

The aims, tactics and outcomes of the 1967 Referendum

Australian Curriculum Content Descriptor

Humanities and Social Sciences/Year 10/History/Historical Knowledge and Understanding/Rights and Freedoms (1945 – the present)/ACDSEH106

Australian Curriculum Content Description

The significance of the following for the civil rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: 1962 right to vote federally; 1967 Referendum; Reconciliation; Mabo decision; Bringing Them Home Report (the Stolen Generations), the Apology.

Australian Curriculum Elaboration

Describing the aims, tactics and outcomes of a particular event in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' struggle for rights and freedoms.

Australians Together Learning Framework



The Wound



Our History



Why Me?



Our Cultures



My Response

Essential question

What are the best ways for a campaign group to achieve their aims?

Introduction

Students are given a comprehensive understanding of the historical context of the 1967 Referendum (the Referendum), including the motivations for the Constitution's sections (51 and 127) and the attempts over several decades to remove these sections. The aims, tactics and outcomes of the campaign groups are covered in detail. Students are asked to evaluate the tactics of campaign material and research the circumstances of the Referendum in their specific state or territory. They understand the limitations of the Referendum in affecting actual change, although they appreciate its symbolic significance in reducing discrimination.

Glossary

Terms that may need to be introduced to students prior to teaching the resource:

assimilation: the act of absorbing other people, cultures and ideas into a more dominant culture or society – to be made ‘similar’.

cabinet: the senior ministers in a government who together make the most important decisions about running the country.

civil rights: the rights and freedoms that any member of a free society is entitled to, such as freedom of assembly and the right to vote, regardless of their background or characteristics.

Commonwealth Government: the government for the whole of Australia, based in Canberra.

Federation: the event where Australia stopped being a set of colonies governed separately by Britain and formed a Commonwealth Government (in 1901).

Labor: the political party in Australia that represents the views and interests of working-class people and trade unions.

Liberal–National government: the two political parties that shared power in Australia between 1949 and 1971.

mixed-race: relating to a person whose parents each come from a different race.

petition: a letter or document to a government or ruling body that a large number of people are asked to sign to show their support for something.

policy: a course of action adopted by a government (or another organisation).


Protection: the government policies brought in to try to reduce the impacts of colonial violence. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were under control of the ‘Protector’ in their area, who had the responsibility for their welfare and control over their lives.



redress: to set right and repair wrongs.


referendum: a vote for all enrolled voters asking a question about whether the rules the government should be changed.

renounce: to give up.

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
 <p>The Wound</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on the issue</p>	<p><i>It's a good idea to introduce students to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders perspectives at the beginning of a study so their views don't become peripheral to the topic.</i></p> <p>Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the time of the 1967 Referendum felt that it had little to do with them or the problems encountered in everyday life. Some felt that it was more significant for non-Aboriginal people (Attwood et al, p. 53). Activist and Indigenous man, Charles Perkins said at the time that he felt it was more useful as a test to see if non-Indigenous people were really interested in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's welfare and rights (Attwood et al, p. 52).</p> <p>In the aftermath of the vote, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people acknowledged that it created a shift in opinion about the situation and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. However, it didn't materially improve conditions or redress the problems stemming from the past. For example, leading referendum activist Faith Bandler said afterwards that "change following the Referendum was disappointingly slow" (Attwood et al. 1997).</p> <p>Today, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people believe that the Australian Constitution should be further amended to acknowledge their rights as Traditional Custodians and original inhabitants of Australia.</p>	<p>Discussion tasks</p> <p>What is a constitution? To what extent is the Australian Constitution important to Australians in our day-to-day lives? Should we learn about it, and know what it says?</p> <p>As a class, discuss the most recent referendum or vote that the Australian Government has put to the Australian people. Look up the different voting patterns across Australia. What reasons or theories do you have about them?</p> <p>Short reflection task</p> <p>Is there something that you think the Australian Government should action and ask the Australian people to vote about? Write a short justification of your ideas.</p>

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
		<p>Short research task In small groups, find out what the 1967 Referendum did and didn't cover.</p> <p>Reflection task Find quotes from and video footage of Faith Bandler. What does she have to say about the causes and effects of the 1967 Referendum?</p>
 <p>Our History</p> <p>A background to the issue</p>	<p><i>Below is a summary of the information on the student handout:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When it was drafted, the Australian Constitution contained two discriminatory clauses regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is because the existence of Indigenous people conflicted with the ideals of 'white Australia'. • The 1967 Referendum on whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be counted in the census and should be allowed to have laws made about them by the Commonwealth Government, has to date been the most successful and well supported referendum in Australian history. • Opposition to the discriminatory clauses began prior to World War II; however, during the 1950s, it began to be a major campaign. • An organisation that became known as FCAATSI (Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders) ran the campaign. They organised petitions, leaflets, speaking tours, protests and meetings with politicians. • The Commonwealth Government eventually agreed to hold a referendum in May 1967. • FCAATSI coordinated the 'yes' campaign and focused on improving the material (actual/quantifiable) situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, (particularly children) in their promotion. • Although the 1967 Referendum was a great victory, it did little to improve the day-to-day lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. <p>Useful resources – remind students to critically evaluate all sources when researching: This resource from the Parliament of Australia website includes a useful graph of the voting across the states, and brief sections on background and impacts: https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2017/May/The_1967_Referendum</p> <p>The State Library of Victoria has many useful primary sources: http://ergo.slv.vic.gov.au/explore-history/fight-rights/indigenous-rights/1967-referendum</p>	<p>Timeline task Using the student handout, create a timeline of all the relevant events leading up to the 1967 Referendum. As you find out more, what information can be added?</p> <p>Annotation task Annotate the student handout to identify the specific aims, tactics and outcomes of the Referendum.</p> <p>Discussion task Research and collect political cartoons that were printed by newspapers during the campaign in the leadup to the 1967 Referendum. Discuss the ways they commented on the issues or attempted to influence voters. Consider the aims, tactics and outcomes that are represented.</p> <p>Small-group research task Research and collect campaign material for the 'yes' vote. Analyse the types of messages they contained and the ways that they tried to influence voters. (Materials could be supplied to students.)</p> <p>Short research task Find a recent news article or piece of online commentary by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person that refers to the 1967 Referendum. Summarise and share with the class. Do you agree with their views? Why/why not?</p>

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
 <p>Why Me?</p> <p>Why am I learning this? What do I need to know to understand the issues?</p>	<p><i>Teachers can guide students through the tactics and outcomes of the 1967 Referendum in the students' own state.</i></p> <p>Further information that outlines the impact and limitations of the 1967 Referendum can be found here: https://australianstogether.org.au/discover/australian-history/1967-referendum.</p> <p>There are many online resources about the 1967 Referendum.</p> <p>To explore this issue in more depth, teachers could examine the way that the 1967 Referendum influenced policy and civil rights advances in their own state. For example, each state repealed their Protection laws and policies in the years after the Referendum, and these changes arguably had much more day-to-day impact, as they meant that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were legally required to be paid the minimum wage. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) contains many resources on how each state managed and repealed the Protection laws: https://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/remove-and-protect</p>	<p>Discussion/Reflection task</p> <p>Reflect on what it would be like to not be recognised by your own country's constitution.</p> <p>Biography task</p> <p>Choose one person involved in the 'yes' campaign and write a short biography about their lives using primary sources to illustrate.</p> <p>Short report task</p> <p>Find out when the Protection system was repealed in your state. What information can you find online? What impact did this have on the civil rights of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people?</p>
 <p>Our Cultures</p> <p>Are there any ways that more knowledge of Indigenous cultures can help broaden our understanding of this topic?</p>	<p>The system of voting by secret ballot, and referendums, is relatively new in European history. In fact, in 1856, South Australia was the first place in the world to have a vote by secret ballot.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies developed unique and complex systems of governance over thousands of years. Culture and the Dreaming are central parts of governance, as the Dreaming is the way knowledge of laws and customs is maintained and shared. Elders are respected as they hold cultural knowledge and can make decisions together about laws and justice. Indigenous governance, which refers to the way that a community or group is organised and managed, relies on relationships and connections. Many traditional forms of governance are adapted and used today across Australia.</p> <p>Consensus, which means discussing an issue or problem until everyone comes to agreement, is an important feature of Indigenous governance. Consensus can take time and can involve many stages of discussion. People of influence in the community, such as Elders, can engage in many discussions before consensus on a decision can be reached.</p> <p>The Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority offers a brief explanation of elements of Indigenous Australian lore: https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/resources/aboriginal-lore</p> <p>Read more about Indigenous governance with this fact sheet from Reconciliation Australia: https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/iga_factsheet_1.pdf</p> <p>This website contains an interesting overview of the key points of Indigenous governance, from the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute: https://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/2-1-indigenous-governance-and-culture</p>	<p>Reflection task</p> <p>To what extent does the referendum process resemble the Indigenous governance mentioned here?</p> <p>Research and compare traditional Aboriginal lore and your knowledge of Australian law. What are the differences and similarities?</p>

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 <p>My Response</p> <p>How does this lesson help us do our part to work towards justice and reconciliation?</p>	<p><i>This Key Idea concludes the unit and asks students to consider how they would reframe the situation in Australia to bring about justice and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. There are many ways to respond, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out more about what the 1967 Referendum did and didn't achieve, keeping in mind that the Referendum outcome didn't automatically give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people equal status in Australian society. • Discover more about the impacts of ongoing dispossession, past discrimination and intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. • Research current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led initiatives for change and improvement. • Learn about the call for the Australian Constitution to be amended to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians. 	<p>Educational display</p> <p>Research how some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activists today are campaigning for the Australian Constitution to be amended to acknowledge dispossession and the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Australians. Create a wall display educating other students at your school about the campaign.</p> <p>Opinion article</p> <p>Using evidence to support your view, write an opinion article on the following topic: 'The 1967 Referendum had such a successful result because of the nature of the campaign materials [propaganda] and strategies'.</p> <p>Multimodal response</p> <p>Using graphs, maps and primary source images and documents, create a multimodal presentation to explore your response to the aims, tactics and outcomes of the 1967 Referendum. To what extent did the Referendum deliver equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?</p>

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