The History of NAIDOC
Celebrating Indigenous Culture
Wominjeka

Welcome
Acknowledgement

La Trobe University acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations as the traditional custodians of the land upon which the Bundoora campus is located.
Acknowledgement

We recognise their ongoing connection to the land and value the unique contribution the Wurundjeri people and all Indigenous Australians make to the University and the wider Australian society.
What is NAIDOC?

NAIDOC stands for the ‘National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee’.

This committee was responsible for organising national activities due to its acronym becoming the name of the week itself.
History of NAIDOC

NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life.
Before the 1920s, Aboriginal rights groups boycotted Australia Day (26 January) in protest against the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians.

Several organisations emerged to fill this role, particularly the Australian Aborigines Progressive Association (AAPA) in 1924 and the Australian Aborigines League (AAL) in 1932.
History of NAIDOC
1930’s

In 1935, William Cooper, founder of the AAL, drafted a petition to send to King George V, asking for special Aboriginal electorates in Federal Parliament. The Australian Government believed that the petition fell outside its constitutional Responsibilities

William Cooper (c. 1861 - 1941), Australian Aboriginal leader
History of NAIDOC
1930’s cont.

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.

Jack Patten reads the resolution at the Day of Mourning Conference on 26 January 1938: "We, representing the Aborigines of Australia... on the 150th Anniversary of the whitemen’s Seizure of our country, hereby make protest against the callous treatment of our people... and we appeal to the Australian nation of today... for full citizen status and equality within the community."
January 26 1938 was the 150th anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet in Australia, for some a day to celebrate, for others a day to mourn.

For those who celebrated there was a parade and a re-enactment of the arrival of the First Fleet was performed.

In this 1938 re-enactment of Governor Phillip’s landing, Aborigines (specially brought in for the occasion) are shown running up the beach as the boats of the First Fleet marines land at Farm Cove. A group of white dignitaries sits in comfortable safety watching the invasion.
Day of Mourning

Those who mourned, were kept waiting until the parade passed by before they could march in ‘silent protest from the Town Hall to the Australian Hall in Elizabeth Street.

The first Day of Mourning, was held at the Cyprus Hellene Club in the Australian Hall. It was the first time that Aboriginal people from around Australia joined together to campaign for equality and citizenship rights.
A LARGE BLACKBOARD displayed outside the Australian Hall proclaims, "Day of Mourning".

William Ferguson, Jack Kinchela, Isaac Ingram, Doris Williams, Esther Ingram, Arthur Williams, Phillip Ingram, Louisa Agnes Ingram OAM holding daughter Olive Ingram, Jack Patten.
From 1940 until 1955, the Day of Mourning was held annually on the Sunday before Australia Day and was known as Aborigines Day.

In 1955 Aborigines Day was shifted to the first Sunday in July after it was decided the day should become not simply a protest day but also a celebration of Aboriginal culture.
1956 - National Aborigines Day Observance Committee (NADOC) was formed with support from Aboriginal organisations, State & Federal Government & the churches.

1975 – NADOC Week was adopted and runs from the 1st Sunday – 2nd Sunday in July
History of NAIDOC
1956-1975 cont.

1972 – the first NADOC Poster & National theme was adopted
History of NAIDOC
1980 - present

NADOC was expanded to recognise Torres Strait Islander people and culture. The committee then became known as the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC).

This new name has become the title for the whole week, not just the day. Each year, a theme is chosen to reflect the important issues and events for NAIDOC Week.
2014 NAIDOC Theme & Poster

Serving Country: Centenary & Beyond.

Artist: Harry Alfred Pitt

Torres Strait Islander artist, Harry Pitt, won the 2014 National NAIDOC Poster Competition with his artwork depicting three brothers with their land behind them & the horizon before them. Their Elders are reflected in the water, giving the brothers the strength to overcome the challenges that may lie over the horizon.
Aboriginal Flag

Designed by Indigenous Elder Harold Thomas in 1971, this flag symbolises Aboriginal identity.

Yellow represents the sun (giver of life) and yellow ochre.

Red represents the red earth (the relationship to the land) and the red ochre used in ceremonies.

Black represents the Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal flag was first displayed on 12th July 1971, National Aborigines' Day, at Victoria Square in Adelaide. It was also used at the 'Tent Embassy' in Canberra in 1972.
Torres Strait Islander Flag

The flag was created as a symbol of unity and identity for Torres Strait Islander peoples & was designed in 1992 by the late Bernard Namok from Thursday Island.

The dharri or deri (a type of headdress) is a symbol for all Torres Strait Islanders.

The colours of the flag represent the following:
- green is for the land.
- black represents the people.
- blue is for the sea.
- white represents peace

The star alludes to the five main Island zones and is sometimes interpreted as a symbol of the "Coming of the Light" - Christianity.
Aboriginal Map of Australia
Victorian Aboriginal Language Groups

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Further Information

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Thank you