

# The 1967 Referendum:

## Will you put it in the Australian 'Human Rights Hall of Fame'?

For an interactive approach to this issue go to [www.australianhistorymysteries.info/ahm2/casestudies.html](http://www.australianhistorymysteries.info/ahm2/casestudies.html)



Audio Visual Archive, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.  
Copyright: Australian Women's Weekly. <http://www.rma.gov.au/indigenousrights/sectionb426.html?ssID=29>

### Caption

**1 LOOK** at this photograph. Photographs provide good evidence for students to use in exploring issues. But they need to be critically analysed. Here is a photograph related to a significant event in Australian history. Discuss these questions:

- Who is in the photograph?
- What are they doing?
- What is the setting?

- What period of time would you say it was?
- What is the mood of the photograph?
- Why do you think it was taken?
- Who was the intended audience?

**2** Provide a caption for this photograph in the box provided.

3 The photograph in fact shows members of the New South Wales Vote 'YES' Committee toasting their campaign director, Faith Bandler, after the success of the 1967 Referendum to change the Australian Constitution. **If you had only this photograph as evidence about this event, what would you say about it?**

From this photograph I would say that the 1967 Referendum ...

Fortunately we have a lot more information about the 1967 Referendum campaign, and in this unit you will be able to find out much more about this event, and make your own decision about its importance in Australian history.

### Why focus on this event?

2007 is the 40th anniversary of the passing of this Referendum which many people see as a major turning point in the achievement of Indigenous citizenship rights in Australia. Others believe it was more show than substance, and did little to achieve real equality. This is an issue that needs exploring.



During 2007 the National Museum of Australia is providing several ways for teachers and students to do this:

A print and DVD/video classroom unit in <i>Australian History Mysteries 2</i>	Go to: <a href="http://www.australianhistorymysteries.info">http://www.australianhistorymysteries.info</a>
An interactive web-based approach that complements this unit	Go to: <a href="http://www.australianhistorymysteries.info">http://www.australianhistorymysteries.info</a> and go to the 1967 Referendum interactive case study
A small display in the NMA for those who can visit Canberra	The exhibition is titled 'Spin, myths and meanings', and we will look at this exhibition later in this unit
A website Collaborating For Indigenous Rights	Go to: <a href="http://www.nma.gov.au/indigenoustrights/">http://www.nma.gov.au/indigenoustrights/</a>

All four approaches are based on **an inquiry approach to learning** — that students learn best when they work things out for themselves from a rich resource base.

**This unit is a resource to help teachers use the small National Museum of Australia display and the very substantial website module at <http://www.nma.gov.au/indigenoustrights/> in their classrooms.**

The structure of the approach is:

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<b>Activity 3</b>	<i>Your petitioners humbly pray</i> — What attempts were made to change the Constitution by petitions?	Page 7
<b>Activity 4</b>	Changing the law — What was the role of Commonwealth Cabinet and Parliament?	Page 13
<b>Activity 5</b>	Changing the Constitution — What was the role of people, groups and ideas in the referendum campaign?	Page 14
<b>Activity 6</b>	What was the result of the Referendum vote?	Page 19
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The National Museum of Australia is one of the nation's most important cultural institutions. The Museum employs a fresh and exciting approach to Australian history, culture and environment. Each Museum unit of work in **STUDIES** asks students to consider the stories and concepts behind Museum themes, objects and images and can be used with students in such curriculum areas as Society and Environment, History, Geography, English and Media Studies.

# Making rules in my classroom

## Understanding the concept of citizenship rights

The reason for the change to the Australian Constitution in 1967 was to try to promote greater equality of citizenship rights for Indigenous Australians.

### What are citizenship rights?

**Imagine that** you have been asked to create a model set of citizenship rights for classrooms. This set of rights will be adopted in schools around Australia.

- 1 List the main rights you will include. For example, you might decide that every 'citizen' of your classroom has the right to eat lunch in that room rather than go outside. Only citizens of the class can do so in that room. Decide on at least five citizenship rules. Use the table below.

Now put the name of every student in your class in a container, and have one person draw out five names. Read out the names. These people, while still members of your class, are not full 'citizens', so do not have the rights you just created. They cannot do all the things that the rest of you can do.

- 2 How do the 'non-citizens' feel about this situation?
- 3 How do those who have full citizenship feel about it?

Citizenship means that members of a community have equal rights within the community. It also means that all members have a fair opportunity to exercise those rights. In effect the condition you created of having two categories of citizens — full, and excluded or unable to exercise part of some rights — was the situation that existed in Australia before 1967.

The rest of this unit explores the situation in Australia in 1967 where Indigenous Australians were second-class citizens, and the struggle to change that situation through a referendum to change the Australian Constitution. It also asks whether 1967 in fact really changed the situation for Indigenous Australians.

The unit does this by looking at the 40th Anniversary commemorative display at the **National Museum of Australia**, and through the rich document collection on the Museum website: **Collaborating for Indigenous Rights** [www.nma.gov.au/indigenoustrights](http://www.nma.gov.au/indigenoustrights).

This unit will guide you in using some of the information on that site in your classroom. At times we will ask you to go to the **Collaborating for Indigenous Rights** website to access the documents.

We have indicated this with this symbol:



### CLASSROOM CITIZENSHIP RULES





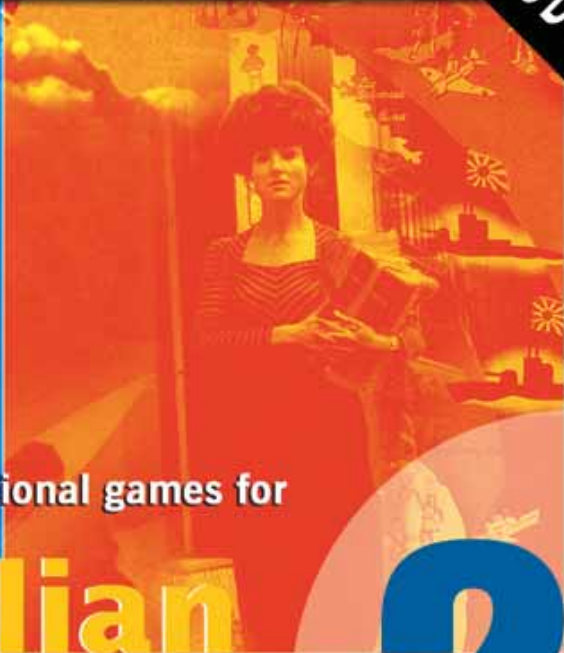







The next step in the inquiry is to understand what citizenship rights existed for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people before 1967.





CD-ROM of educational games for

# Australian History Mysteries

# 2

Five case studies in  
twentieth century Australian history







# '67 Referendum

Spin, myths and meanings



