
A Look at the Integration Rule on Aborigines in Australia

There are a number of policies targeted at Aborigines in Australia that has been changed since the end of World War for many reasons. These policies included: the Assimilation Policy, the policy of Integration and the Reconciliation Policy. There are also important Aboriginal Rights that occurred after WW2. E.g. voting and land rights.

The Assimilation Policy which occurred in 1940 was a policy which was aimed to have all Aborigines living like white Australians. The Aborigines were encouraged to move into cities, give up their Aboriginal identity and adopt "white" customs.

The Assimilation Policy gave the government the rights to take Aboriginal children away from their parents, have control over where they could live or go and had little respect or understanding for their culture.

During the 1960's, Aboriginal activists and groups began to fight for justice and equality to end this policy. These Aboriginal actions and greater community awareness led the government to change the Assimilation Policy into Integration.

This meant bringing all Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals people together. Integration was aimed at treating all Australians equally, regardless of their cultural background.

Even though the Integration Policy was put into place, most Aborigines still did not have the same rights and advantages as most Australians. Aborigines still had lower wages and poorer conditions, they still could not vote and were not allowed to enter a number of public facilities like swimming pools, pubs, clubs, hotels and public toilet.

Early in the 1960s, some Aboriginal activists, white student, led by Charles Perkins, set out for north-western New South Wales in a bus. These people were also known as "freedom riders". They wanted everyone to know that Aborigines were not allowed to public area and the choices that they had.

During this period, things slowly started to change for the Aboriginals for more justice and freedom. There was a constitutional referendum held in 1967 and asked whether the discriminatory references to Aboriginal people of the Constitution should be removed. 89% of voters approved the new law. This meant that the Aboriginal people are counted as the Australia population and new laws to give a better deal to Aboriginals people anywhere in Australia. But this still did not end the discrimination, racism and inequality against Aboriginals.

In 1974, the Whitlam government recommended the granting of land rights. This led to the handing back of some land to its original owners e.g. Uluru. Following an extensive court battle, the High Court's Mabo decision in 1992 finally recognised Aboriginal ownership land before the European arrival.

These past inequitable policies have been changed as a result of Aboriginals standing up for themselves to gain justice and freedom. Today Australians are working towards reconciliation.

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