

February 4, 1939: Cummeragunja Walk-off

Today marks the anniversary of the famous **Cummeragunja Walk-off**. On that day in 1939, over 200 residents of the Cummeragunja Mission walked off the mission in protest against conditions at the mission station, crossing the Murray River into Victoria and leaving NSW. The NSW police were not able to cross the border bridge into Victoria to force them back.



Image: Cummeragunja Football Club with Bob Nelson, Tom Dunolly snr, Dowie Nicholls, Tom Dunolly jnr. In front row. (Online source: AFLNSWACT via Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation).

Further reading:

Just how difficult was it for Yorta Yorta people to permanently leave the one place that many had come to regard as 'home'? Yorta Yorta historian and scholar Dr Wayne Atkinson tells us more in [The Cummera Walk Off and the return to Base Camp Politics](#)

<https://waynera.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/cummerawalkoff-doc.pdf>.

[Cummeragunja, the Aboriginal football team that was too good](#): The Cummeragunja footy team, where Sir Doug Nicholls first played football before he commenced an illustrious career in the VFL, was so successful in the 1920s that it was handicapped by the local league according to the NSW Australian Football History Society.

<https://www.nswfootballhistory.com.au/cummeragunja-the-aboriginal-football-team-that-was-too-good/>

For further teaching resources & curriculum links see the VAEAI [Koorie Perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin #1:2021](#).