Les Malezer become **the first elected national Indigenous leaders** since the abolition of ATSIC as they assume the positions of co-chairs of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples.

April: Benson Saulo from the Wemba Wemba people and raised in Tamworth, is the first Aboriginal person to become Australia's Youth Representative to the United Nations.

8 May: Aboriginal boxer **Lionel Rose dies** aged 62. He was the first Aboriginal boxer to win a world title. ⇒ [Famous Aboriginal sports people](#)

8 June: The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples gets the first elected board, giving Aboriginal people the first **elected national representative body** since the abolition of ATSIC.

June: The Australian Capital Territory gets its first Aboriginal politician when Gamilaroi man Chris Bourke is elected to the ACT Legislative Assembly. Mr Bourke is the son of Prof Colin Bourke, the first Aboriginal person to qualify as a dentist.

2 October: Dr Aunty **Ruby Langford Ginibi dies**. She was one of Australia's foremost Aboriginal authors and wrote numerous books, short stories and poetry. Her trademark term was about 'edu-ma-cating' non-Aboriginal people about Aboriginal peoples' circumstances and struggle. ⇒ [Aboriginal books](#)

28 September: The Federal Court of Australia decides that **journalist Andrew Bolt has contravened the Racial Discrimination Act** "because of the manner" in which he reported about Aboriginal people of mixed descent ('fair-skinned'). ⇒ [Racism](#)

October: Aboriginal directory service inguides.com.au launches Australia's **first Indigenous mobile application**.

November: Gamilaroi man Chris Bourk becomes the **ACT's first Aboriginal government minister**, taking on the portfolios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, education and training.

The government introduced new legislation to **extend key Northern Territory Emergency Response measures** for a further 10 years.

6. 2012

26 January: The **Aboriginal Tent Embassy** in Canberra celebrates its 40th anniversary. An incident where the Prime Minister was disturbed by around 50 protesters outside a restaurant makes security guards drag her hurriedly into a car. She loses a shoe, gaining her the nickname 'Gingerella' (alluding to Cinderella and PM Julia Gillard's red hair). Media reports grossly exaggerate the events.

14 February: Three former Aboriginal children's homes are added to the NSW State Heritage Register: Cootamundra, Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home and Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Training Home.

March-April Aboriginal people set up tent embassies in Brisbane, Moree and Perth to draw attention to issues such as sovereignty and native title.

April: The first **Aboriginal-owned biobank** opens in the Hunter Valley.

Western Australia renames the Foundation Day public holiday (first Monday in June) as Western Australia Day, for the first time in legislation recognising Aboriginal people as the original inhabitants and traditional custodians of Western Australia.

2 April: Veteran Aboriginal country musician [Jimmy Little](#), dies after a long illness, aged 75, at his home in Dubbo in western NSW.

2 May: The NSW Governor launches the **Justice Reinvestment Campaign** which aims to spend more money on prevention and early intervention than imprisonment.

- 18 June:** Campaign *Stand For Freedom* presents 43,000 signatures to the Australian government supporting Aboriginal demands that the Stronger Futures legislation be withdrawn.
- 30 June:** Government and opposition introduce laws that continue the [Northern Territory Intervention](#) for another 10 years (“Stronger Futures” legislation).
- 9 August:** After widespread outrage and a petition signed by 20,337 people **Facebook removes a page of Aboriginal memes** which portrays Aborigines as drunks who sniff petrol and bludge on welfare.
- 15 September:** Over 200 people, including newly arrived asylum seekers, receive an **Aboriginal Passport**. The Aboriginal Passport was first introduced in 1988 by Palawa (Tasmanian) activist, Michael Mansell, and was issued to an Aboriginal Delegation that visited Libya.
- 12 December:** In a historic day for Australia, SBS begins broadcasting a **dedicated Aboriginal TV service** available free-to-air for the first time. The new channel incorporates NITV (National Indigenous Television) on SBS4 (digital channel 34) and starts at 12pm on 12/12/2012.
- 15 December:** More than 30 years after the Mabo decision the Queensland government returns the title over the Murray Islands back to the Meriam people.

7. 2013

- 13 February:** The Australian Parliament passes with bi-partisan support the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Bill 2012** which recognises the unique and special place of Aboriginal people and sets out a review process to progress the route to a referendum.
- 14 March:** The Northern Territory Country Liberal Party elects Gamilaroi man Adam Giles as Chief Minister. He is the **first Aboriginal person to head an Australian government**.
- 30 March:** Murrawarri people from the Culgoa River region of northern New South Wales declare their sovereignty of their lands under the name of the **Murrawarri Republic**. Along with the boundaries of their republic they also present their own flag. The Peoples Council of the Murrawarri Republic held its first meeting at Weilmoringle on 13 July 2013.
- April:** The federal government grants environmental approval to Toro Energy’s Wiluna project, the **first uranium mine in Western Australia**.
- 12 April** The Western Australian Government **replaces the word ‘Indigenous’ with the word ‘Aboriginal’** in their official documents, and also changes the “Department of Indigenous Affairs” to the “Department of Aboriginal Affairs”.
- 24 May** A **13-year-old girl calls Sydney Swans Aboriginal rugby player Adam Goodes an “ape”**, shattering the star. The racist incident comes 20 years after Aboriginal player Nicky Winmar pointed proudly to his black chest in a similar incident. Another comment by television presenter Eddie McGuire a few days later sparks a national debate about [racism](#).
- 2 June** [Yothu Yindi](#) lead singer **Yunupingu dies** at his home in Yirrkala in Eastern Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, aged 56, from kidney disease.
- 6 June** The Musée du Quai Branly (MQB) in Paris unveils the **largest Australian Aboriginal public artwork in the world** on its roof, a detail of Lena Nyadbi’s painting *Dayiwul Lirlmim* (Scales of the Barramundi). The permanent artwork is only viewable from atop the Eiffel Tower.
- 27 June:** **Kevin Rudd becomes Prime Minister** (again).
- 23 July:** The Victorian Government appoints Aboriginal man Andrew Jackomos as Victoria’s - and **Australia’s - first Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Youth**. The appointment of an Aboriginal children’s commissioner was one of the recommendations arising out of the Protecting Victoria’s Vulnerable Children Inquiry.
- August:** Tiwi Islander Rob Collins wins the role of the kind-hearted leader Mufasa in the Disney musical *The Lion King*.

12 August: The **Euahlayi Nation** of Goodooga in the upper western region of NSW, **declares independence** from the Commonwealth.

7 September: **Tony Abbott becomes Prime Minister** of Australia. The Coalition's Aboriginal policy declares that "Australia will, in effect, have a prime minister for indigenous affairs and a dedicated indigenous affairs minister."

Nova Peris becomes Senator for the Northern Territory and the **first Aboriginal woman to enter Federal Parliament**.

October: Australian South Sea Islanders elect their first national governing body which creates a national secretariat, board of directors and an ethics council.

12 November: Western Australia Premier **Colin Barnett compulsorily acquires** 3,414 hectares at James Price Point in the Kimberley to develop a supply base and gas processing hub.

He calls it self-determination; we call it standing on our own feet with a gun to our head.—Wayne Barker, spokesman for the Jabirr-Jabirr [8]

8. 2014

25 January: AFL player **Adam Goodes becomes Australian of the Year** "for his leadership and advocacy in the fight against racism both on the sporting field and within society".

26 January: Townsville Council for the first time officially celebrates both Survival Day (on 24 January) and Australia Day (on 26 January).

The late Mr Yunupingu from Aboriginal band Yothu Yindi posthumously receives the Companion of the Order of Australia, one of Australia's highest honours. The award recognises the highest degree of service to humanity.