

NAIDOC - Closing the Gap

Before the 1920s, Aboriginal rights groups boycotted Australia Day in protest of the treatment of Indigenous Australians. Several organisations emerged to co-ordinate these protests, particularly the Australian

Aborigines Progressive Association (AAPA) in 1924 and the **Australian Aborigines League (AAL)** in 1932. In 1935, **William Cooper**, founder of the AAL, drafted a petition to send to **King George V**, asking for Aboriginal electorates in Federal Parliament. The **Australian**



On **Australia Day, 1938**, protestors marched through the streets of **Sydney**, followed by a congress attended by over a thousand people. One of the first major civil rights gatherings in the world, it was known as the **Day of Mourning**. Following the congress, a deputa-tion led by **William Cooper** presented Prime Minister **Joseph Lyons** with a proposed national policy for Aboriginal people. This was again rejected because the Government did not hold constitutional powers in relation to Aboriginal people.



In 1939 **William Cooper** then wrote to the **National Missionary Council of Australia** seeking support in establishing an annual event. From 1940-1955, the **Day of Mourning** was held annually on the Sunday before **Australia Day** and was called **Aborigines Day**. In 1955 **Aborigines Day** was shifted to the first Sunday in July after

It was decided the day should become not only a protest march but also a celebration of Aboriginal culture and survival. Major Aboriginal organisations, state and federal governments, and church groups all supported the formation of **NADOC**, the **National Aborigines Day Observance Committee**. In 1974, the **NADOC** committee was composed entirely of Aboriginal

members for the first time. The following year, the event was extended to a week, from the first to second Sunday in July. The efforts of **NADOC** in lobbying for the rights of Aboriginal people laid the foundation for the establishment of State, Territory and Federal policies and departments responsible for addressing Aboriginal disadvantage. In 2007 the social justice report highlighted the gaps in Aboriginal equality and founded the closing the gap campaign. While there have been huge improvements since the early **NADOC** marches the gaps are still prevalent today as indicated by these 2008 statistics from the **Australian Human Rights Commission**.



Closing the Gap Statistics Snapshot

The infant mortality rate for Indigenous Australians is twice the infant mortality rate for all Australians. Indigenous peoples were nearly twice as likely to report their health as fair or poor (22%) compared to non-Indigenous people. The life expectancy of Indigenous people is around 17 years lower than that of the Australian population. The unemployment rate is 16% for Indigenous adults compared with 5% of the non-Indigenous population. The rate of Indigenous homelessness is three times the rate for other Australians. The imprisonment rate for Indigenous adults at June 2007 was approximately 13 times that for non-Indigenous adults. 31% of all female prisoners were reported as having Indigenous status. 18.3% of Indigenous women experienced physical or threatened abuse in the past 12 months compared with 7% of non-Indigenous women.



Unsung Heroes
Closing the Gap by
Leading Their Way
4-11 JULY
2010

**SOUTH WEST HEALTH CARE
NAIDOC CELEBRATIONS
WARRNAMBOOL HOSPITAL**

**Tuesday 6th July
10:30am-2:30pm**

**Where: Hider Street
(near the Ward 9 Entry)
Hider St will be blocked for the
days events**

10:30am-Welcome to Country

10:40am-Smoking Ceremony

10:50am-CEO SWHC

11:00am-Aboriginal Dancers

11:10am-Flags in the town

11:20am-Release Gardens

11:30am-Entertainment & Acts

For Information Ph 03 55644190

