

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES: KEY DATES, EVENTS, PEOPLE & PLACES (SUMMARY SHEET)

JANUARY

26 January | Survival Day / Australia Day

Marks the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples it represents invasion, dispossession of land, and ongoing impacts. It is also a day of survival, resilience, and resistance.

26 January | Aboriginal Tent Embassy

A long-running protest site in Canberra calling for land rights, sovereignty, and recognition of Indigenous rights. It remains a powerful symbol of political activism.

FEBRUARY

13 February | National Apology Day

Marks the formal apology to the Stolen Generations, acknowledging the harm caused by past government policies of forced child removal.

MARCH

17 March | Close the Gap Day

National campaign highlighting health, education, and life expectancy inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

21 March | Harmony Day

Promotes cultural diversity, inclusion, respect, and belonging in Australian society.

MAY

26 May | National Sorry Day

A day of remembrance for the Stolen Generations and reflection on the long-term impacts of forced child removal.

27 May | Referendum

A historic vote supporting constitutional change to include Indigenous peoples in the census and allow federal laws for them.

27 May–3 Jun | National Reconciliation Week

A national week promoting truth-telling, respect, and stronger relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

JUNE

3 June | Mabo Day & Mabo Decision

High Court recognises Native Title and rejects terra nullius, acknowledging Indigenous peoples' continuous connection to land.

JULY

1 July | Coming of the Light

Marks the arrival of Christianity to the Torres Strait Islands in 1871, now celebrated with cultural and religious significance.

1st week of July | NAIDOC Week

Celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture, achievements, and ongoing strength across Australia.



AUGUST

4 August | National Children's Day

Celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, identity, culture, and strong family and community connections.

9 August | International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

A UN day recognising Indigenous peoples globally and raising awareness of their rights and challenges.

SEPTEMBER

September | Single Noongar Claim

Federal Court recognition of Noongar people's continuing connection to their Country in south-west Western Australia, strengthening native title recognition.

September | Bringing Them Home Report

Landmark inquiry documenting the Stolen Generations and exposing the long-term impacts of forced removal policies.

13 September | UNDRIP Anniversary

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples outlines global rights including land, culture, language, and self-determination.

September 1975 | Racial Discrimination Act

Made racial discrimination illegal in Australia and provided important legal protections.

OCTOBER

October | Sea of Hands

A reconciliation campaign first held in Canberra using coloured hands placed in the ground to represent support for Indigenous rights and native title.

26 October | Uluru Return

Uluru in the Northern Territory was returned to its Traditional Owners, recognising its deep cultural and spiritual significance.

28 October | Pinjarra Massacre

A violent conflict in Western Australia between British settlers and Noongar people, remembered as one of the most significant colonial massacres.

KEY PEOPLE & PLACES

Yagan: Noongar resistance leader who defended Country against British colonisation and became a symbol of Indigenous resistance.

Fanny Balbuk: Noongar woman known for resisting land takeover and asserting her right to access her traditional Country.

Wadjemup (Rottnest Island): A sacred Noongar place meaning "place of spirits," with deep cultural, spiritual, and historical significance.