The 1967 Referendum was a vote to end discrimination against Indigenous Australians in the Australian Constitution. Across the country the vote was overwhelmingly "yes", representing a landmark in relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
The Referendum held on 27 May 1967 asked two questions of Australian voters.

The first question, relating to the number of Members in the House of Representatives was defeated by a 3 to 2 majority.

The second question sought two amendments to the Constitution as it related to Aboriginal Australians. The first amendment was to Section 51, paragraph xxvi, that stated, "The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to ... The people of any race, other than the aboriginal race in any state, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws." The Referendum proposed deleting the reference to 'the Aboriginal race' as it was discriminatory and denied the Commonwealth Parliament the opportunity to make special laws for Aboriginal people even if they were of an affirmative nature.

The second amendment proposed repealing section 127 of the Constitution, "In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a state or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted." It had been claimed that section 127 had been included in the Constitution because Aboriginal people in the late 19th century lived a mainly tribal and nomadic lifestyle creating "practical difficulties ... in satisfactorily enumerating the Aboriginal population". [Sir Robert Menzies, 11 November 1965, page 2638]

Introducing the Constitution Alteration (Aboriginals) Bill 1967, Prime Minister Harold Holt, said, "The simple truth is that section 127 is completely out of harmony with our national attitudes and modern thinking. It has no place in our Constitution in this age." [1 March 1967, page 263]

When put to the Australian electorate, the usual practice of presenting a 'Yes' case and a 'No' case for these two amendments was not followed as no Member of Parliament could be found to authorise a case against the proposed amendments. There was also support from the broader community, including church leaders, unionists, sports people, and the media.

The proposed amendments received 5,183,113 votes or 90.77% in favour, the biggest majority ever to be afforded to a Referendum question in Australia.

Background Information on the 1967 Referendum

"We aborigines have been fighting for this Referendum for 10 years."

The 1967 Referendum contributed significantly to Australian political, social and cultural history. The staging and outcome of the Referendum indicated Australian society’s maturity and willingness to recognise fundamental human rights and to give Aboriginal people a fair go. The constitutional amendment provided a pre-condition for social, economic, cultural change and Reconciliation in Australian society.

The focus of the 1967 Referendum teaching and learning opportunities within this resource:

- Provide knowledge of Australia’s historical, social and political past (Knowledge).
- Support understanding of citizenship, democratic processes, equality and human rights (Skills and understandings).
- Foster development of active citizenship, Reconciliation, respect for others, appreciation of a diversity of opinions, views and perspectives (Values and actions).

The 1967 Referendum provides a significant focal point in understanding the Reconciliation process even though this event occurred long before the term “Reconciliation” was used. The Referendum is best understood in the context of legislation, campaigns and activism prior to and after 27 May 1967 through to the present. Education plays an important role in understanding, commitment and momentum towards Reconciliation.

“I to recognise our shared past, foster understanding and work together for a shared future”

http://www.sacsa.sa.edu.au/index_fsrc.asp?t=ECPitid=E1.2A

Planning, Programming and Assessment

Teaching and learning activities, student inquiry and investigation may be approached through a disciplinary, multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary approach. Society and Environment provides the main curriculum connection – evidence towards other Learning Area outcomes can also be assessed and recorded.

Online resource links provide adequate factual information from which to develop most suggested activities.
National Consistency in Curriculum Outcomes

Statements of Learning and their Professional Elaborations have been developed nationally for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 English, Mathematics, Science, Civics and Citizenship and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). In 2006 all the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education agreed that these Statements of Learning will be used by State and Territory departments (or curriculum authorities) to guide the future development of relevant curriculum documents in their states and territories.

An overview of the Civics and Citizenship Statement of Learning is included in this package as it provides guidance for learning.

STATEMENTS FOR LEARNING FOR CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

The Statement of Learning for Civics and Citizenship describes the knowledge, skills, understandings and capacities that all young Australians should have the opportunity to learn and develop.

GOVERNMENT AND LAW explores institutions, principles and values underpinning Australia’s representative democracy including the key features of the Australian Constitution; the role of democracy in building a socially cohesive and civil society; ways in which individuals, groups and governments make decisions; how governments and parliaments are elected and formed; levels and roles of government; concepts of power, leadership and community service; the purpose of laws; and the ways in which Australia’s legal system contributes to the democratic principles, rights and freedoms.

CITIZENSHIP IN A DEMOCRACY explores the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society and the civic knowledge, skills and values required to participate as informed and active citizens in local, state, national and regional and global contexts. Australia’s cultural diversity and place in the Asia Pacific region and in the world are explored. Issues of environmental sustainability are examined as well as opportunities to learn to make decisions that build a capacity for futures-oriented thinking. The ways in which the media and information and communication technologies (ICT) are used by individuals and governments to exert influence and the influence that media and ICT have on civic debate and citizen engagement are examined. Opportunities to practise democratic values and processes in classrooms, schools and communities are included.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES explores the impact of the past on Australian civil society. The impact of British colonisation on Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their pursuit of citizenship rights are examined. The ways in which individuals, events and popular movements have influenced the development of democracy in Australia and the influence of past societies in Australian democracy are explored. The influence of local, state, national, regional and global events, issues and perspectives on Australia’s changing national identities and the impact of government policy on the development of Australia as a culturally diverse nation are examined.

For details refer to:

40th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum

Entry Points

DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Children develop a positive sense of self and a confident personal and group identity
- Children develop a sense of being connected with others and their world.

THEMES

- What is an Australian?
- Student voice
- Fair/ not fair – how do we build a fair and just society?
- Rules/law
- Elections
- Reconciliation Week
- Referendum 1967

Inquiry Question & Discussion/Activities

What is an Australian?
Life in Australia today – is it the same for everyone? Who is it different for? How is it different for Aboriginal People?

40th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum - How has this impacted on Reconciliation?

- Who would have been alive in 1967?
- Who do you know 40 years old or older – family members/community members?
- Life in 1967
- Timeline - start from today and work backwards. What happened and what was life like 10 years ago…20 years ago…30 years ago…40 years ago? What did we have? How was it different for different people?
- Using photos of relatives/other Australians of the life of Aboriginal people: discuss differences /similarities
- Children record how they think the people in the pictures feel and what they would like to change?

Create a Photostory of different emotions and choose music/words to suit

- Create roles / timelines illustrating different times. Children are able to talk about then and now. What might it be like in the future?
- Different groups identify what they would like life to be like in…10 years time, 20 years time…what are the common ideas and how do we work together to achieve this?

Resources

- “Working Within Community”
  Aboriginal community members/leaders, District Aboriginal Education Coordinators – where possible
This site has lots of excellent links to resources:
http://aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/referendum-australia-had-have

There are opportunities for students to achieve outcomes (at least in part) in a number of learning areas including S&E, Mathematics and English. A number of these are listed below in the Evaluating section of the Inquiry table.

The intention of this document is to support teachers in developing an inquiry learning approach by using the website as the resource for this inquiry.

The example provided is aimed at Year 4 and can be adapted for Years 3 and 5 as appropriate. It is presented as a guide only and we encourage further development be negotiated/constructed with students. Where possible the involvement of the local Aboriginal community would be highly recommended. Teachers in DECS sites may choose to contact the Aboriginal Education Consultant based in the District Office to gain support in identifying appropriate contacts.

An inquiry approach:
It is vital that students have opportunities to make an emotional connection to the inquiry explored and build on their sense of identity as active citizens. It is important that students develop knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal history as an integral part of both the past, and future of all Australians.
What is the significance of the 1967 Referendum and how do we continue to contribute to a fairer and more just society?

**Defining and Planning**
- As a whole class discuss the central question using an appropriate protocol.
- By way of an introduction to the inquiry an initial viewing of the website could be done at this point.
- Find out what is known and needs to be researched.
- Students and teachers need to construct a plan of inquiry and determine who will do what, when and how.
- Develop sub-questions in for each group e.g. using the Learning Trail notes as a guide. An example of these notes is as follows: Page 4, Macquarie Atlas of Indigenous Australia Trail Notes Look at this map of Australia. There are pie graphs to show how each state’s population voted in the Referendum. You will see that many more Australians voted yes than no. The total yes vote was just below 91%, which means that 9 out of every 10 Australians voted yes. What percentage voted yes in your state?
- This topic could be expanded with further questions or investigations in other Learning Areas e.g. Mathematics.
- Each group develops and agrees to processes, roles and responsibilities in their group.
- Develop criteria and timelines for assessment e.g. a class rubric.

**Locating in order to extend and test findings**
- Use website as the starting point to locate information.
- Identify Aboriginal people in the community who may be resource people.
- Undertake internet investigations to locate more information e.g. follow some of the links on the website.
- Use at least one other resource to test findings e.g. an encyclopedia, or Library catalogue using subject, title or author.

**Selecting to extend and test findings**
- From the body of information, students select the relevant information that will assist them in their inquiry.
- Select the best medium for the presentation of their inquiry e.g. a PowerPoint, a play, song lyrics, data, diagrams, a graph, a poster, a timeline, an oral presentation, flow chart/web etc.

**Organising and analysing findings**
- Students sequence information logically.
- Develop a draft copy, proof read the spelling and basic punctuation.
- Organise data mathematically, where appropriate, using graphs, tables etc.

**Actioning, based on the findings of the inquiry**
- Share the learning with the community e.g. present their play as part of an assembly; publish reports and student comments in the newsletter; PowerPoint presentations uploaded onto the school website.
- Discuss: 1. How can our class use the lessons from the Referendum to influence change in our community? 2. What are the impacts of decisions and who has the power to change them?

**Evaluating learning achieved**
- Self-assessment – “How well have I addressed the criteria?”
- Peer assessment – Contribution to group discussion/group work.
- Teacher Assessment - To what degree has the student met the SACSA Outcomes including: Society & Environment: 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.5; 2.6; 2.9; 2.12

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40th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum

**Topic/ Theme:**
- The 1967 Referendum
  - A pre-condition for change - historical, social, economic and political significance and impact.

**Inquiry Question**
- What impact has the 1967 Referendum had on Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in the past 40 years?
- Do we have a fairer society in Australia today?
- How can all Australians contribute to Reconciliation?
- What action will you take?

**Learning and assessment strategies & evidence of achievement**
1. Students brainstorm in pairs, using Inspiration to record:
   a) What they know about the 1967 Referendum.
   b) What they’d like/need to know. Discuss.
2. Students explore and share understandings of the meaning of terms: democracy, government, elections, constitution, referendum, civic action, activism, citizenship, laws, Reconciliation.
3. Students visit the Migration Museum and participate in the “Whose History” Program which examines how history is constructed and recorded, who is included and who is left out?

**SACSA Links**
- **English:** Texts and contexts (Outcomes 4.1 4.2 4.3, 4.4), Language (Outcomes 4.7), Strategies (Outcomes 4.9)
- **Society and Environment:** Time, continuity and change (Outcomes 4.3), Societies and Cultures (Outcomes 4.7, 4.8, 4.9), Social systems (Outcomes 4.10, 4.11, 4.12)

**Equity Cross Curriculum Perspectives:**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. Being informed about contemporary local/global issues such as Reconciliation, human rights, racism.
- Understanding Australia’s Indigenous and multicultural history and development.

**Essential Learnings**
- Developing perspectives to critically reflect upon and contribute to creating preferred futures, including: identifying, researching and analysing challenges for the future, understanding world views and how they are constructed and manifested, taking ethical action to affect personal and social change.
- Identity: Critically understanding and developing person identity, group identity, and relationships and acting to shape these.
- Interdependence: Developing a sense of connectedness with other people, and systems reflecting on and taking action to shape local and global communities.
4 Students explore a range of websites, biographies, articles, films (see resources) to support research and discussion about

   a) What did the 1967 Referendum constitutional amendment mean; what opportunities did it create for further constitutional change? What rights, responsibilities and consequences resulted from the constitutional change?

   b) What arguments formed the YES/NO Referendum case?

   c) What were the results of the Referendum, decisions, influences and interpretations from a range of perspectives?

   d) What were the State and Federal government responses - what did this mean in relation to land rights, councils, and royal commissions?

   e) What was the role and influence of activists in bringing about change? Who were some of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women who were active in this movement?

5 Students examine a range of texts, including photographs, newspaper articles, and advertisements related to the 1967 Referendum.

   a) What messages are contained in the text?

   b) Examine and compare representations of Aboriginal peoples in the text. Pay attention to arguments used, tone and language, and expected consequences.

6 Students interview speakers about their views, recollections and experiences of the 1967 Referendum. Students develop questions for interviews, record and summarise responses to share with class group. Aboriginal Education Co-ordinators in districts may recommend appropriate speakers.

7 Students research the role of activists in the campaign for Aboriginal equality in the 1960s and 1970s; for example Charles Perkins, Faith Bandler, Chicke Dixon and Kath Walker (later Dodgeroo Noonuccal)

8 Students view "Two bob mermaid" in the "From sand to celluloid" series (video 562). A short film based on the freedom ride era when a young Aboriginal girl is allowed into a town swimming pool but her darker skinned relatives are not. Students compare and contrast the treatment of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal characters in the film. Available from the Aboriginal Resource Centre and DECS Tape Services.

9 Students view documentaries "Freedom Ride – SBS Blood Brothers Series" and "Inside Story – Winning the 1967 Referendum" available from DECS Tape Services

   a) Students in small groups discuss and analyse significant people and events from the films. Create a Target Diagram to demonstrate the exploration of three main ideas from the film. Target Diagram pro-forma available at www.classtools.net/welcome.htm

10 Students develop mindmap/concept map/fishbone to show key factors from research which help to answer the essential question. Fishbone pro-forma available at www.classtools.net/welcome.htm

11 Students create a Timeline or Living Graph of international and national events prior to and after 1967 – what was their significance and impact. Timeline and Living Graph templates can be accessed at www.classtools.net/welcome.htm

12 Students visit the Australian Bureau of Statistics website (1967 Aborigines Referendum) and analyse Referendum ballot results. What states were most and least in favour of constitutional change and explore possible reasons why.

13 Students write a newspaper report or conduct a mock radio/TV interview that would have followed Saturday 27 May 1967. This could include an account of the Referendum, an interview with an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal Australian on the reasons why he or she voted YES/NO, or a political leader about the expected consequences of the YES vote.

14 Human Graph/Values Walk "The 1967 Referendum made little difference to the reality of life for Aboriginal People" Students take a position along an imaginary YES/NO continuum and justify their opinions on the question. This can be revisited during the inquiry process to show possible shifts in knowledge and understandings.

15 Students participate in a debate or structured controversy "The 1967 Referendum made little difference to the reality of life for Aboriginal People".

16 Students in groups develop a range of presentation e.g. reflective journal, song, role play, movie, PowerPoint which demonstrates their learning in relation to the inquiry question and the social action they will take to contribute towards Reconciliation.

17 Design a class rubric to assess knowledge, skills and understandings demonstrated in relation to the inquiry question. Utilise Rubric for self, peer and teacher feedback and assessment.
Educational Resources

Electronic Resources

- ABC
  www.abc.net.au (search 1967 Referendum)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
  www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/3919938725CA0E1FCA254ED90001CA9B8
- Curriculum Corporation: Discovering Democracy
  www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au (search 1967 Referendum)
- Equal Opportunity Commission SA
  www.equ4schools.net.au
- Human Rights Commission
  www.humanrights.gov.au
- Migration Museum of South Australia
  www.history.sa.gov.au
- Racist No Way!
  www.racismnoway.com.au
- Reconciliation Australia
  www.reconciliation.org.au
- Reconciliation South Australia
  www.reconciliationsa.org.au
- State Library 1967 Referendum Fact Sheet
  www.slsa.sa.gov.au
- Women’s History Month

Teaching and Learning Materials

- As a Matter of Fact Answering the myths and misconceptions about Indigenous Australians (ATSIC 1998)
- Countering Racism: Using a critical approach in teaching and learning contexts to explore portrayals of Aboriginality (DETE 2000)
- Discovering Democracy Kits: Upper primary Units (pages 129–131 Charles Perkins and the Freedom Rides) and Lower Secondary Units (pages 95–98, the 1967 Referendum), Commonwealth of Australia (Curriculum Corporation 1998)
- Towards Reconciliation: Activities for Reconciliation Week (DETE 1998)

Resources (from the State Library FactSheet)

Books and Pamphlets


Electronic Resources

- National Archives Australia. Fact sheet of resources held by National Archives pertaining to the 1967 Referendum.
- Reconciliation Australia.
  Pages prepared by Reconciliation Australia for the 40th Anniversary of the Referendum.
  www.reconciliation.org.au
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Online exhibition of materials relating to the 1967 ‘Freedom rides’ in New South Wales.

© State Library of South Australia 2007
Finding information in Government Publications

The Library has a complete set of the Official Hansard for both houses of the Australian Parliament. The House of Representatives is bound in green; the Senate is bound in red. There are indexes at the back of the bound volumes. Indexes are divided into Indexes to speeches and Indexes to subjects. The latter uses broad subject categories such as Bills; Committees; Questions on Notice etc.

The Constitution Alteration (Aboriginals) Bill 1967 was presented by the Prime Minister to the House of Representatives on 1 March 1967.

To read the Bill in its entirety, consult the Parliamentary debates (Hansard): House of Representatives for that day.

To follow the debate about the Bill use the indexes found in the volumes produced in 1967 for both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Finding more articles in periodicals

There is a vast amount of information in full-text databases of periodical and newspaper articles on any particular subject. See the Factsheet Fulltext databases for more details.

Customers doing research into Aboriginal people may find the following databases particularly helpful: EBSCOhost, Electric Library and Informit Online.
Reconciliation South Australia

A united Australia, which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all.

Reconciliation has both symbolic and practical elements. A spirit of goodwill, mutual respect and recognition of the effects of colonisation on Australia's first people are the symbolic cornerstones of the Reconciliation effort. On the practical side, working towards an improved quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly in areas such as health, education and employment is essential for achieving equity for all South Australians.

Reconciliation South Australia Incorporated is a not-for-profit organisation with a major focus on encouraging the people's movement for Reconciliation at a state level after the cessation of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

Department of Education and Children's Services

The 1967 Referendum Education Pack produced by

Reconciliation South Australia Inc.
with the assistance of

Government of South Australia
Department of Education and Children's Services
UniSA
Catholic Education South Australia
Reconciliation Australia

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ADELAIDE SA 5001
The 1967 referendum

This resource provides opportunities for students to engage in the following elements of the Australian Curriculum Content descriptions (Version 8.2):

### Humanities and social sciences (Foundation to Year 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR LEVEL</th>
<th>CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP</th>
<th>INQUIRY SKILLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children (ACHASSK135)</td>
<td>Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present (ACHASSI127)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The shared values of Australian citizenship and the formal rights and responsibilities of Australian citizens (ACHASSK147)</td>
<td>Evaluate evidence to draw conclusions (ACHASSI129)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The process for constitutional change through a referendum (ACHASSK194)</td>
<td>Analyse primary sources and secondary sources to identify values and perspectives on people, actions, events, issues and phenomena, past and present (ACHASSI157)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### History (Years 7 to 10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR LEVEL</th>
<th>CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP</th>
<th>INQUIRY SKILLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>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 (ACDSEH106)</td>
<td>Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument (ACHHS188)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Civics and Citizenship Education (Years 7 to 10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>INQUIRY SKILLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The process for constitutional change through a referendum (ACHCK049)</td>
<td>Critically analyse information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS056)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Present evidence-based civics and citizenship arguments using subject-specific language (ACHCS059)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Languages (Years 7-10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR LEVEL</th>
<th>FIRST LANGUAGE LEARNER PATHWAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>Investigate, analyse and synthesise information obtained from a range of sources on topics and issues related to their Country/Place and community (ACLFWC048)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General capabilities

This resource provides opportunities to address the following organising elements of the general capabilities:

Critical and Creative Thinking

- Inquiring – identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas

Ethical understanding

- Exploring values, rights and responsibilities

Cross-curriculum priorities

This resource provides opportunities for students to address aspects of the following cross-curriculum priorities:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples live in Australia as first peoples of Country or Place and demonstrate resilience in responding to historic and contemporary impacts of colonisation.
- The significant contributions of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the present and past are acknowledged locally, nationally and globally.