



THE LONGEST STORY

A TIMELINE OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

FROM 65,000 YEARS AGO TO TODAY

DEEP TIME

COLONIZATION

MODERN ERA

TODAY

First Footprints



Pyramids of Giza
(4,500 years)



Aboriginal History
(65,000+ years)

65,000
YEARS



Science vs. Dreaming: Excavations prove humans were here long before Europe was settled. First Nations people believe they have been here since the Dreaming—the beginning of creation.

100 BP

100 BP

5,000 BP

10,000 BP

65,000 BP

60,000 BP

40,000 BP

25,000 BP

1,000 BP

Engineers of the Land



Aquaculture: Eel Traps

Baking Bread:

Aboriginal people baked bread thousands of years before the Egyptians.

Fire-Stick Farming:

Controlled burns cleared paths and encouraged fresh grass for kangaroos.

100 BP

100 BP

5,000 BP

10,000 BP

Pre-1788

60,000 BP

40,000 BP

25,000 BP

1,000 BP

MYTH-BUSTER

MYTH: Australia was wild bushland.

REALITY: It was a managed estate.



The First Bakers: 30,000-year-old grindstones

Farming Eels:

Stone traps in Victoria could feed hundreds of people.

The International Traders



Pre-1788

1700s

1760s

Long before Captain Cook, fishermen from Makassar (Indonesia) sailed to northern Australia.



Trade: They came for Trepang (sea cucumber) to sell to China.



Exchange: Aboriginal people traded for metal knives, cloth, and tobacco.



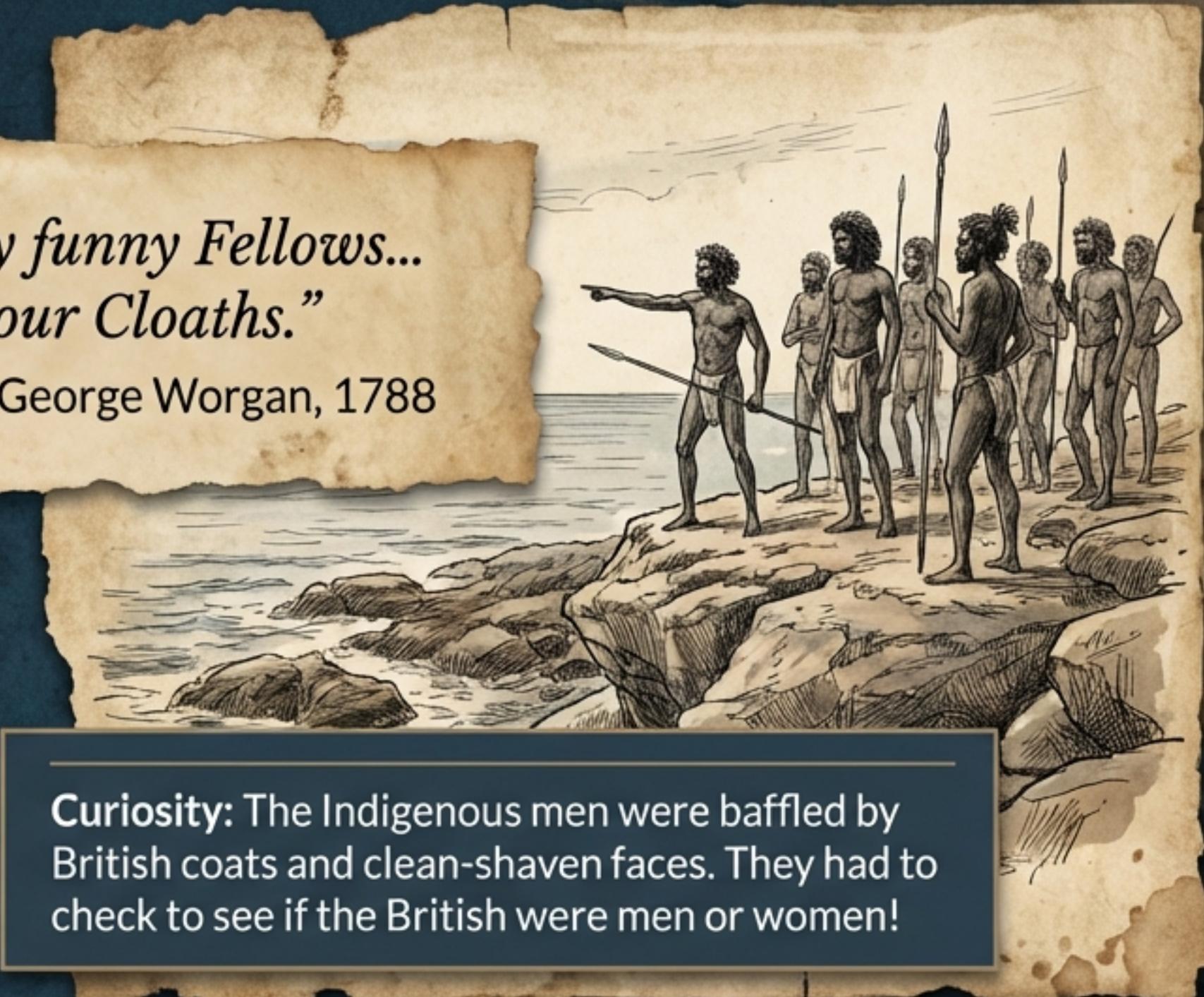
Culture: Macassan words became part of Aboriginal languages.

The First Fleet Arrives (1788)



“They were... vastly funny Fellows... curious about our Cloaths.”

— Surgeon George Worgan, 1788



First Contact: A moment of mutual confusion. The British offered beads; the locals stayed distant until they saw the strangers were unarmed.

Curiosity: The Indigenous men were baffled by British coats and clean-shaven faces. They had to check to see if the British were men or women!

Pre-1788

1700s

1760s

1788

...

...

The ‘Black War’ (Tasmania, 1820s)

Conflict:

As settlers fenced off hunting grounds for sheep, a war for land exploded.

The Black Line (1830):

A massive human chain of 2,200 soldiers tried to capture the clans. It failed—they caught only two people. The warriors slipped through the gaps.

GUERRILLA WAR:

Irregular warfare using ambushes, sabotage, and hit-and-run tactics.



Pre-1788

1700s

1760s

1788

...

1830

Resistance Leaders



TONGERLONGETER

General of the Oyster Bay Nation

United disparate clans to fight a strategic war.



MANNALARGENNA

Leader of the Plangermaireener

Negotiator and warrior who outsmarted British muskets.



Martial Law: The resistance was so effective that in 1828, the Governor declared Martial Law—effectively declaring war.

Pre-1788

1700s

1760s

1788

...

1828-1832

Exile and Survival

The 'Friendly Mission': A truce was negotiated with a promise of protection and return to Country.

The Betrayal: Instead, people were exiled to Flinders Island. It became a prison, not a sanctuary.

The Cost: Disease and despair devastated the survivors.



**From thousands...
to 47 survivors.**

1835–1847

DESIGNING A NATION (1901)



Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

- **Six into One:**
Six separate colonies with different laws and railway gauges voted to become one nation.
- **Tenterfield Oration:**
Henry Parkes called for “one great Federal army” and a united government.
- **The “Washminster” System:**
A hybrid constitution mixing the US system (Washington) and the British system (Westminster).

1901

A Nation for Whom?



Excluded:
Aboriginal and
Torres Strait
Islander
people were
deliberately left out of the
census and the constitution.

The Paradox: While
celebrating "One People,
One Destiny," the new
nation passed laws to
exclude non-Europeans.



THE STOLEN GENERATIONS (1910s–1970s)



“

We can't go back...
but we can't forget.”

— Testimony from the
Bringing Them Home Report

THE POLICY

State laws forcibly removed Indigenous children to “assimilate” them into white society.

THE IMPACT

Children were forbidden from speaking their language or seeing their parents.

THE TRAUMA

A deep loss of connection to Country, culture, and family.

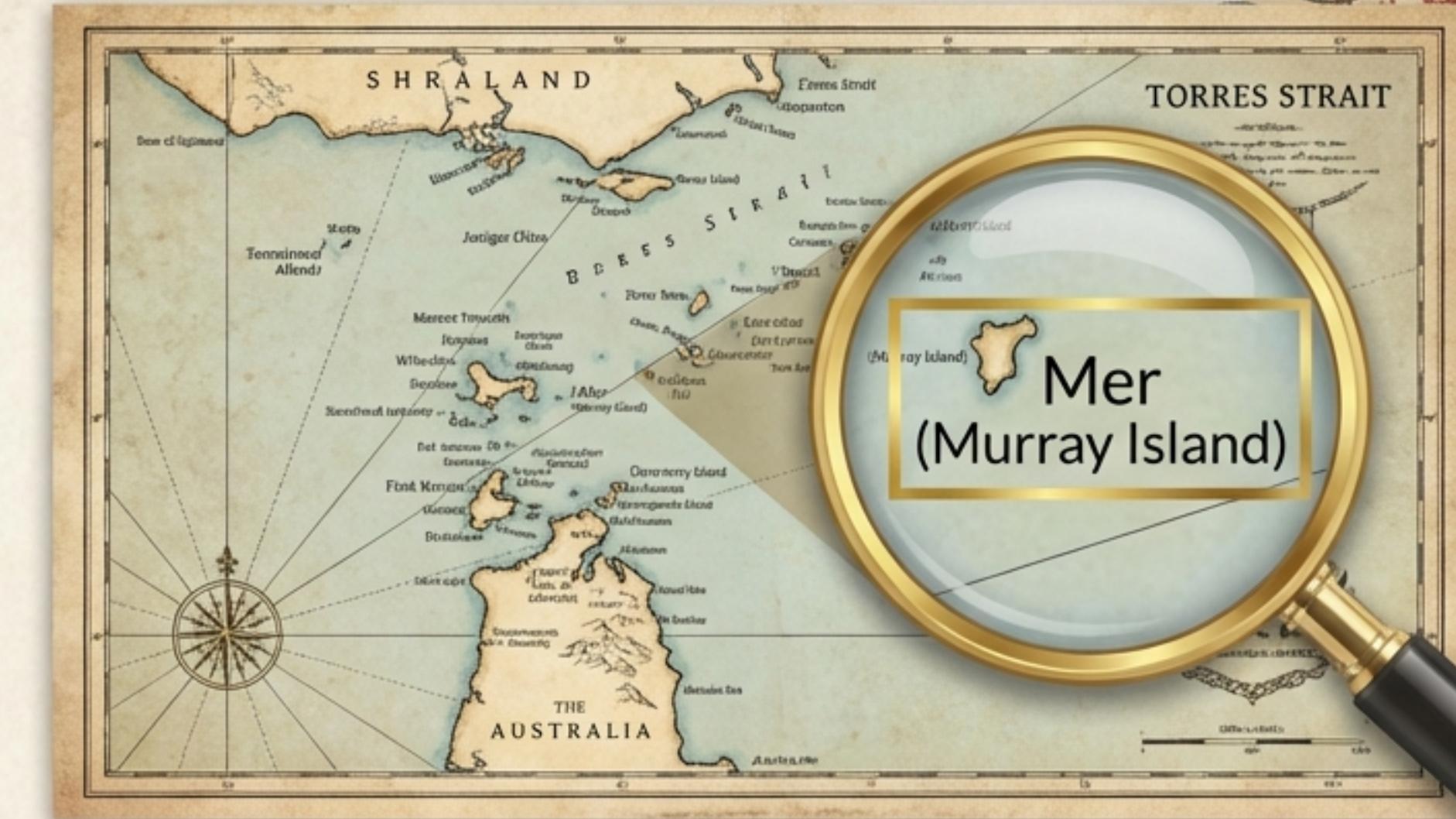
1910–1970

The Fight for Land: Terra Nullius

TERRA NULLIUS

(Latin: Land belonging to no one)

The legal idea that Australia was empty wilderness before 1788, meaning Indigenous people had no property rights.



The Plaintiffs (1982): Eddie Mabo and four other Meriam people took the government to court. Their argument:
“We have lived here forever. This is our land.”

1982

The Mabo Decision (1992)



1992

The Verdict:

On June 3, 1992, the High Court ruled that Terra Nullius was a **fiction**. They recognized Native Title.

A Bittersweet Victory:

The legal battle took 10 years. Tragically, Eddie Mabo passed away just months before the decision.

Truth Telling & Healing

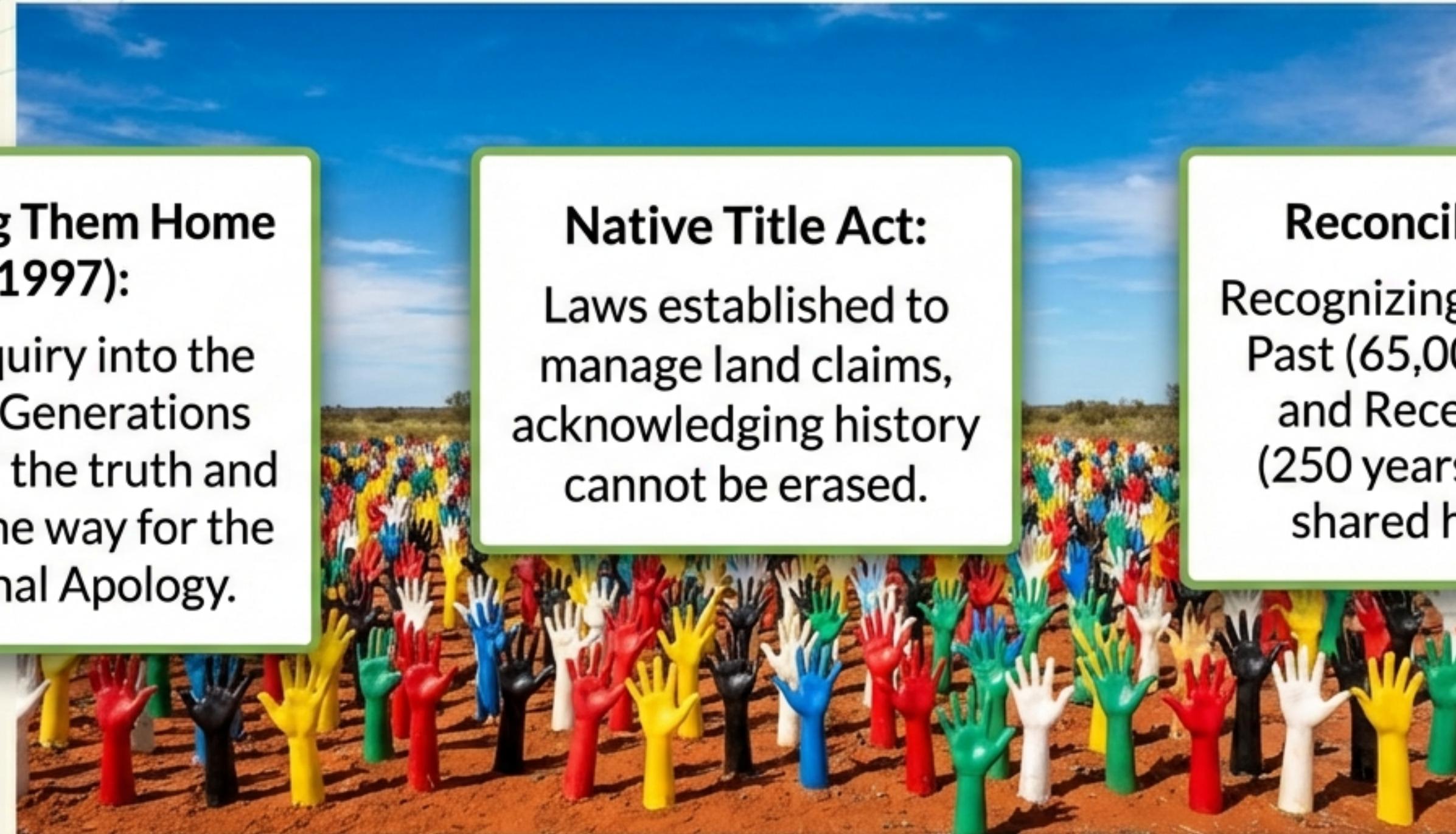
Bringing Them Home (1997):

The inquiry into the Stolen Generations exposed the truth and paved the way for the National Apology.

Native Title Act:

Laws established to manage land claims, acknowledging history cannot be erased.

Reconciliation: Recognizing the Deep Past (65,000 years) and Recent Past (250 years) as one shared history.



1782

1997

1996

1997–Present

History is a Living Thing.



You are now part of this timeline. What happens next is up to you.