SIGNIFICANT FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE EVENTS 2026

JAN 1
Native Title Act (1994)
First Nations People's entitlement to land which has been stolen from them.

JAN 26
Australia Day (Invasion/Survival Day)
Commemorates the start of British colonisation and the survival of First Nations peoples.

The Tent Embassy (1972)
The Aboriginal people erected the Tent Embassy in 1972 in Canberra to protest. Many struggles and battles later, the Embassy has become a heritage-listed landmark for Aboriginal protest.

FEB 7
David Unaipon Passes Away
Aged 95
David Unaipon was a Ngarrindjeri man and a writer/inventor. He invented a mechanical sheep shearing hand tool and the helicopter propellers, 22 years before the helicopter become a reality. David Unaipon is featured on the Australian $50 note.

FEB 13
National Apology Day
In 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd moved a motion of Apology to the First Nations People, particularly to the Stolen Generations whose lives had been blighted by past government policies of forced child removal and Indigenous assimilation.

FEB 19
Wodlianni Day
The 1836 Letters Patent establishing South Australia acknowledged Aboriginal land rights and promised protection from dispossession, stating that Aboriginal people would retain occupation and enjoyment of their lands and be treated as British subjects. Despite these assurances, Aboriginal people were systematically dispossessed in the years that followed.

MAR 8
International Women's Day
Although it's not a First Nations-specific holiday, International Women's Day has grown in popularity within Indigenous communities as an important day to celebrate our matriarchs and their achievements.

MAR 19
National Close the Gap Day
First organised in 2006, Organisations come together to improve the health of First Nations people. Close the Gap Day, which is held on the third Thursday of March, is an opportunity for organisations and the community to hold events and raise awareness.

APR 5
Bringing Them Home
Released in 1997, the Bringing Them Home report marks its 28th anniversary this year, following the National Inquiry into the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The report contains 54 recommendations aimed at supporting healing for the Stolen Generations and their families.

APR 12
Maralinga Tjarutja Land Rights (1984)
The Maralinga Tjarutja Land Rights Act (1984) returned Maralinga lands to their Traditional Owners after decades of displacement caused by British nuclear testing, marking an important step in recognising Aboriginal land rights.

MAY 26
National Sorry Day
A day to remember the removal of First Nations children from their families. A chance for all Australians to recognise the pain thousands of First Nations people went through. The children affected are now known as the Stolen Generations.

MAY 1
Pilbara Strike (1946)
In May 1946, 800 Aboriginal pastoral workers in Western Australia walked off sheep stations demanding fair wages and conditions, launching the first First Nations–led industrial action since colonisation. Lasting until 1949, it became the longest strike in Australian history.

APR 25
ANZAC Day
ANZAC Day commemorates Australian and New Zealand service members, including more than 1,000 First Nations people who are believed to have served in World War I despite being excluded by law. Many concealed their identity to enlist, served with distinction, and returned to ongoing racism, while First Nations people have also been warriors of resistance on their own Country since 1788.

APR 15
Royal Comission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
The Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission released its report in 1991.

MAY 27
1967 Referendum
Where 97% of Australian voters voted "YES". To recognise First Nations People as people, not fauna, (but still didn't have the right to vote). The day also marks the start of the annual National Reconciliation Week.

JUN 3
Mabo Day
It celebrates the 1992 High Court Mabo decision, which recognised native title, rejected terra nullius, and affirmed that the people of Mer occupied the Torres Strait land prior to British arrival. This historic decision effectively recognised the existence of native title rights and rejected the concept of terra nullius.

MAY 27 to JUN 3
Reconcilliation Week
These dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey. National Reconciliation Week was initiated in 1996 so that there could be a focus for nationwide activities and achievements so far.

MAY 28
Walk for Reconcilliation
In 2000, about 250,000 people walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge for Reconciliation.

MAY 29
Torres Strait Islander flag Launch
In 1992 the flag was officially presented to the people of Zenadth Kes on Thursday Island. It was designed by the late Bernard Namok as a symbol of unity and identity for Torres Strait Islanders.

JUL 5 to JUL 12
NAIDOC Week
(Is celebrated in the first full week of July, mostly from the first Sunday to the following Sunday). NAIDOC stands for: "National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee." The week is to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of the First Nations People.

JUN 12
Barunga Statement (1988)
First Nations People presented the Barunga Statement to Prime Minister Bob Hawke in 1988.

JUL 9
Aboriginal Flag (1971)
Designed by Luritja/Wambaya artist Harold Thomas and was first flown in Tarndanyangga (Victoria Square), Adelaide in 1971 on National Aborigines Day.

AUG 4
National First Nations People Children's Day
First celebrated in 1988, this day is now the largest national celebration of First Nations children. While 4 August was once recorded as the birthdate of many children removed from their families, the day now highlights issues such as poverty and education access while celebrating children's strength, pride, and culture.

AUG 9
International Day of the World's Indigenous People
Declared by the United Nations in 1994, the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is observed annually on 9 August to raise awareness of Indigenous rights and issues. Indigenous peoples number over 476 million worldwide, making up around 6.2% of the global population.

SEP 25
Cathy Freeman wins Gold
Cathy Freeman won two Gold Medals at the 2000 Olympics.

SEP 2
Indigenous Literacy Day
(The first Wednesday of September) Indigenous Literacy Day aims to help raise funds to raise literacy levels and improve the lives and opportunities of the First Nations People living in remote and isolated regions. They need your support to help raise funds to buy books and literacy resources for the children in these communities.

AUG 23
Gurindji walk off (1966)
First Nations people organised the Gurindji Walk-Off from Wave Hill Station in the Northern Territory in 1966, that became a pivotal moment in the land rights movement,

AUG 13
Bark Petition (1963)
Yolngu people from the Yirrkala community presented the Bark Petitions to the Australian Parliament in 1963. The petitions asserted land ownership and cultural rights, becoming the first traditional documents recognised by the Australian Parliament.

SEP 28
David Unaipon (1872)
Born on this day, David Unaipon was a visionary whose contributions to science, literature, and Aboriginal rights made him one of Australia's most significant cultural figures.

OCT 26
Uluru (1985)
Uluru was returned to the traditional owners in 1985.

OCT 30
Racial Discrimination Act
The Racial Discrimination Act takes effect in 1975.

NOV 26
Pope John Paul II (1986)
Pope John Paul II addresses First Nations People in Alice Springs N.T in 1986.

DEC 16
Land Rights (NT) Act (1976)
Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act passed in 1976.

Designed by Crista Bradshaw