

### 3. Historical information and key dates

**What are some of the key historical events for Aboriginal people and communities?**

1967	Constitutional amendment referendum	The Commonwealth Government acquired power to legislate for Aboriginal Australians and allowed for their inclusion in the census.
1971	The Aboriginal flag first flown	Designed by Harold Joseph Thomas, a Luritja man from Central Australia, the Aboriginal flag was first flown in Adelaide on National Aborigines Day, 12 July.
1972	Self-determination introduced into government policy	The Department of Aboriginal Affairs was established, and the Whitlam Government introduced the policy of self-determination.
1975	Racial Discrimination Act	On 11 June the <i>Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act</i> came into effect.
1985	Uluru handed back	Uluru (formerly known as Ayers Rock) was handed back to the traditional owners.
1989	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act	The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission was established by the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989</i> and began operations on 5 March 1990.
1992	Native title (Mabo)	In 1992, the High Court decision on Native title (Mabo) overturned the concept of 'terra nullius' (that land belonged to no one at the time of European invasion) and established that Native title can exist over particular kinds of land. This led to the establishment of the <i>Native Title Act 1993</i> .
1992	Torres Strait Islander Flag	Bernard Namok of Thursday Island designed the Torres Strait Islander flag.
1997	<i>Bringing Them Home</i>	The Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, <i>Bringing Them Home</i> , was released. In 1999, the Federal Government issued a statement of sincere regret over the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families.
1998	26 May, National Sorry Day	The first National Sorry Day was held one year after the tabling of the <i>Bringing Them Home</i> report which recommended that a National Sorry Day be declared.
2005	Abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission	On 16 March Parliament passed the ATSIAC Amendment Bill, repealing provisions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 1989 (Commonwealth) and thereby abolishing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and its structures from 30 June 2005. <sup>vii</sup>

**What key dates are significant to Aboriginal people and communities?**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Significance</i>
26 January <b>Survival Day</b>	Aboriginal Australians choose to mark Australia Day as a day to highlight the invasion of Australia by Europeans and to acknowledge the survival of their cultural heritage.
13 February <b>National Apology to Australia's First Peoples</b>	
26 May – 3 June <b>National Reconciliation Week</b>	This week begins with National Sorry Day on 26 May and ends with Mabo Day on 3 June.
26 May <b>National Sorry Day</b>	This day marks the anniversary of the 1997 tabling of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, <i>Bringing Them Home</i> (April 1997)
3 June <b>Mabo Day</b>	This day commemorates the anniversary of the 1992 High Court decision in the case brought by Eddie Mabo and others, which recognised the existence in Australia of Native title rights.
First full week of July <b>NAIDOC Week</b>	The first Sunday of July sees the beginning of a week dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people to celebrate NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day Observance Committee) Week. It is a celebration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people of their survival. It is also a time for all Australians to celebrate the unique contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions and cultures and to bring issues of concern to the attention of governments and the broader community.
4 August <b>National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day</b>	This day was first observed in 1988 and each year it has a special theme <sup>viii</sup> .

**Where can I get more information about what is happening for each of these dates?**

Information can be obtained by:

- Contacting your local Aboriginal organisation
- Viewing advertising in Aboriginal publications, such as the *Koori Mail* and the *National Indigenous Times*
- Visiting web sites, Indigenous Infonet and Reconciliation Australia

## 4. Aboriginal health promotion

Health promotion for Aboriginal people needs to take into account culture, diversity within the population, socioeconomic circumstances, numerous languages and dialects, geographic location and, importantly, the consequences of colonisation (which have impacted on the social, economic, and physical living conditions of Aboriginal people).

Health is viewed holistically in the Indigenous population, and is inclusive of the physical, social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of individuals and communities. Relationships within the community (particularly those with elders), and spiritual connections to the land and ancestors need to be considered in the interpretation of health issues.

Specific health issues and their contributing factors need to be assessed in the context of Indigenous people's lives and the disproportionate burden of disadvantage they bear compared with the non-Indigenous population<sup>x</sup>.

*Please refer to using a Health Promotion Framework with Aboriginal lens, available as part of the Making Two Worlds Work Project, for further information.*

## 5. Protocols and procedures

### Working in partnership

#### **How do I go about working in partnership with an Aboriginal community?**

The Making Two Worlds project has produced three resources to support effective partnerships:

- A Working with Aboriginal clients and community audit tool for agency planning and review
- A checklist poster for working with Aboriginal clients
- Health Promotion framework with an 'Aboriginal lens'

These are available in this resource kit or accessed online at [www.whealth.com.au](http://www.whealth.com.au) or [www.mungabareena.com](http://www.mungabareena.com)

Relationship building is essential before starting work on a project or program that has a direct impact on Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal people have a strong sense of owning their history and knowledge and being in control of their future. This ownership has often been ignored in the past.

### Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Flags

#### **What is the meaning of the design of the Aboriginal flag?**

The black top half of the flag symbolises Aboriginal people. The bottom red half represents the earth, and the yellow circle in the centre represents the sun. Mr Harold Thomas, an Aboriginal Elder, holds the copyright for the flag.

