

SoR Summary Notes - Australia Post-1945

Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal spirituality as determined by the Dreaming • issues for Aboriginal spiritualities in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the effect of dispossession – the Land Rights movement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss how Aboriginal spirituality is determined by the Dreaming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – kinship – ceremonial life – obligations to the land and people • discuss the continuing effect of dispossession on Aboriginal spiritualities in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – separation from the land – separation from kinship groups – the Stolen Generations • outline the importance of the following for the Land Rights movement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Native Title – Mabo – Wik • analyse the importance of the Dreaming for the Land Rights movement |
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Syllabus Dot Point	Summary Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how Aboriginal spirituality is determined by the Dreaming - Kinship 	<p>Aboriginal Spirituality and the Dreaming</p> <p><i>The Dreaming</i> - the spiritual aspect of Aboriginal religions that encapsulates the spiritual and physical dimensions, giving meaning to all aspects of life.</p> <p>Kinship</p> <p>The fabric of traditional Aboriginal society, and works like a highly sophisticated network of relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These relationships then govern interactions between clans and are really important for creating belonging and responsibilities within the tribe <p>E.g. (concept of Kanyini) “the completeness of the oneness” - Elder Bob Randall</p> <p>Rules - strict rules and obligations exist for each kinship relationship, and this forms part of Aboriginal law (land, dancing ceremonies, hunting parties and raising children).</p> <p>Totems - unify clans under the same ancestral beings which then fosters a metaphysical connection of Dreaming kinship.</p>

- Ceremonial life

Ceremonial Life

An important link between Aboriginal People, land and identity.

Roles

- Rites of passage
- Passing on social information
- Facilitating personal connections
- Facilitating spiritual connections

Aboriginal People see the Dreaming as existing in the past, present and the future (metatemporal concept).

- Ceremonies represent the 'present', and are important for passing on and maintaining beliefs and practices

While ceremonial roles differ across clans and tribes, common elements are that they...

- Acknowledge a creation event
- Show the metaphysical presence of the Dreaming world in the real world

- Obligations to the land and people

Obligations to Land and People

Aboriginal spirituality cannot be separated from the land, as they are inextricably connected. This is for a number of different reasons:

- Land is the physical medium (the resting place for Ancestral Beings)
- Rituals are connected to sacred sites (called 'balance rites')
- Land is the meeting point (where tribes derive their identity and relationships from)

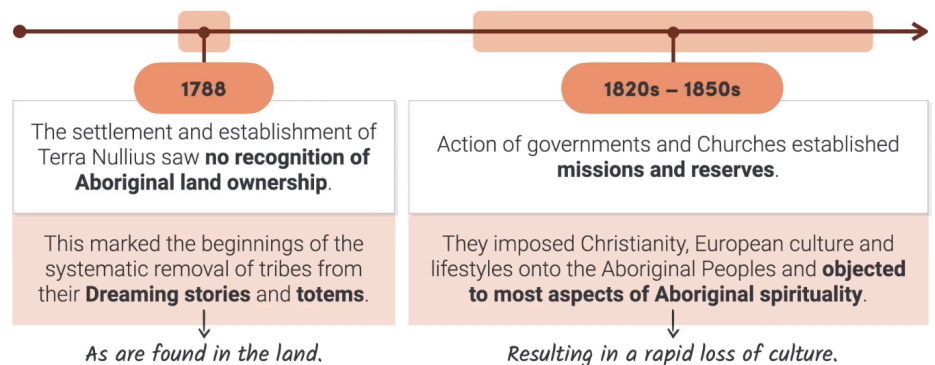
- Discuss the continuing effect of dispossession on Aboriginal Spiritualities in relation to:
 - Separation from the land

Dispossession

Separation from the land

Land is inextricably connected to kinship, ceremonial life, family connections and relationships.

- The loss of land destroyed much of the system of totemic responsibilities. It was really detrimental to all aspects of Aboriginal spirituality

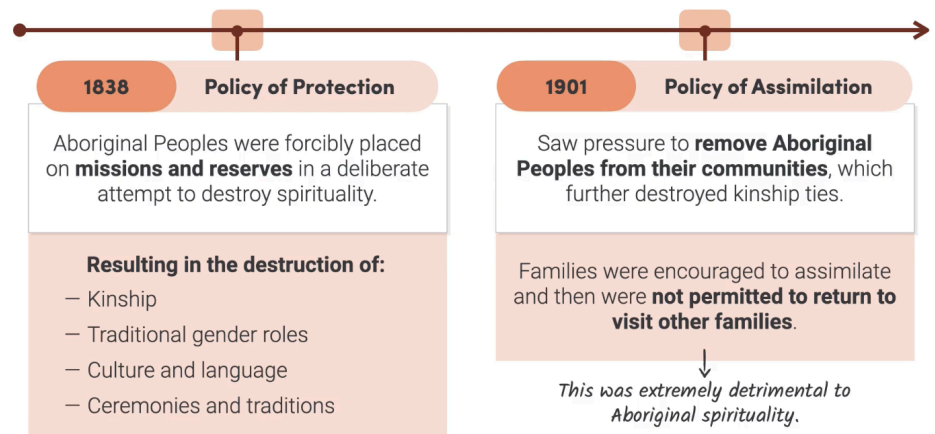


- Separation from kinship groups

Separation from Kinship Groups

Thousands of years of traditional custom and culture were disrupted,

much of which is irretrievable without kinship ties.



- The Stolen Generations

The Stolen Generations

Forced separation of Indigenous children from their families was government policy (late 1800s - 1970s).

- It's estimated that as many as 100,000 children were removed in a deliberate attempt to remove their Aboriginal identity.

Bringing Them Home Report:

- Revealed the shattering effects of these policies, including a loss of heritage, culture, language, land and community
- Made 54 recommendations to the government, churches and other community groups

E.g. Recommendation 7.A, called for annual National Sorry Day

Australian Bureau of Statistics

- Revealed that Aboriginal life expectancy is 8 years below the Australian average
- These are indicators of a poor underclass in society, which was caused by separation from land, kinship and family

- Outline the importance of the following in relation to the Land Rights movement

Land Rights Movement

Aboriginal Land Rights Movement

A religious-political movement that seeks to secure the inherent rights of Aboriginal Peoples to their land, and to ensure that their religious, spiritual and cultural integrity is preserved.

Native Title and Mabo

Native Title - given by the High Court of Australia to Indigenous property rights as recognised by the Court, as handed down in the Mabo decision of 1992.

1992 - The High Court decided Eddie Mabo and the Meriam people continued to have traditional right to possess and live on the most lands of Mer (Murray Islands in Torres Strait)

- Rejected idea of Terra Nullius
- Ruled that Native Title exists where Indigenous Peoples have

- Native Title
- Mabo

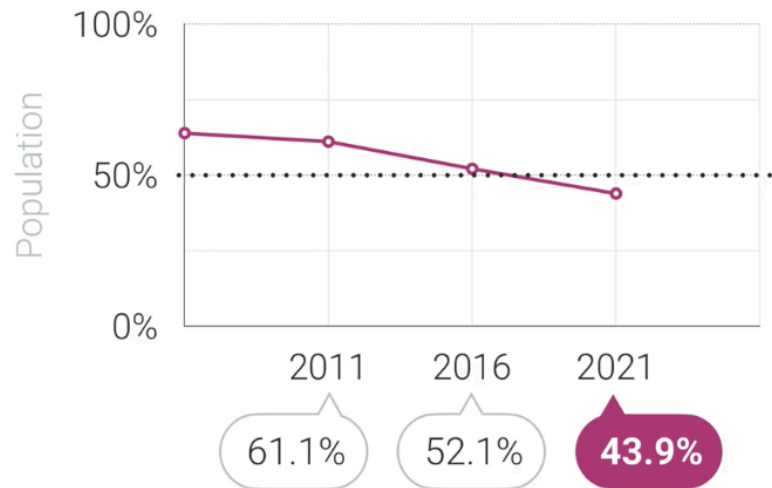
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wik • Analyse the importance of the Dreaming for the land rights movement 	<p>maintained continuous traditional connection with the land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Native Title Act passed in 1993; stated it is the traditional rights and interests of ATSI peoples, but it can't prevail over freehold title (homes, farms, etc) <p><u>Wik Case</u></p> <p>The Wik people argued that pastoral leases granted over their area of claim didn't extinguish their Native Title rights.</p> <p>1996 - Court ruled that Native Title rights could co-exist in this land, but during conflict, the pastoralist's rights would prevail</p> <p>1998 - The Native Title Amendment Act; abolished the right of claimants to negotiate with the government for land that the government wishes to acquire, instead replaced with the right to merely be consulted</p> <p>Dreaming and the Land Rights Movement</p> <p>For ATSI peoples, land is crucial for connecting to the Dreaming.</p> <p>E.g. Having access to sacred sites to perform ceremonies is an essential part of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening and maintaining relationships with Ancestral Beings - Meeting obligations to the land and people <p><u>Significance</u></p> <p>Dreaming is at the heart of the land rights movement because Aboriginal Peoples have been fighting to have access to the land that they are spiritually connected to.</p>
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Religious Expression in Australia Post 1945 to the present

Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present

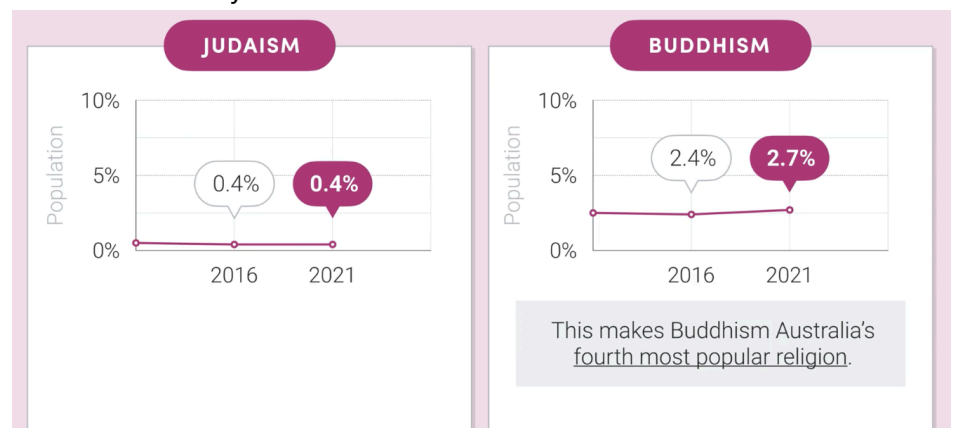
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the religious landscape from 1945 to the present in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changing patterns of religious adherence the current religious landscape religious dialogue in multi-faith Australia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ecumenical movements within Christianity Interfaith dialogue The relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions in the process of Reconciliation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> outline changing patterns of religious adherence from 1945 to the present using census data account for the present religious landscape in Australia in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christianity as the major religious tradition immigration denominational switching rise of New Age religions secularism describe the impact of Christian ecumenical movements in Australia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Council of Churches NSW Ecumenical Council evaluate the importance of interfaith dialogue in multifaith Australia examine the relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions in the process of Reconciliation |
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Syllabus Dot Point	Summary Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The religious landscape from 1945 to the present in relation to: Changing patterns of religious adherence 	<p>The Religious Landscape</p> <p>Changing Patterns of Religious Adherence</p> <p><u>Why Census Data Matters</u></p> <p>Held every five years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profiles the Australian population demographically (includes religious affiliations) <p><u>Religious Decline</u></p> <p>Christianity is the most notable religion on a (significant and rapid) decline in Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christianity has been the dominant religion in Australia for the whole Census' history Remains Australia's most popular religion today by a long margin But, 2021 was the first census where a majority of Australians did not identify as Christian



- Different denominations within Christianity are trending in totally different directions
 - More traditional forms (e.g. catholicism and anglicanism) are decreasing; anglicanism saw the worst drop-off rate
- Some christian groups are on the rise; Christianity nfd (not further defined) first included in 1996, increased by 700,000 since 2016
 - Shows an increase in people affiliating with Christianity more broadly, and may also include smaller, newer forms of Pentecostalism which aren't represented

→ Both Judaism and Buddhism have remained relatively stable over the last 5 years



Religious Growth

- Mainly seen outside of Christianity, especially in religions where high rates of immigration boost numbers
- Over the last 25 years, the % of Aus who follow a religion other than Christianity has risen from 3.5% – 10%
- Biggest non-Christian religions in 2021 were Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism
 - Islam grew from 2.6% – 3.2% from 2016-2021 (second most popular religion)

- Hinduism grew from 1.9% – 2.7% from 2016-2021, driven by Indian and Nepalese immigration
- Sikhism has almost tripled in 10 years 0.3% (2011) to 0.8% (2021), driven by Indian immigration
- Are mostly reflections of Australia's migration trends
 - Over 90% of people who affiliate with 'other religions' were either born overseas, or have a parent who was

Non-Religion

The biggest trend in Australian religion in recent years is the growth in non-religion.

- Over the past 50 years, this proportion has been steadily on the rise and become steeper and steeper
 - 30.1% (2016) to 38.9% (2021); 2.8 million more people
 - Growth is highest among people in their 20s
- Overall a big shift away from religion; people are expressing spirituality outside traditional religious frameworks or giving up on religion and spirituality entirely

- The current religious landscape

The Current Religious Landscape

Christianity as the major religious tradition

- Most immigration came from Britain in 1945, and has consistently been a huge source of migrants
- The Australian Christian community has had a massive change exclusively due to diverse migration patterns

Immigration

1945:

- Assisted migration from Britain introduced Christianity
- Numbers were too small to populate the nation, so the government took war refugees mainly from Europe
- Massively changed Christian denominations - mainly Catholicism

1945-1960

- Approximately 30,000 Jews arrived from Europe, into an established community

1960:

- Drastic moves to restrict racial diversity

1973:

- White Australia Policy was abandoned
- A planned program of Asian Immigration began, bringing Eastern religions as well

1975:

- Asian immigration dramatically increased following the Vietnam War
- 120,000 refugees accepted from Indochina (Catholics, Buddhists and a few Protestants)
- Post 1975 saw a spike in the total Muslim population in Australia, now made from about 35 countries

Denominational Switching

- People who move from one sect of Christianity to another

Main Losses: older, mainstream, traditional denominations (Lutherans, Uniting Church, Presbyterian and Anglicans)

National Church Life Survey

- Studies suggests that young people are committed more to a Congregation or community than a denomination
- Most important information is about Protestants

Census Data

- Christianity NFD was the biggest growing Christian response between 2016-2021
 - Switching to small Pentecostal denominations
 - Identifying with no denomination

New Age Religions

Alternative spiritualities that aim to foster personal happiness, health and meaning in life.

- Popular as they resonate more with modern people, which traditional religions fail to do (e.g. Christianity has negative attitudes toward the body, sexuality and women)
- Growing since the 1970s, and includes:
 - Feng Shui
 - Tarot cards
 - Astrology
 - Meditation
 - Scientology
 - Spiritualism
 - Philosophy
- Many take beliefs and practices from ancient religions as well, e.g. reincarnation
 - Example: Australian Mindy Body and Spirit Festival

Secularism

Belief that religion should not interfere with or be integrated into the public affairs of a society. (Society would be better off if not controlled by religion).

Reasons include:

1. Pluralism - the diversity of beliefs and cultures
2. Individualism, materialism and scepticism towards the supernatural as a result of scientific progress
3. Disillusionment with traditional religions - as a result of perceived hypocrisy, power abuse and irrelevance in the contemporary world

→ Use statistic of 38.9% of people with no religion in 2021, as it supports New Age Religions and Secularism

- Religious dialogue in multi-faith Australia
- Ecumenical movements within Christianity

Religious Dialogue in Multi-Faith Australia

Ecumenism

The movement for dialogue and mutual understanding between Christian Churches.

- A response to immigration post-1945

National Council of Churches Australia

Gathers Christian communities in order to apply the message of unity that Christ willed.

- Established in 1994, and consists of about 18 member churches across Australia (incl. Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Churches)
- Runs programs that impact the Australian religious landscape:
 - Act for Peace
 - Safe Church Awareness
 - Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce

Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce (ACRT)

Aims to apply a Christian moral voice to the suffering of refugees and asylum seekers.

- Gives the combined Christian Churches a political voice in the scheme of Australia's secularisation
- Combined power of the Churches enables a bigger impact on the social issue

The Christmas Bowl Mission (International)

Sends aid assistance to countries throughout Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific.

- Facilitated by the NSW Ecumenical Council

NSW Ecumenical Council

Formed in 1983 with 18 member churches, and runs many initiatives:

- *Domestic Violence Project*: raises awareness about responses to domestic violence, and how to support survivors
- *Commission on the Middle East*: churches come together to advocate for Christians, minority groups and Asylum seekers in the Middle East

- Interfaith dialogue

Interfaith Dialogue

Development of Interfaith Dialogue

- Rapid expansion due to post 1945 immigration being culturally diverse - required religious harmony
- Promotes understanding and communication, which are vital to maintaining a multifaith society (importance)

Organisations

Australian Council of Christians and Jews

Aims to create dialogue and mutual understanding between Christianity and Judaism.

- Founded 1991, runs programs to facilitate mutual understanding

- The relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions in the process of Reconciliation

Example: program that educates Christian teachers on how to deal with anti-Semitism in the New Testament

- Led to a decrease in racism, religious intolerance and supremacy

Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

Aims to break down stereotyping or negative assumptions about Islam.

- Presents religious harmony as a positive step in the face of increasing secularisation

2007 Victorian Bushfire Memorial Service

Involved many religions and presented interfaith as a means of universal comfort during tragedy.

The ceremony included:

- An Aboriginal Elder
- A Catholic Archbishop
- An Anglican Archbishop
- An Islamic Imam

Note on Opposition

Include a sentence at responses' end to acknowledge opposition:

- Despite the progress of interfaith movements, occasional resistance to other religions is unfortunately still a reality of religiously diverse societies.

Aboriginal Spiritualities and Religious Traditions in Reconciliation

Definition

A long and difficult process that requires the recognition of past wrongdoings involved in the destruction of Aboriginal spiritualities.

- Significantly due to the imposition of Christianity (but it is not the only religion that works for reconciliation)

Religious Support for the Voice

In 2023, faith leaders from different religions signed a letter in support of the Voice to Parliament, "**to move towards national healing, unity and reconciliation**". (Can be used in an interfaith dialogue question too).

Religions included:

- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Judaism
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Sikhism

→ Many groups actively campaigned for a 'Yes' vote

Pope John Paul II

In 2001, on behalf of the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II apologised for the role of Christian missions in the Stolen Generations.

To assist the Reconciliation process, he also urged the government to implement facilities for:

- Health
- Employment
- Education

Executive Council of the Australian Jewry

A Jewish organisation that has been outspoken about Reconciliation.

- In 2001, they lobbied the Australian Government to implement recommendations put forth in the Bringing Them Home Report

Other Organisations

Other groups that have expressed their support for Reconciliation

- NCCA
- Buddhist Peace Fellowship
- Australian Federation of Islamic Councils

→ Briefly add these as additional examples at the end of responses

Evaluation

Reconciliation is an ongoing process that still faces serious barriers.

- Evidenced by ABS statistics that show Indigenous life expectancy is 8 years below the national average, demonstrating the destruction of their spirituality