

Indigenous Australians' Rights Timeline

Based on the timeline in
<www.nma.gov.au/indigenoustrights>

1957

INTERNATIONAL

The International Labour Organisation adopts convention 107, 'Convention Concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries'.

IN AUSTRALIA

The *Northern Territory Welfare Ordinance 1953* comes into operation. All but six Aborigines of full descent are classified as wards and thus subject to this restrictive legislation.

Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship petition campaign begins. A petition drafted by Jessie Street for a referendum to alter two clauses of the Constitution is launched by the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship at the Sydney Town Hall. This begins a decade long campaign taken up the following year by the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement.

Aboriginal people of the Warburton-Laverton Ranges area are reported to be starving. These reports cause great public controversy and raise questions of federal and state responsibility for the welfare of Indigenous people.

GROUP WEBSITE ACTIVITY: Warburton Ranges Controversy

This controversy concerned the appalling conditions in which a particular group of Indigenous people were living. The issues raised were: how could a group of Australians be so disadvantaged, and how could they be supported and their conditions improved to an acceptable standard?

Use the specific website documents indicated to answer the following questions, prepare your group report to the class, and add your annotations to the timeline display.

FOCUS

1 Mark the Warburton Ranges area on the map of Australia on page 50.

Go to **Civil rights > Warburton Ranges controversy > Overview** to see a map.

2 Use the newspaper report to provide more information on:

- health
- education
- food
- water.

Go to **Civil rights > Warburton Ranges controversy > Manslaughter** to see the newspaper article *Big Bayswater meeting sees the most horrible film made in Australia.*

3 How did people react to the film? What messages did they get from it when it was shown?

Go to **Civil rights > Warburton Ranges controversy > Manslaughter** to see several examples of reactions.

4 How did the Australian Government react to the criticism? What sense of responsibility did they show?

Go to **Civil rights > Warburton Ranges controversy > Manslaughter** to see the Government's response.

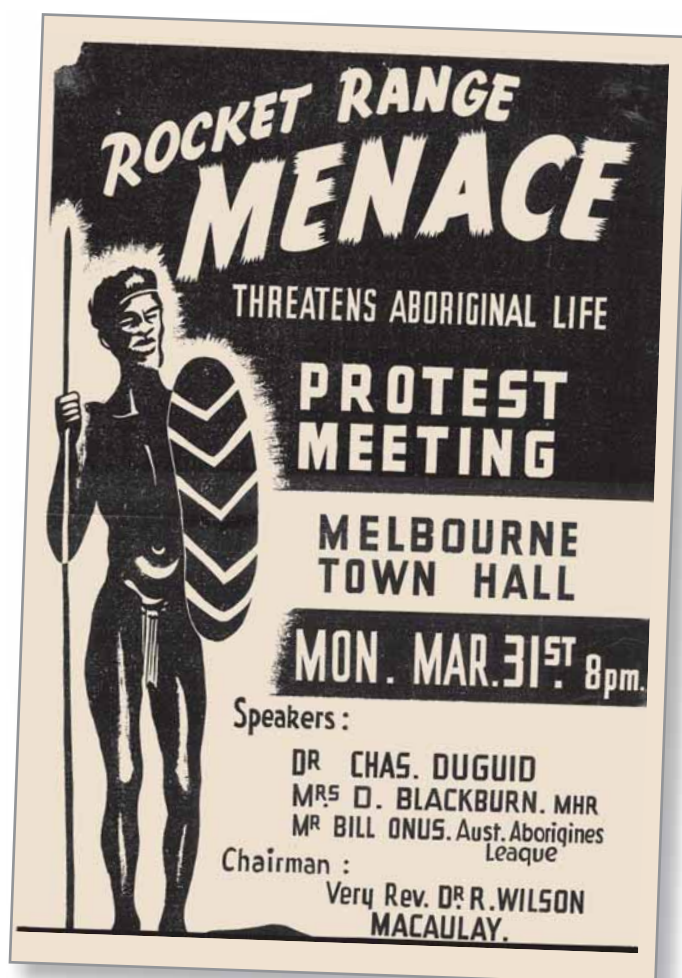
5 What problems were there with existing organisations that limited their ability to react effectively?

Go to **Civil rights > Warburton Ranges controversy > Activists organise** to see a letter from Shirley Andrews supporting the Anti-Slavery Society's view.

6 Why did some people look to the British Anti-Slavery Society to help?

7 What was significant about the organisations that formed as a result of the crisis?

Go to **Civil rights > Warburton Ranges controversy > Birth of a federal movement** to see a document from the Adelaide Conference at which the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement was formed.



State Library of Victoria

GROUP REPORT

When you have answered all the questions above prepare a report to the class that starts: The Warburton Ranges incident is significant in understanding the development of Indigenous rights because ...

Explain the issue fully and display your summary under this part of the timeline. In this way you will be helping to create an annotated timeline for the whole class.

1958

1959

INTERNATIONAL

IN AUSTRALIA

Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement established in Adelaide on the weekend of 15–16 February.

Albert Namatjira is found guilty of supplying liquor to a relative who was a ward of the state. The resulting outcry draws attention to weaknesses of Northern Territory legislation that creates a division between Aboriginal 'wards' and Aboriginal 'citizens'.

Albert Namatjira dies, eight months after being charged with supplying alcohol to a ward, reigniting investigations into government approaches to Aboriginal Australians whose citizenship is constrained by state and territory legislation.

The Social Services Act is amended making old age pensions and maternity benefits available to most Aboriginal Australians. The remaining restrictive clause is that such benefits would not be available to people who are 'nomadic' or 'primitive'. These terms are not defined.



GROUP WEBSITE ACTIVITY: Albert Namatjira and Citizenship

As you have seen in the civil rights summary Aboriginal people were not allowed to have alcohol. Albert Namatjira was an exception – he had been granted full civil rights status because of his fame as an artist.

Use the specific website documents indicated to answer the following questions, prepare your group report to the class, and add your annotations to the timeline display.

FOCUS

NMA Website Documents

- 1 Who was Albert Namatjira, and why was he famous?
- 2 Why was he jailed in 1958?

Go to **People > Albert Namatjira** to see biographical information about Albert Namatjira.

- 3 How did people react to that jailing?

Go to **Civil rights > Albert Namatjira and citizenship > Public response** to see examples of people's responses to his jailing.

- 4 Unlike Albert Namatjira, most Aboriginal people did not have full citizenship rights. Those who had special restrictions were known as 'wards'. Read the article on the 'Stud Book' and explain why the journalist found this situation so offensive.

Go to **Civil rights > Albert Namatjira and citizenship > The Stud Book** to see a newspaper article about the law.

GROUP REPORT

When you have answered all the questions above prepare a report to the class that starts: The Albert Namatjira incident is significant in understanding the development of Indigenous rights because ...

Explain the issue fully and display your summary under this part of the timeline. In this way you will be helping to create an annotated timeline for the whole class.



Albert Namatjira painting National Library of Australia

GROUP WEBSITE ACTIVITY: Social Service Benefits

One area where equality of citizenship can be tested is access to the services provided by the state – such as social services. Do all people get these equally?

Look at the information on the National Museum of Australia website and discuss the problems that Aboriginal people in remote areas had in accessing social services, and how this would have affected their lives. For each, summarise their life story and circumstances, and the reasons why they did not have equality of access to social services.

Use the specific website documents indicated to prepare your group report to the class, and add your annotations to the timeline display.

FOCUS

NMA Website Documents

- 1 Daisy and Angel Imari Joyce Maher

Go to **Civil rights > Social Service benefits > Introduction** to see the cases of Daisy and Angel Imari and Joyce Maher.

- 2 Norman Bilson, Lulu Bilson and Alec Bilson

Go to **Civil rights > Social Service benefits > The older generation** to see the cases of Norman, Lulu and Alec Bilson, and letters from Mary Bennett explaining aspects of their situation.

- 3 Bowee and Gidum (Tommy) Noble

Go to **Civil rights > Social Service benefits > The middle generation** to see the cases of Bowee and Gidum (Tommy) Noble.

- 4 Beverley Joy Noble and Ron Noble

Go to **Civil rights > Social Service benefits > The younger generation** to see the cases of Beverley Joy and Ron Noble.

GROUP REPORT

When you have answered all the questions above prepare a report to the class that starts: The social service case studies are significant in understanding the development of Indigenous rights because ...

Explain the issue fully and display your summary under this part of the timeline. In this way you will be helping to create an annotated timeline for the whole class.



Beverley Joy and Ron Noble National Museum of Australia

ROCKET RANGE MENACE

THREATENS ABORIGINAL LIFE

PROTEST
MEETING

MELBOURNE
TOWN HALL

MON. MAR. 31ST 8pm.

Speakers :

DR CHAS. DUGUID

MRS D. BLACKBURN. MHR

MR BILL ONUS. Aust. Aborigines
League

Chairman :

Very Rev. DR R. WILSON
MACAULAY.





