

What was the result of the Referendum vote?

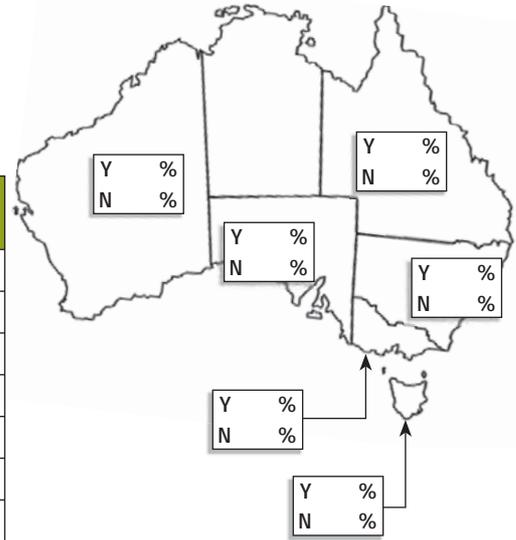
This activity helps students explore the material in the Victory section of the website <http://www.nma.gov.au/indigenoustrights/>

Here are the national voting figures for the 1967 Referendum to change s.127 and s.51(xxvi).

- 1 Work out the approximate percentage of Yes and No votes, and write them in the appropriate box for the State in the map opposite. (Note that ACT and NT residents did not have a vote in referenda at this stage.)

SOURCE 6.1 Voting results in the 1967 Referendum

State	On rolls	Ballots issued	For	Against	Informal
NSW	2,315,828	2,166,507	1,949,036	182,010	35,461
Vic	1,734,476	1,630,594	1,525,026	85,611	19,957
Qld	904,808	848,728	748,612	90,587	9,529
SA	590,275	560,844	473,440	75,383	12,021
WA	437,609	405,666	319,823	75,282	10,561
Tas	199,589	189,245	167,176	18,134	3,935
Total (Aust)	6,182,585	5,801,584	5,183,113	527,007	91,464



- 2 Suggest reasons for:
 - the overwhelming support for the change
 - the differences that existed in States' voting patterns.

- 3 Suggest how you could test these answers.

To see how your own electorate voted go to <http://www.australianhistorymysteries.info> and go to the 1967 Referendum interactive case study.

- 4 In the table opposite are some comments made by people about the 1967 referendum nearly 30 years later. From your knowledge, decide whether the underlined claims about the Referendum are true or false.

- 5 Why do you think so many people make such mistakes about what the 1967 Referendum actually did?

- 6 How would you describe the outcome of the 1967 Referendum?

SOURCE 6.2 Some comments on the meaning of the 1967 Referendum

TRUE or FALSE	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>[1997] marks just 30 years since a 1967 referendum <u>acknowledged Aboriginal citizenship, allowed Aborigines to vote and participate in the political process, and entitled them to pursue access to crucial services such as education.</u></p> <p><i>Patrick Dodson and Roberta Sykes, Sydney Morning Herald, 1996</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The referendum victory was a watershed, <u>giving black Australians basic human rights</u> and laying the foundations for the land rights movement of the '70s.</p> <p><i>Gary Hughes, The Australian, 1992</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>1997 marks only the 30th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, when <u>Aborigines finally won the right to vote.</u></p> <p><i>Socialist Alternative, 1996</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Surely 27 May should be Australia's national day. On that date in 1967 by referendum, <u>all Australian citizens, indigenous or otherwise, became equal under the Constitution with the same rights and responsibilities.</u> True nationhood-was born on that day.</p> <p><i>The Age, 1996</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Since the 1967 referendum, when a Coalition Government <u>established the long overdue citizenship rights of Indigenous people,</u> there has been an increasing involvement of the Commonwealth Government in Indigenous Affairs.</p> <p><i>Liberal Party, 1996</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir ... alluded to the racism debate in Australia, saying: 'The Aborigines of Australia were granted <u>citizenship, the right to vote and full recognition as human beings</u> only in 1967'.</p> <p><i>The Australian, 1996</i></p>

Sources quoted in B. Attwood and A. Markus, *The 1967 Referendum, or When Aborigines Didn't Get the Vote*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1997