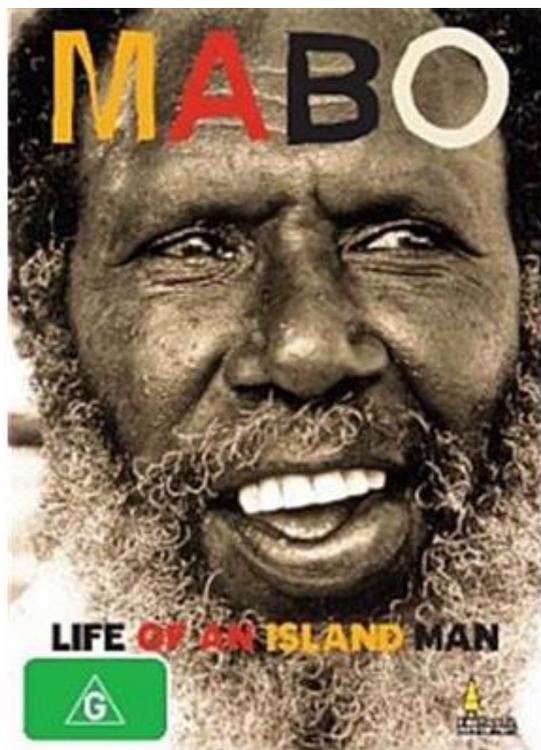


# Mabo



**Mabo Day** occurs annually on 3 June.

The day commemorates [Eddie Koiki Mabo](#) (c. 29 June 1936–21 January 1992) a [Torres Strait Islander](#) whose campaign for Indigenous land rights led to a landmark decision of the [High Court of Australia](#) that, on 3 June 1992, overturned the legal fiction of [terra nullius](#) which had characterised Australian law with regards to land and title since the voyage of James Cook in 1770.

**The Mabo decision** was a legal case held in 1992. It is short for Mabo and others v Queensland (No 2) (1992). The legal decision was made by the High Court on 3 June 1992. The High Court is the highest court in Australia's judicial system. The Mabo decision was named after Eddie Mabo, the man who challenged the Australian legal system and

fought for recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of their land.

In 2010 a campaign was launched to make Mabo Day a national holiday. It has been suggested that Mabo Day is more significant to Australians than the [Queen's Birthday](#). In 2002, on the tenth anniversary of the High Court decision, Mabo's widow, Bonita Mabo, called for a national public holiday on 3 June. On the eleventh anniversary, in 2003, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) launched a petition to make 3 June an Australian Public Holiday. Eddie Mabo Jnr, for the Mabo family, said:

*We believe that a public holiday would be fitting to honour and recognise the contribution to the High Court decision of not only my father and his co-plaintiffs, James Rice, Father Dave Passi, Sam Passi and Celuia Salee, but also to acknowledge all Indigenous Australians who have empowered and inspired each other.*

*To date we have not had a public holiday that acknowledges Indigenous people and which recognises our contribution, achievements and survival in Australia.*

*A public holiday would be a celebration all Australians can share in with pride ... Mabo symbolises truth and justice and is a cornerstone of Reconciliation."*

[MABO Classroom](#) is interactive and relevant for studies in History and The Arts. This dynamic multiplatform site is a comprehensive resource for the teaching and learning about Eddie Koiki Mabo - his personal life, his exceptional attributes and the extraordinary achievement he determined for Indigenous Australians.

Primary students can watch the short [video](#) showing how Torres Strait Islander people celebrate the achievements of one of their greatest heroes, Eddie Koiki Mabo. Watch the

[BTN](#) report about the life of Eddie Mabo and why he is such a significant Australian.

In 2010 a [campaign](#) was launched to make Mabo Day a national holiday in Australia. With your students develop a proposal for making Mabo Day a national public holiday, and consider sending it to your local member.

Explore the excellent [ABC Mabo](#) website learning resources, and Native Title [timeline](#) and discuss the importance of Native Title with your students.

Significant in Victoria is the rejection of the **Yorta Yorta Native Title case** in 1998 in the High Court - a decision upheld again in 2002. With senior secondary students discuss: to what extent does the concept of justice correlate with courts upholding laws; and to what extent is the law adequate in addressing issues of justice, under current Native Title legislation?

Comprehensive information about the Yorta Yorta Struggle for Land Justice can be found on the [On country Learning Course](#) Wordpress site.



Mabo Day Celebrations in Townsville, QLD 2011 see: <http://www.abc.net.au/local/videos/2011/06/03/3235188.htm>



Image source: <https://waynera.wordpress.com/yorta-yorta-struggle-for-land-justice/>



#### Victorian Curriculum:

[VCHHK076](#) Significance of days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia and the importance of symbols and emblems, including Australia Day, ANZAC Day, Harmony Week, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week and National Sorry Day: *History 3- 4*

[VCHHK154](#) Significance of the following events in changing society: 1962 right to vote federally, 1967 Referendum, Reconciliation, Mabo decision, Bringing Them Home Report (the Stolen Generations), the Apology and the different perspectives of these events: *History 9-10*

[VCCCL023](#) Compare how laws are made in Australia, including through parliaments (statutory law) and courts (common law), and explain different types of laws, including executive law (delegated law), criminal law, civil law and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customary law; *Civics and Citizenship 7-8*

[VCHHK155](#) Effects of methods used by civil rights activists to achieve change for **Aboriginal** and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the role of one individual or group in the struggle: *History 9-10*