

Our Healing. Our Future.

TIMELINE OF TRAUMA AND HEALING IN AUSTRALIA

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have been taken from their families since the start of colonisation in Australia. Children were kidnapped, taken for labour and removed from their families through government policies of the day.

This timeline looks at some of the events, trauma and healing that's taken place in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over the last two and a half centuries.

The dates in this timeline are a selection representing the breadth of events that have occurred. This is not intended to be a complete list.

60,000BC Archaeological evidence suggests a rock shelter was used by people at a site in Arnhem Land.	42,000BC Mungo Man buried in a shallow grave.	1770 Captain James Cook declares possession of the east coast.	1788 The First Fleet arrives in Sydney.	1789 Smallpox decimates the Aboriginal population of Botany Bay, Port Jackson and Broken Bay.	1794 Colonists begin farming on the Hawesbury. Aboriginal people dispossessed from their lands.	1814 Governor Macquarie opens a school for Aboriginal children in Parramatta.	1830 The Black Wars begin in Tasmania.	
1836 Committee of the British House of Commons reports genocide is happening in the colonies. The Doomadgee Mission is set up in Far North Queensland.	1838 Myall Creek Massacre – first time colonists were punished in a court for their crimes.	1848 New Norcia Mission established in Western Australia.	1865 The Ballarat District Orphan Asylum is established. It hosted thousands of 'neglected' children.	1869 Victoria becomes the first state to pass laws authorising child removal from Aboriginal parents. Similar policies and legislation were later adopted by other states and territories.	1870 The first Aboriginal children enrolled in public schools in New South Wales.	1877 The Hermannsburg Mission is established.	1879 Torres Strait Islands annexed to Queensland.	
1883 The New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board is established to manage the lives of 9000 people.	1887 Parramatta Girls Industrial School opens.	1890 Jandamarrra, a resistance fighter in the Kimberley, declares war on Europeans and prevents settlement for six years.	1897 Queensland introduces laws allowing removal of Aboriginal people from their land and children from their families.	1901 The Commonwealth of Australia is formed.	1904 Torres Strait Islanders become subject to the Queensland Aboriginal Protection Act. Their islands become reserves. Cherbourg Mission is also established in Queensland.	1905 The Aborigines Act is passed in Western Australia, making the 'chief protector' the legal guardian of Aboriginal children.		
1908 The Invalid and Old Age Pension Act is introduced, providing social security for all Australians except Aboriginal people. The Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home opens near Nowra.	1909 The Aborigines Protection Act is introduced in New South Wales, granting power to take 'neglected' children from their families.	1911 South Australia and the Northern Territory create laws to remove Aboriginal people from their land and separate families. Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls is established in a disused hospital building.	1912 Maternity Allowance is introduced but does not include Aboriginal people.	1913 The Church of England Girls' Home opens in Carlingford, New South Wales.	1915 The Aborigines Protection Board in New South Wales is given powers to take children from their families without having to prove neglect.			
1917 Yarra Bay House becomes the site of a number of government-run children's homes from around 1917 to the mid 1980s.	1918 The Palm Island Mission is set up in Queensland.	1920 Bidura, an historic house in Sydney, becomes a depot and receiving home for children while they await foster placements or transfers to other establishments.	1923 Kinchela Training Home for Aboriginal Boys opens near Kempsey in New South Wales.	1928 The Coniston Massacre, Australia's last documented massacre, takes place in Central Australia.	1930 William Cooper petitions the King to have an Aboriginal representative in Australian Parliament.	1934 The Arnhem Land Reserve is declared. Sister Kate's Children's Cottage Home is established in Perth.		
1937 Australian Government convenes first 'native welfare' conference and states adopt assimilation policies for Aboriginal people.	1938 Day of Mourning held in Sydney to mark the 150th anniversary of colonisation.	1939 The South Australian Aborigines Protection Board is established.	1940 The Aborigines Protection Board in New South Wales is renamed Aborigines Welfare Board and loses power to remove Aboriginal children.	1941 The Child Endowment Act is passed but declares no endowment should be paid to dependent Aboriginal people.	1942 Darwin is bombed by the Japanese and many Aboriginal people are moved to 'control camps'.	1947 Torres Strait Islanders are allowed to travel to mainland Australia to pursue employment.	1948 All Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are given 'Australian citizenship' for the first time.	
1949 The Commonwealth Electoral Act is extended to Aboriginal ex-servicemen.	1956 Large nuclear tests are carried out at Maralinga – hundreds of Aboriginal people are forced to leave because of radiation poisoning.	1961 The Allambi Reception Centre opens in Burwood, as the Victorian Government's main reception centre for children.	1962 The Commonwealth Electoral Act is amended to give the vote to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Federal elections.	1965 The Freedom Ride takes place in New South Wales, protesting against racial discrimination.	1966 Around 200 Aboriginal stockmen, led by Vincent Lingiari, walk off in protest of pay and conditions at Wave Hill station.	1967 More than 90% of Australians vote yes in a referendum to give the Australian Government the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.		
1969 The New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board is abolished. All states repeal Aboriginal child removal legislation.	1971 Aboriginal people are counted in the Census for the first time.	1972 The Tent Embassy is pitched outside Parliament House in Canberra.	1975 The Australian Parliament passes the Racial Discrimination Act to help ensure all Australians are treated equally.	1980 The first Link-Up organisation is set up in New South Wales, providing support for Stolen Generations members and their families.	1985 Uluru is handed back to its traditional owners. Yarra Bay House closes at Phillip Bay.	1988 The Barunga Statement, calling for rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, is presented to Prime Minister Bob Hawke.		
1991 The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody presents its final report into the deaths of 99 Aboriginal people in Australian jails.	1992 The High Court hands down the Mabo decision. Paul Keating delivers historic Redfern Speech, acknowledging the negative impact of European settlement.	1993 The United Nations declares 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People.	1994 The Going Home conference takes place in Darwin, bringing together over 600 Aboriginal people who were stolen from families as children.	1996 The first National Reconciliation Week is held.	1997 The Bringing Them Home report is tabled in Australian Parliament. Six states and the Australian Capital Territory issue formal apologies to Stolen Generations.	1998 The first National Sorry Day is held.		
2001 Northern Territory Government apologises to Stolen Generations.	2006 Australia's first Stolen Generations compensation scheme is established in Tasmania.	2007 Northern Territory intervention in Aboriginal communities.	2008 National Apology to the Stolen Generations in Australian Parliament.	2009 The Healing Foundation is established. Australia supports the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.	2013 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Act 2013 passes in Australian Parliament.	2017 Commemorations held for the 20th anniversary of the Bringing Them Home report.	2018 10th anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations.	2019 Launch of the Stolen Generations Resource Kit for Teachers and Students and 10th anniversary of The Healing Foundation.