

RIGHT WRONGS
WRITE
YES

For
the
rights

AGAINST ABORIGINES
Commonwealth Constitution says the Federal Parliament can make laws for
of any race
OTHER THAN THE ABORIGINAL RACE in any State"
Section 51, Clause xxxiii
and
members of people . . .
ORIGINAL NATIVES SHALL NOT BE COUNTED"
156, see 127

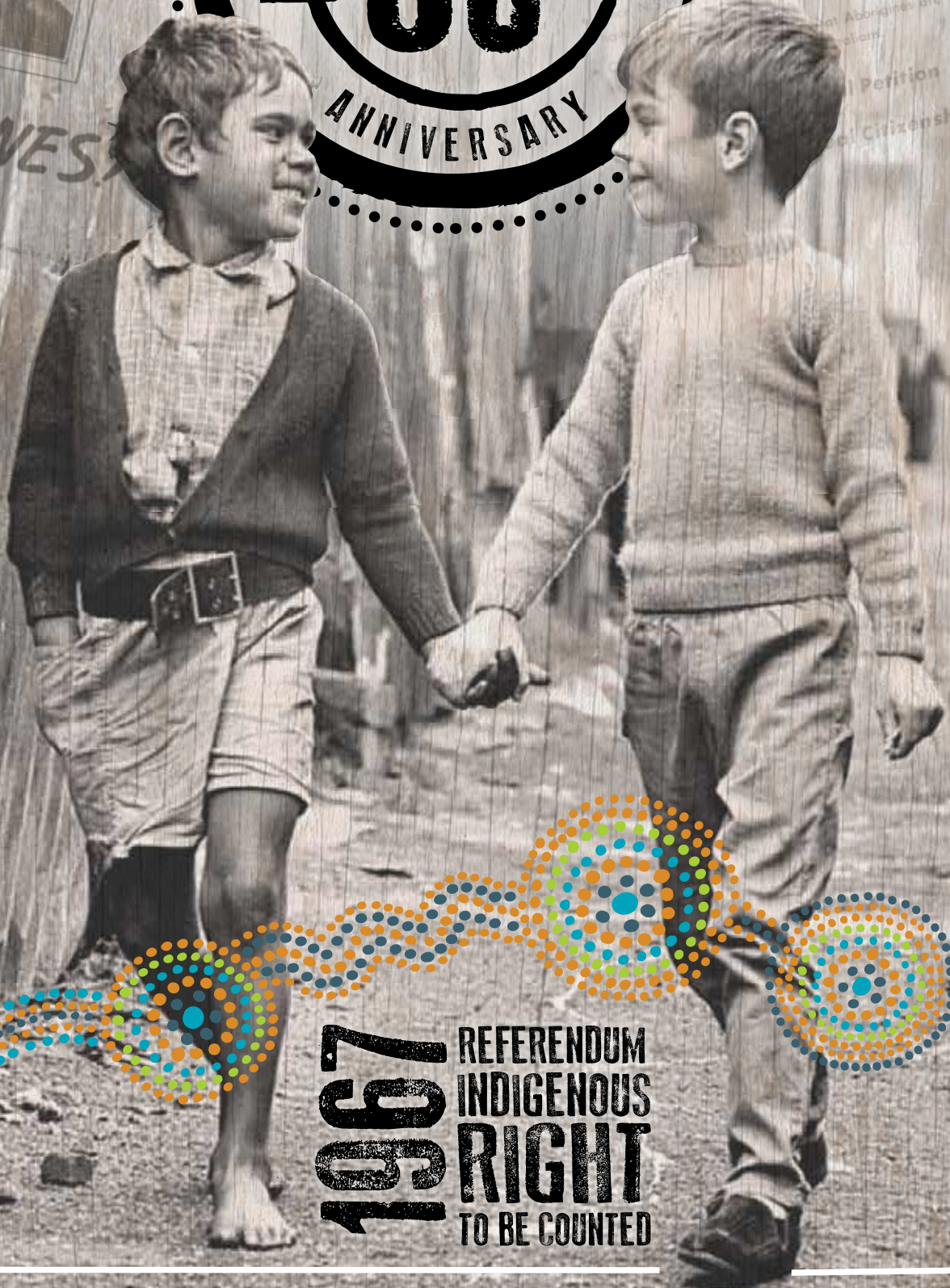


1967 REFERENDUM

50 YEARS

ANNIVERSARY

for
ABORIGINES?
On May 27



1967 REFERENDUM
INDIGENOUS
RIGHT
TO BE COUNTED

ES

The referendum on May 27th makes it possible to end some of the discrimination against Australian Aborigines.

Every voter will be asked to vote for the deletion of certain words from Section 51 sub-section (xxvi) and of Section 127 from the Commonwealth Constitution.

These clauses have long been used as an excuse by both Federal and State Governments for the continued lack of opportunity for many Aborigines. Deletion of these clauses will not solve the problems of the Aboriginal people, but a YES VOTE in the referendum would be a step forward to a situation in which Australians can compel Governments to act justly towards the Aborigines.

The referendum is being held in response to pressure from many sections of the community, including the Aboriginal people.

The Holt Government is not acting as a matter of principle or with any sense of urgency. In fact it has linked this vital issue with another, designed to increase the number of members of Federal Parliament—not a popular issue.

The referendum on the clauses of the Constitution affecting Aborigines should have been held separately.

Electors should certainly consider the two issues separately.

Every reasonable-minded Australian who seeks an end to discrimination against Aborigines will VOTE YES and persuade others to do likewise.

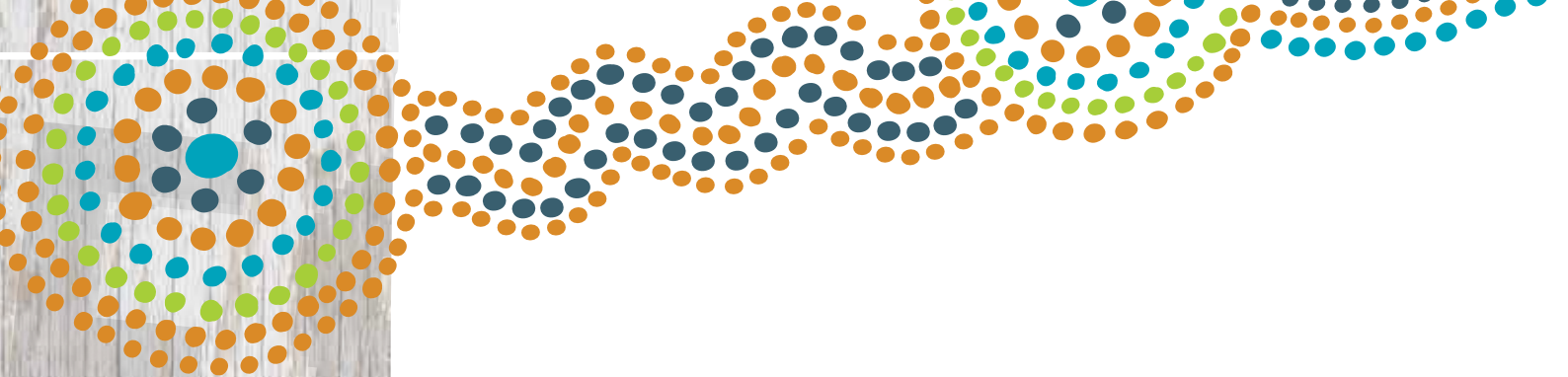
For the rights of Australian Aborigines



Cheerful Aborigine town—what d

27th VOTE YES





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Acknowledgment of Country

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of whose land we live, work and walk on; the Byellee, Gooreng Gooreng and Gurang People. We also want to pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



MESSAGES FROM OUR POLITICAL LEADERS

Milestones remind us of the past and give hope for the future

It seems incredible that as recently as 50 years ago, Australia's indigenous population was officially classed as flora and fauna.

Personally, I find such circumstances abhorrent but I can find some solace in the fact that a majority of Australians felt the same, as evidenced by the referendum on May 27, 1967, in which almost 91 per cent voted for full citizenship to be granted to indigenous people.

Although such an act should not have been needed in the first place, it will stand forever as a significant date in our nation's history when our deeds finally caught up with the rhetoric of Australia being a democracy in which all residents enjoyed freedom and equality.

This is not to say that all is now as it should be. Fifty years on, there is still much work to be done to narrow the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous residents when it comes to life expectancy, health standards, provision of education and employment opportunities.

The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2017 is 'Let's Take the Next Steps' and this is an appropriate time for us to reflect on the injustice of the past and work together to bring about a day where such injustice never occurs again.

The fact that we are also marking 25 years since the historic Mabo decision brings even greater focus to our efforts to 'take the next steps' on our nation's reconciliation journey.

Harmony, respect and cooperation between indigenous and non-indigenous communities are goals that our society is striving to achieve, and must continue to push for, in order for us to attain true equality and for our nation to become a truly great democracy.

.....

Matt Burnett
Mayor - Gladstone
Regional Council



LIFE BEFORE THE REFERENDUM OUR SERVICE MEN



I stand proudly and equally with all, regardless of colour or creed

On that day, Australians overwhelmingly voted to amend the Constitution to include the Indigenous population in the Census and give the Commonwealth power to make special laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

I was yet to be born, but during my informative years my parents often spoke of that historic day and of their hope that in my lifetime I would never see the discrimination against fellow humans as they had.

On 27th May 1967, 90.77% of the voting population in Australia determined to not deny others the acceptance they wished for themselves.

I am eternally grateful for every "yes" vote cast on that day which has ensured that I can proudly and equally stand with each of my friends knowing colour, creed and religion does not determine our unbreakable bond of life long mateship.



.....
Glenn Butcher
*State Member
for Gladstone*

50th Anniversary of Indigenous Australian's right to vote

Fifty years ago Australia moved forward.

The referendum of 1967, while controversial, was a watershed moment for this young nation where we decided to no longer subscribe to outdated ideals that left those with the longest history in this place to not have the most basic of democratic rights.

In the subsequent fifty years we have seen progressions and regressions in the fortunes of our indigenous brethren. Each year's Closing The Gap report shows that while many improvements are being made, outcomes are not yet equal in our society.

This golden anniversary of the 1967 referendum serves to remind us that much is still to do in addressing the inequity many indigenous Australians experience. I believe the great success of the 1967 referendum was its purity of purpose, it was considered too important to hi-jack for other agendas. I hope as we work toward constitutional recognition, this lesson is heeded.



.....
Ken O'Dowd
*Federal Member
for Flynn*

Aboriginal people were barred from enlisting in WWI, with all men who were not 'substantially of European origin or descent' excluded. Some Aboriginal people did sneak through, either because they were deemed 'white enough' or because of the desperation to recruit further soldiers.

At least 400 Aboriginal people are known to have enlisted. The real figure is likely higher as race was often not recorded.

It is estimated 3000 Aboriginal soldiers joined the armed forces in WWII - but unlike soldiers in the

regular army, they received only about half the pay.

When Aboriginal soldiers returned from both wars, they continued to face racism and discrimination. They were denied citizenship and not counted as human in the census nor were they allowed to drink with other returned soldiers in hotels.

Many soldiers were granted farmland under soldiers' settlement schemes after both world wars. All but a tiny handful of Aboriginal soldiers were denied land. To add to the indignity, Aboriginal people were often moved off reserve land where

they lived to free up land for the returning soldiers.

Aboriginal people faced demeaning controls on their behaviour under the Protection Acts, with their wages and movement controlled by Protection Boards.



LIVE

MY THOUGHTS
UNCLE RICHARD JOHNSON

ABOUT THE VOTE

On May 27, 1967 the following question was proposed to the people of Australia.

DO YOU APPROVE the proposed law for the alteration of the Constitution entitled— 'An Act to alter the Constitution so as to omit certain words relating to the People of the Aboriginal Race in any State and so that Aboriginals are to be counted in reckoning the Population'?

They responded overwhelmingly (90.77%) in favour of change.

Most Australians thought that the 1967 referendum would allow full citizenship rights for Indigenous Australians. But the referendum didn't give Aboriginals the vote, equal pay or citizenship rights. It also didn't address their rates of pay or personal freedoms – issues that also needed urgent attention.

Public policy changed only very slightly after the referendum, and this led to wide scale disillusionment in the Indigenous community.

Many Indigenous people regard the 1967 Referendum as a symbolic turning point, revealing a widespread desire for Indigenous equality in Australia. Others felt that the Referendum was irrelevant to their lives, having little effect on the daily discrimination they experienced

It is however, recognised as an important step forward in the battle that continues today.



NO THE REFERENDUM

One man's perspective

For 16 year old Richard Johnson, the importance of the 1967 referendum, was lost in the excitement of an approaching 17th birthday and the opportunity to get his drivers licence.

For Richard's parents and uncles however, it was a whole different story.

Richard recalled the reactions of the Elders in his home, "it (the outcome of the referendum) didn't mean much to me at the time, but to my parents and uncles it was a very significant event. I still remember their excitement and talking about how they could now vote."

"It was a bit of a non event for me at the time. I had left school, had a job and could pretty much, in the near environs of Gladstone at least, do

anything I wanted to do. I had no idea I was a non citizen. I only realised how important this whole thing was much later. Looking back, I don't believe that how other people perceived me was changed at all by the outcome of the referendum."

"Growing up, my parents had always cautioned me to stay away from officialdom, because as a young Aboriginal man, I was likely to be the first in the firing line if things went wrong, and then suddenly here was my mother registering me to vote and telling me I had to go and make myself known to all these official people. I had a couple of close mates and we never discussed what the changes meant to us, we just pretty much did as we were told by our Elders," Richard recalled.

"It is funny sometimes how you remember things. While the old people were really excited to not be classed as flora or fauna anymore, I remember being a bit annoyed because I had always enjoyed being classed this way as I felt it made me Indigenous to my country, like a gum tree."

"Of course now it is a whole different story. The older and wiser Richard Johnson sees the referendum as such an important event," he said.

Just under 91% of Australian voters recorded the largest ever 'yes' vote in a referendum to alter the Australian constitution, and it finally allowed Aboriginal people to be counted in the national census and be subject to Commonwealth laws.

Richard went on to say that looking back, he is encouraged by the ability of the Australian people 50 years ago to embrace change, and was heartened that the stereotypes around in the 1960's did not impair the judgement of the general population.

"Moving forward, my one wish for the future would be the signing of a treaty with the Aboriginal people, simply being on the journey would be exciting. I would love to see all Australians embrace our Indigenous heritage; it must happen, and it will."

"Our young people today are better educated and more involved than in my time and I believe that todays activists will foreshadow the development of a treaty. I may not be alive to see it but my grandchildren will certainly benefit from it."

"I want my grandchildren to have the confidence to stand up and say I am an Aborigine and not be afraid of negativity or judgement. When this day comes and we don't need special pathways for Indigenous employment or special concessions for daily life, then we know that it is a level playing field, with acceptance for all."

"When this happens," said Richard "we will all reap the rewards of those first seeds of change that were sown 50 years ago on May 27."



Left: Richard Johnson (seated) with daughter Naomi Jackson and grand daughter Eller Johnson.

SELF DETERMINATION LEADS TO

MATTHEW COOKE
CEO Nhulundu
Health Service

WELLBEING

Now more than ever, self-determination must feature front and centre in Aboriginal advancement. It is imperative that Aboriginal communities are empowered to develop and run programs for Aboriginal people that are culturally appropriate and reach those who desperately need support. We know it's the only model that works.

Unless investments from all levels of Government – and in all indigenous-focused programs – support self-determination and are channelled through reputable Aboriginal organisations, we will not make any gains. Aboriginal people need to be central to decision-making – their leadership as well as participation, must be welcomed.

For example, better progress is being made in the area of Aboriginal health than in the other five National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) target areas because successive Australian governments have channelled some of their Aboriginal grant funds through grassroots Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations – often referred to as Aboriginal Medical Services.

Investing in non-Indigenous services and organisations to deliver Indigenous health and social services is widely acknowledged as failed policy – the solution must come from the Indigenous community itself.



One of the most gratifying outcomes from producing this publication has been the reaction from those we approached for comment. Many of the younger generation had no knowledge of what the referendum was about, but in true modern fashion, went straight to the internet to learn more... and that knowledge has, in most cases taken them by surprise. To learn and understand what the referendum meant, not only to Indigenous Australians, but to all Australians is important. To educate, to unite and to raise awareness is the ultimate gain.

BEN GHEE

The referendum means a lot to me because it affected my forefathers, especially my parents. The outcome of the referendum is very important to me because my forefathers did the hard yards. Remember they were classed as just flora and fauna at that time. But these trials produced strong people for their time; that generation now shows strength and humbleness in the characters of the Elders. I see it in my parents. The decision made in 1967 opened a way forward for the next generation and for my children to be proud of where they came from. I make it a personal goal to stay strong and to encourage my children to be leaders and to aspire to their goals.



KIZZY SMITH

When I think about the Referendum, I think about our history, I think of the path we've tread as people and as a nation, the perseverance of our Elders and the dedication of the ones who lent their voices in 1967 so I could be heard today. These reasons give me the incredible honour to be able to stand up and be counted. It is not just an honour to have a voice, it is being granted my right to be heard - a right I will gladly take and use.

SHANNAE SALTNER WITH JONAS JOHNSON

I hope my son never feels less than any other person because of his Aboriginality. I hope that Australia grows to be more accepting about Indigenous people and their issues so that I don't have to worry about Jonas missing out or being put in the 'too hard basket'. I want my son to have a level playing field when it comes to his health, education and employment options. I hope that we make strides in the right direction to ensure that our kids aren't dealing with the same issues we and our Elders have had to deal with for many years.



YALEELA SAVAGE TORRENS

I don't see myself involved with the Reform and I find it difficult to locate opportunities within regional communities to be involved. In my eyes, the Constitutional Reform is a top-down approach with strong underpinnings of a Neo-Liberal government.

Just like the 'Closing the Gap' policy, the Constitutional Reform is about rationing public resources for Aboriginal people and getting the best 'value for money'. I believe constitutional reform should be about community control, self-determination, Indigenous leadership and collaboration.



MICHELLE MURRAY

As a Police Liaison Officer, historical knowledge is very valuable in our working day. Some of the difficulties our people endured back then can often influence who they have become today. Personally I feel a sense of gratitude that I am living in today's world.



KAREN MURPHY

The Referendum in 1967 changed the focus on two sections of the constitution which discriminated against Aboriginal people. The federal law was designed to protect all Australians but didn't apply to the Indigenous people. The referendum didn't give Aborigines the right to vote for equal pay or citizenship rights; it was however, an important step forward in a battle that continues to this day.

ADRIAN GHILOTTI

Working in this field means you often need to draw upon the past to help us understand and support one another. While I don't have any memories of my parents discussing these times I have real empathy for our ancestors and those who came before us.

CONRAD INGRA

I don't support Constitutional Reform as there's too many unclear areas to me, and I wouldn't want to get behind something that could jeopardize a Treaty or our push for Sovereignty!





50 YEARS 50 FACES



MICHAEL GHEE

I am proud to be Torres Strait Islander. I am greatly appreciative that my Elders and my ancestors pushed for what they believed in. We wouldn't be where we are today if they didn't speak out back in 1967. What has it done for me? It has given me three beautiful children who will have opportunities, as I have, to apply for employment. It has enabled me to fulfil a lifelong dream of being a home owner. If it wasn't for these ancestors speaking out and being heard I would not be where I am today, nor would my children have such a bright future to look forward to.

MAUREEN EGGMOLESSE WITH JAIDEN & NEVAEH COOKE

As a young woman I never knew too much about Aboriginal rights but the referendum shone a light on our Aboriginal people. I remember the activists marching and hearing they were marching for our rights. We have to thank these people because they set in motion the process that will make Nevaeh and Jaiden's lives so much better.

I want to be able to teach my great grandchildren about our family history; I want them to hear the stories of Grandma Bessie that I heard. I was lucky to know her and she passed our family stories down to me. I want my great grandchildren to know the true story of their heritage, not just what they might be taught in schools and to know things that many of our relatives may not know.





KEARNY PHOLI

As a young person I wasn't sure how to respond when I was asked to participate in this project. My family have always ensured I knew about my cultural heritage, but for me it's about a coming together of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people that allows us to come from a place of love while acknowledging our past.



IAN PHOLI

Reconciliation and the 1967 Referendum moving forward means to me healing, living again and bringing people together.

50 YEARS 50 PAGES



TANNUM SANDS STATE HIGH STUDENTS

Tannum Sands High Year 7 students, Heidi Sullivan, Alissa Jenkinson, Ella Grundy and Ria Moodley (pictured left to right) spent time during their recent culture class to create a strong visual poster "Lets' take the next steps". The poster was designed to help promote National Reconciliation Week, and is displayed in the parent foyer. With the 50th anniversary of the Referendum and the 25th anniversary of the Mabo decision approaching, the girls will present a talk to the other students on school parade around these issues.



AMOY MALLIE

I never received a birth certificate when I was born and neither did my brothers and sisters. We also were not counted in the census. We never really dwelt to much on this at the time, but as we have gotten older, the repercussions of this are still being experienced by my family members. As late as just last year, one of my brothers who lives on a community in the north tried to buy a plane ticket to come down for a funeral. He was unable to do this as he had no documentation to say who he was - almost unbelievable in this day and age.

I see that things are slowly changing and views are no longer quite so black and white. I have always tried to ensure that my own children never suffered any of this.

JADE PENGELLY

My own children will never have to go through anything like this and I am grateful for that. If I have one wish for the future it would be that my children are always able to cherish and be exposed to the beauty of their own culture, that they can share with the entire community the goodness and light that is found in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and beliefs and their huge capacity for sharing and love of their community. I want them to be able to retain all of this while still being seen as equals in our society.

MICHELLE COOK WITH OSCAR CONDON

I am grateful for everything my ancestors have achieved through their perseverance and so pleased that my son will enjoy the benefits of that.

Through my position in the Deadly Choices team and the work we do in the local schools, my wish is that there is more education around the real history of Indigenous Australia. Former generations have worked so hard to give us the choices we have today and we should all strive to continue this work.



KERRY BLACKMAN

I am a traditional owner descendant of the Gurang and Gooreng Gooreng peoples, the First Nations people of Australia. My country boundary is north to Port Alma, south to the Elliot River and west to the Auburn Ranges as described in the PCCC Native Title claim registered in the Federal Court an area of approximately 20,000 sq km.

I am a traditional owner of the Meerooni Clan of the Gurang people.

I was born in 1957! But for the first 10 years of my life under the "White Australian Policy" and the "White Australian Constitution" I was not recognised as a human being by white Australia, even though under the policy of my "Creator God" he said I was fearfully and wonderfully made in his image!

This 50th year anniversary is part of the 1967 referendum vote "Yes" campaign and a part of the brutal British colonisation beginning in 1788 the process of annihilation of

our people and our cultural heritage and way of life is still affecting our people 229 years later.

Our people's lives are still controlled today by the same welfare system that destroyed our way of life.

Before British settlement at Sydney Cove on the 26th January, 1788. Australia was owned and occupied for many thousands of years by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Since 1788 - many of our people were dispossessed and dispersed from our traditional Lands.

We have never ceded our ownership of this Great South Land or ceded our Sovereignty.

Remember what was life for our communities before the vote? Most of our people were rounded up like cattle and either herded on to missions, many of which still exist, or had to live in shanty tin shacks with dirt floors and despicable dwelling conditions, on the outskirts of the towns, out of sight and out of mind!

Loss of land has had economic, social, cultural and spiritual consequences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples spanning many generations. In addition, for more than 100 years many Indigenous people worked for rations rather than wages. Also many were forcibly removed from their families as children (my Grannie Rosie's story is well recorded), affecting whole communities.

Remember it was one of Australia's Prime Ministers, the Hon Paul Keating, who made one the greatest

speeches in a modern society. On the 10th, December 1992 Keating gave a speech on Aboriginal reconciliation, addressing issues faced by indigenous Australians such as their land and children being taken away. This speech became known as The Redfern Address. 'One distinguishing point he made in the speech was that "we committed the murders. We failed to ask 'How would I feel if this were done to me?'" Unquote. He is the only person at these highest level who ever admitted to this barbaric and heinous massacres of innocent shed blood.

As a former ATSIC Commissioner and a Member of the National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, and as an Aboriginal Leader of the Australian Aboriginal Leadership Council I have interacted with Prime Ministers and politicians and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across this great land at a local community, regional, state and national Level.

As an ATSIC Commissioner I was directly involved in negotiations with the Federal Government at the time in dealing with the MABO High Court decision which flowed on to the "Native Title Act 1993".

I have gained an in-depth appreciation and understanding of the issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

There are three main National Statistical records we don't want our people to be a part of;

1. The national chronic unemployment of First Nation people which, currently at 27 per cent, is always five times higher than the national average
2. The national life expectancy of First Nation people is 20 years less than non-Indigenous people.



3. The most shameful national statistic is the figure of 27% of our First Nation people in jail when we only represent 2% of the general population.

It is recorded our people are the most disadvantaged group on every socio-economic scale still in Australia today and every effort must be made to alleviate this disadvantage. We must move the next generation and the future generations out of those horrific statistics and poverty forever!

What happened in the past continues to have consequences today. Compared with other Australians, Indigenous people experience poorer health, limited employment opportunities, educational disadvantage, and greater rates of imprisonment than ever. Economic disadvantage restricts life choices and is a major obstacle to self-determination.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often face prejudice when trying to rent a home, find a job, hire a taxi, get service in shops and banks, when doing the simple everyday things that most Australians take for granted.

For me the Legacy – 50 years on – what has changed? All Australians need to hold hand on heart and answer the question. Most importantly our Aboriginal Leaders need to question the white politicians as there is a Constitutional Recognition Forum going on right now at Uluru.

Even though the White Australian constitution is a discriminatory constitution based on race that very foundation as the founding document.

This will be our downfall if they negotiate our human rights to a treaty away to constitutional Recognition in the White Australian Constitution which means Australia cannot have a treaty with itself.

We must come before this agenda item as there is no greater moral issue that confronts the Australian Government and the Australian people then a treaty for First Nation people, the moral obligation is above any legal interpretation of the law.

The first Aboriginal female in the House of Representatives is a strong advocate, lobbyist and supporter of a treaty after her cultural exposition dressed in her cultural regalia and speaking in her language is she going to have the same commitment to her people an advocate and support a call for a treaty which she signed up for in the Final Report in the year 2,000 "Australia's Challenge" calling for a treaty to complete the unfinished business in this country.

"Ms Burney acknowledged the land's traditional owners, and said "these lands are, always were, and always will be Aboriginal land".

Labor Senator Pat Dodson has called for the discussion to begin on treaty in his maiden speech as follows Quote "I will be working in this place to make sure that fewer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are locked up in our prisons; help develop northern Australia in partnership with regional communities, industries and Aboriginal people; build consensus on changing our constitutional framework, recognising the need for meaningful discussion with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on a Treaty or Treaties" Unquote

I am the current Chairperson of "Treaty Australia" made up of some high profile and eminent Aboriginal and Torres Islander people.

I was a member and part of the 10 year "Aboriginal Council for Reconciliation" and proud of my achievement forcing the Council to put the following in the final recommendations;

Two key recommendations of the report (Australia's Challenge) to "Unite All Australians" stated:

5. Each government and parliament:
 - Recognise that this land and its waters were settled as colonies without treaty or consent and that to advance reconciliation it would be most desirable if there were agreements or treaties; and
 - Negotiate a process through which this might be achieved

**50 YEARS
50 FACES**



that protects the political, legal, cultural and economic position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

6. That the Commonwealth Parliament enact legislation (for which the Council had provided a draft in the report) to put in place a process which will unite all Australians by way of an agreement, or treaty, through which unresolved issues of reconciliation can be resolved.

I am still fighting the good fight for change and still standing up for our basic human rights and equality in our own country.

It was an extraordinary vote in the 1967 referendum. Campaigning and activism will take extraordinary people who do not have the word impossible in their vocabulary and only the words 'all things are possible' with the help of our Creator to agitate for change and advocate for a treaty.

Where to now?

50 YEARS 50 AGES



LINDSAY JOHNSON

We worked hard head down everyday, taking each day as it came. At a national level we weren't supposed to vote but we did anyway, maybe they were counted. I think we were all in the same boat (Aboriginal people), we knew we were different and we didn't have the same perks as the white people.



JULIE INGRA

My father used to say to us, 'You must Vote' but I'm not sure if his vote was ever counted? The Government used to send the police out to our home and check to make sure that our names were on the list to vote and to make sure that we voted. I'm not sure if they only did that to black people but it sure scared me!

MARILYN SMITH

I wasn't eligible to vote, I was in highschool at that time, I only knew about it because we used to get an Aboriginal affairs magazine much like what the Koori Mail is now, to inform us. We talked about it in home much like other families, but it was never discussed or was a topic in high school to inform us. It was such a significant event for the entire country. Our family wanted it to change much like other Aboriginal families, back then we were fighting to be recognised as Aboriginal people and not as Flora and Fauna; we spoke with one voice! Today seems to have some division. Aboriginal people need to come back together, as one - one Mob!





NEOLA SAVAGE

I didn't realise our people couldn't or didn't vote, because our father Hector Johnson used to vote anyway. It wasn't compulsory back then either. We weren't considered to be citizens of the country, we voted anyway, not knowing whether it would be counted.

When 1967 happened people overwhelmingly started to vote that was great for our people all over Australia. Now in Australia a lot of our people refuse to vote because we believe our voices don't seem to be heard. We need our own people in Government.

We are disillusioned by the system; our plight is still the same!

JACQUI JOHNSON

"Make sure you vote" was something my father had always said. At the time I was 24 and had already been voting so there wasn't much change for me when 6 years later the referendum came in.

RICHARD JOHNSON

It is funny sometimes how you remember things. While the old people were really excited to not be classed as flora or fauna anymore, I remember being a bit annoyed because I had always enjoyed being classed this way as I felt it made me Indigenous to my country, like a gum tree.

VALDA COOLWELL

It didn't change much for us, when I was 21 Years old I was voting, that was 6 years before the referendum, our father always said, "Make sure you vote."



POSITIVE & SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE

GPC is committed to the Australian reconciliation journey; building stronger relationships, increased respect, a willingness to learn, and creating a better understanding. It's about bringing together Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian South Sea Islander peoples and the broader Australia community and moving forward together. This year we will reflect on where we have been, how far we have come and what steps are required next as we take the next steps in the reconciliation journey.



KYLIE BEEZLEY

When I was asked to participate, I wasn't sure what to say. I didn't want to admit that I didn't know too much about the referendum. It took place long before I was born. I wanted to find out some information before I spoke to anyone so I googled it. I am so glad I did because it jogged my memory of Uncle Bill (my grandmother's family) and what he used to say. In fact I found myself welling up with tears at the memories. When people knocked on the door, he and his siblings used to run out the back and hide. To this day he still won't answer the door and it makes me sad that he has had to live with such fear his whole life. Seeking out the information has opened a small window into his life for me and I am so grateful to have a better understanding of what it all meant.



NICOLE COWBURN

I didn't know much about those times and my family didn't discuss much either but I did some reading about the referendum and what it meant to our ancestors. I felt physically upset about what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had to endure. Most of my workmates had very little knowledge of what it was all about either. Nicole is about to meet her brand new grandson and is glad that we live in a different world to the one her family struggled in 50 years ago.



ALLEN CRAIGIE

I did hear my parents and other elders talk about the referendum but I didn't understand it, even now my knowledge of it is very limited. It's a credit to our fore fathers who have paved the way for us as a people to be recognised as Australians.



LEE-ANN DUDLEY

I am sure the referendum was important to my parents, but in my family I do not remember it ever being discussed. If it was, then, like all the really important discussions in our family, us kids were not involved.

While I don't know the direct impact it had on my life, I recognise that without it, I would not be enjoying the life I have today.

MELISSA GHEE

When you have children you become very protective and focused on giving them the best possible things in life. It is hard to understand the life my family endured prior to the referendum. They would never have dreamed of the opportunities my children will enjoy. I hope they never take them for granted and I want them to have the knowledge and understanding of what the Elders who came before them went through.



Gladstone Ports Corporation

Growth, Prosperity, Community.

GPC is proud to support the oldest continuous culture on the planet.



EBONY YASSO

To be honest I had not really thought about the referendum that took place 50 years ago and I spoke with my work mates and discovered they really didn't know much about it either. I looked up some stuff online and it really made me stop and think about how hard it was for our families back then.

JUWAN EGGMOLESSE

I have never given much thought about what the referendum really meant, but after finding out quite a bit of information, I now feel really lucky that I have the opportunities I have today.



KEAGAN YASSO

I googled what the Anniversary of the referendum was all about and I was surprised that it all happened only fifty years ago, and that our families were looked upon in such a way. I hope people take the time to find about our history and ancestors. If we all work together, Reconciliation can become real.



COEN HORAN

My mum has always been very important to me and she was adopted as a young child. She tried many times to find her biological family but she wasn't allowed to access her history until the mid nineties. I think how hard that must have been and what a strong person she is to have dealt with that. I had never thought about this before.



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AARON NAGAS WITH LACHLAN & JAI GHEE

In the lead up to the 50th year celebrations of the 1967 referendum, I've been reflecting on what a significant event that was for me personally as a Bailai/South Sea Island man living in 2017 and what resonates most for me is how lucky I am to have been born when I was and how important it is that we continue to push for equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all Australians in the future.

In my opinion the 1967 referendum didn't just happen because Australians had a sudden change of heart but for the 1967 referendum to be the most successful referendum in our history, there was a lot of people black & white fighting for equality in this country. We had the Freedom rides in NSW, we had the Gurindji strike (better known as the Wave Hill strike) in NT, we had the deadly South Sea Island woman Faith Bandler who led a 10 year campaign that helped create the political pressure that led to the 1967 referendum. I'm grateful to those people & many others who fought so that my generation were the first of our mob to all be born

in an age where we take things for granted like being able to;

- vote in state elections
- marry whomever they choose
- move to wherever we choose
- own property wherever they chose
- be the legal guardian of their own children
- receive the same pay for the same work
- drink alcohol.
- access federally funded services like social security and education

And other things that were inconsistently legislated throughout the country depending on which state you lived in until after the 1967 referendum. So I'm thankful to both First Nations people and non-Indigenous people who fought for the referendum that lead to a lot of positive social changes for our mob and it's my generations responsibility to ensure that they didn't fight for nothing and we need to continue to fight for Indigenous issues today & into the future.

50 YEARS 50 YEARS 50 YEARS



Photograph by Karina Elliott

LEANNE GARTHWAITE

I am proud to be of Yorta Yorta heritage and recognise the extreme hardships that many of my Elders/ancestors endured in their lifetime. Growing up I was told I was Aboriginal, what my heritage was, who my family was but it wasn't until recently I discovered that for the first year of my life I was classed as non-human under the Flora and Fauna Act. I can't begin to explain how I feel about this, let alone understand the impact on Indigenous Australia.

Even though opportunities have improved for Indigenous people we still face many of our own hardships today. We need to stay strong and stand proud so we can continue to move forward. My wish is that the 50th Anniversary of The Referendum invokes a positive conversation for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.



WESLEY POWER

I never heard much about this growing up and don't fully know the impact this had on my family, especially my grandparents and parents. But looking back now I can only image the changes and the benefits that this would have had on my mum and dad's young lives and how much better all our lives are now due to the changes that took place."

AMANDA POWER WITH SAVANNAH & EMMETT

Growing up I can't ever remember my parents or aunts ever talking about the Referendum and I truly can't say I knew much about it until I started teaching. I wanted to share everything about my culture with all the students at my school and would research and learn about all of the significant events for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Wow, the changes that were able to be put through have allowed me the opportunities I grew up with. The great thing about it is, it's still working today to change the lives of the next generation. My babies have grown up in a world even better than mine and I'm sure my grandchildren will enjoy even more benefits all due to two simple but massively important constitutional changes.





JEROME POWER

Right from a small age I can remember Mum always talking to us kids about significant changes that have happened for our people. Probably because every year she would do something for school and would always discuss it and impress on us the importance of such events. The 1967 Referendum was one such event.



YARRNDJI INGRA

I believe the referendum was the beginning of the real Australia we know and love today, allowing everyone to recognise and be apart of Aboriginal culture. The oldest living culture in the world is for all Australians to celebrate we are one.

50 YEARS 50 FACES



DJURAN JOHNSON

I think I understand why we were not included in the census prior to 1967. It makes sense to me that the reasons were economic. I believe it was a legal way for the Government to hold onto our lands. They would have been worried that, with mining giants on the doorstep, Indigenous people would want their lands back. Now it is fair to see our people being involved in these issues.



50 YEARS 50 FACES



EDDIE & ROBYN COOLWELL

We are so pleased to have the opportunity to be a part of this project. As people and as mothers and fathers we acknowledge our forefathers and the difficulties they endured. We are for moving forward in unity with our Community.



TORRES STRAIT DANCERS

Keeping our cultural heritage alive gives our family, and importantly our children, a firm basis for living their lives in the modern world, while allowing them to maintain connection with their cultural roots. One way we do this is by performing our traditional dance, Zorm Kolbe Kolbe meaning "In the afternoon". Our dance is about the story of the colours of the sunset, while the sun is going down, thinking of our loved ones going away.

Right: Lachlan, Jai, Benjamin, Evander (front), Isiah and Isaac Ghee.



FLAG HISTORY

The Australian Aboriginal Flag

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. It became the official flag for the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra after it was first flown there in 1972. Since then, it has become a widely recognised symbol of the unity and identity of Aboriginal people.

In July 1995 the Aboriginal flag was proclaimed a 'Flag of Australia' under the Flags Act 1953.

The Aboriginal flag is divided horizontally into halves. The top half is black and the lower half red. There is a yellow circle in the centre of the flag.

The black represents the Aboriginal people of Australia, the yellow circle represents the Sun, the giver of life and protector and finally the red symbolises red earth, the red ochre used in ceremonies and Aboriginal peoples' spiritual relation to the land.

The Torres Strait Island Flag

The Torres Strait Islander Flag is an official flag of Australia, and is the flag that represents Torres Strait Islander people. It was designed in 1992 by Bernard Namok. It won a local competition held by the Islands Coordinating Council, and was recognised by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in June 1992.

The green panels at the top and the bottom of the flag symbolise the land, while the blue panel in the centre represents the waters of the Torres Strait. The thin black stripes between the green and blue panels signify the Torres Strait Islanders themselves. The white five-pointed star at the centre of the flag represents the five major island groups, and the white dhari (dancer's headdress) around it also symbolises the Torres Strait Islands people. White symbolises peace, while the star is a symbol for navigation.



COMING TOGETHER IN RECONCILIATION

BARNEY POINT BEACH
Saturday 27 May 2017



LOOKING BACK LOCALLY



1. James Lingwoodock on left with unidentified man. Lingwoodock served in the light horse regiment during World War 1
2. (L-R) Gran Yowyeh & Gran Johnson
3. Bessie Yow-Yeh (Nee Burke)

4. (L-R) Lindsay Johnson, Andy Pickwick, Lenny Allen - 1959
5. Mr Bill Yow-Yeh leading the Gladstone Harbour Festival - 1960



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