



NAIDOC History

1920s & 1930s

Before the 1920s, Aboriginal rights groups boycotted Australia Day (26 January) in protest against the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians. By the 1920s, they were increasingly aware that the broader Australian public were largely ignorant of the boycotts. If the movement were to make progress, it would need to be active.

Several organisations emerged to fill this role, particularly the Australian Aborigines Progressive Association (AAPA) in 1924 and the Australian Aborigines League (AAL) in 1932. Their efforts were largely overlooked, and due to police harassment, the AAPA abandoned their work in 1927.

In 1935, William Cooper, founder of the AAL, drafted a petition to send to King George V, asking for special Aboriginal electorates in Federal Parliament. The Australian Government believed that the petition fell outside its constitutional responsibilities.

1938

On Australia Day, 1938, protestors marched through the streets of Sydney, followed by a congress attended by over a thousand people. One of the first major civil rights gatherings in the world, it was known as the Day of Mourning.

Following the congress, a deputation led by William Cooper presented Prime Minister Joseph Lyons with a proposed national policy for Aboriginal people. This was again rejected because the Government did not hold constitutional powers in relation to Aboriginal people.

After the Day of Mourning, there was a growing feeling that it should be a regular event. In 1939 William Cooper wrote to the National Missionary Council of Australia to seek their assistance in supporting and promoting an annual event.

1940–1955

From 1940 until 1955, the Day of Mourning was held annually on the Sunday before Australia Day and was known as Aborigines Day. In 1955 Aborigines Day was shifted to the first Sunday in July after it was decided the day should become not simply a protest day but also a celebration of Aboriginal culture.

1956–1990

Major Aboriginal organisations, state and federal governments, and a number of church groups all supported the formation of NADOC, the National Aborigines Day Observance Committee. At the same time, the second Sunday in July became a day of remembrance for Aboriginal people and their heritage.

In 1972, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was formed, as a major outcome of the 1967 referendum.

In 1974, the NADOC committee was composed entirely of Aboriginal members for the first time. The following year, it was decided that the event should cover a week, from the first to second Sunday in July.

In 1984, NADOC asked that National Aborigines Day be made a national public holiday, to help celebrate and recognise the rich cultural history that makes Australia unique. While this has not happened, other groups have echoed the call.

1991–Present

With a growing awareness of the distinct cultural histories of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, NADOC was expanded to recognise Torres Strait Islander people. The committee became known as the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee, NAIDOC. This new name has become the title for the whole week, not just the day. Each year, a theme is chosen to reflect the important issues and events for NAIDOC.

During the mid-1990s, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) took over the management of NAIDOC until ATSIC was disbanded in 2004–05.

There were interim arrangements in 2005. Since then a National NAIDOC Committee, until recently chaired by former Senator Aden Ridgeway, has made key decisions on national celebrations each year. The national committee has representatives from most States and Territories.

NAIDOC WEEK

TEACHERS RESOURCE AND TEACHING IDEAS



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ABOUT NAIDOC WEEK

TEACHER RESOURCE DEVELOPED BY DR. LYNETTE RILEY

The learning available to all students through the NAIDOC website: <http://www.naidoc.org.au/> is immeasurable for teachers and students.

The site may be used for research in foundational knowledge concerning National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week (more commonly known as NAIDOC) the history of themes since 1972, and the host cities for the NAIDOC Awards ceremonies.

The following teaching ideas relate directly to supporting teachers in addressing The Australian Curriculum: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture cross-curriculum priority; with provision of content that can be used across multiple learning areas and stages/grades from Foundational Studies to Year 12. The material in the NAIDOC site may also be relevant to VET and University students undertaking Indigenous Studies.

* KEY LEARNING

The Australian Curriculum: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority. The Australian Curriculum is working towards addressing two distinct needs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education:

- that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas, can fully participate in the curriculum and can build their self-esteem
- that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority is designed for all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.



* TEACHING IDEAS – FOCUS QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

FOCUS QUESTION 1: WHAT IS NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WEEK AND WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?

ACTIVITY:

Explore what National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week is through the NAIDOC website, and the history of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week. Do a brainstorm with students to discuss:

- The significance of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week and its important role for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- How National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week is relevant for the wider community.

FOCUS QUESTION 2: WHAT HAVE BEEN THE NAIDOC WEEK THEMES SINCE 1972?

ACTIVITY:

Create a timeline of the themes since 1972 and break students into groups to discuss each themes importance and relevance.

FOCUS QUESTION 3: HOW HAVE THE POSTERS SUPPORTED THE NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WEEK THEMES?

ACTIVITY:

Get students to select a NAIDOC poster and explore how it represents the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week theme. Students brainstorm and workshop their own theme and then create their own posters.

FOCUS QUESTION 4: WHAT ARE THE AWARDS PRESENTED AT THE AWARDS CEREMONY AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

ACTIVITY:

Search the NAIDOC website and find the awards presented at the NAIDOC ceremonies and discuss the importance of the awards. Students work on an award they think they would present and why; then decide who they would present it to. This could be to someone in his or her family; or this could be a class activity and presented in the class or across the school.



FOCUS QUESTION 5: WHO HAVE BEEN THE PEOPLE GIVEN AWARDS IN PAST CEREMONIES AND WHY HAVE THEY BEEN SIGNIFICANT?

ACTIVITY:

Research past award winners. Students do a biography of a past person or organisation that has won an award; and provide their own summary of why that person deserved the award.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

For more information about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority and its organising ideas: <http://australiancurriculum.edu.au>

Australian Curriculum: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures Guiding Principles For Promoting And Implementing The Australian Curriculum Cross- Curriculum Priority:

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/1536/guiding-principles.pdf>

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS): <https://aiatsis.gov.au/>

NAIDOC How to celebrate: <http://www.naidoc.org.au>

NAIDOC Week Plan your event: <http://www.naidoc.org.au/get-involved/plan-your-event>

NAIDOC Posters: <http://www.naidoc.org.au/resources/poster-gallery>

SBS Teaching Resources: <http://www.sbs.com.au/learn/naidoc>



* WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP IN MY COMMUNITY?

In issues around cultural significance, land care or native title, look for groups such as:
Aboriginal Lands Councils- <http://alc.org.au/>

In education look for groups such as: NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group-
<https://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/>

There may be groups who provide tours with cultural significance and tours, such as-
<https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/events/aboriginal-history-and-heritage-of-the-rocks-tour>

Narragunnawali- <https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/>

Reconciliation Australia: Share Our Pride- <http://www.shareourpride.org.au/>

Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE): Respect, Relationships, Reconciliation- <https://rrr.edu.au/>

Additionally schools should develop a community profile to establish the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations in the local and regional communities who may be able to assist with specialist support; and Non-Indigenous organisations who may have Aboriginal units or support within their organisations, such as: city/town councils, local museums, health units, etc – know who they are and what they offer, get names and get on their mailing lists for events which may be occurring which may be useful for schools and students.

* USEFUL REFERENCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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The University of Sydney – Ask Us Anything- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHVbVBLhCM&index=2&list=PLXSDVg9HvDBiCihkUcjGz3L4_o6QIHMPi&t=0s