

Australia

Ethnicity in Australia

Group selection

We code the **Whites**, the **Aboriginal people** and the **Asians** as politically relevant groups at the state-level in Australia. All group sizes are based on the 2001 Australian Census. The Whites are now mostly Australian-born and include decedents from the immigrants from Britain, Ireland and many other European countries.

Power relations

There are two periods. From 1946 to 1962, the Whites were dominant and all other groups discriminated. After 1962, the political discrimination of the minorities ended.

From 1938 to 1967, there were various Aboriginal organizations, such as the Aboriginal Advancement League, and the Federal Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. These agitated for full voting rights, which were granted over the whole country in 1962 and the transfer of Aboriginal Affairs to the Federal government, which happened in 1967. Some official agencies have more recently been established like the Aboriginal Conference (1974) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, which was abolished in 2006. These official agencies took over much of the work of independent organizations, as did the State based Land Councils. There is no longer an independent pressure group, but pressure through official channels. There are no Aboriginal parties, although a few attempts have been made to start one. There are no reserved parliamentary seats for Aboriginal people, but two have been elected to the Senate through the mainstream parties - both now defeated. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people population at the 2001 Census totalled 2.2%.

To this date, the finding of the inconsistent and fragmented political (party) representation of Aboriginal Australians (AA) can be confirmed. In 2011 for instance, the Australia's First Nations Political Party (AFNPP) was registered ⁽¹⁶⁹⁾. Their political manifesto is concerned with Aboriginal issues ⁽¹⁷⁰⁾. The homepage of the party does not seem to be maintained however, and no information could be found on recent activities. Predecessors of the AFNPP include the Australia's Indigenous Peoples Party, registered in 1993 and deregistered in 1999 due to a lack of members ⁽¹⁷¹⁾.

It is worthwhile noting that there have been repeated attempts

¹⁶⁹ [Australian Electoral Commission, 2013]

¹⁷⁰ [AFNPP, 2010]

¹⁷¹ [Australian Electoral Commission, 2011]

at representing Aboriginal interests outside of party frameworks: In 1990, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was set up as an official government body, with the aim of representing AAs and Torres Strait Islanders interests and to give them influence on decisions which affect their lives/comunities. The concrete objectives of ATSIC were ⁽¹⁷²⁾

¹⁷² [Pratt, 2003]

- Ensure maximum participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in government policy
- Promote Aboriginal self-management and self-sufficiency
- Further Aboriginal economic, social and cultural development
- Ensure co-ordination of Commonwealth, state and territory and local government policy affecting Aboriginal people

Following allegations of fraud and corruption, ATSIC was formally abolished after open criticism in 2005. Since then, the representation of Aboriginal interests to government has been the responsibility of the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination in the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. In line with the EPR definitions regarding the 'access to executive power at the center' variable, and despite the aforementioned existence of the ATSIC not mentioned in the previous comments, it appears recommendable to keep the status 'powerless' for the period 1990-2005 when the ATSIC existed. Despite the fact that each of the agency executives was of Aboriginal descent, the ATSIC can be mainly considered an advisory body, not granting 'true' access to executive power. (An example where this is the case would be the Minister of Maori Affairs in New Zealand). In 2009, nearly five years after the abolition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) the Labor government announced that it would support a new national representative body for AAs. Soon after, in 2010, the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee. As a company the Congress is owned and controlled by its membership and independent of Government ⁽¹⁷³⁾. As this also does not mark a shift in the AAs relation to the core executive, the representatives within the body are voted by Aboriginal communities and show ongoing efforts of exercising political influence and advocate the interests of Aboriginal Australians.

¹⁷³ [Aboriginal Representative Bodies, 2013]

Recent developments brought symbolic advancements to the situation of Aboriginal people in Australia. In 2013, Ken Wyatt became junior minister for health, the first person of native decent with a government position ⁽¹⁷⁴⁾. During the same period, the house of representatives decided to enshrine the Aboriginal status as first Australians in the constitution. The necessary referendum is still pending ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾. The broader social picture of the situation of the Aboriginal people in the Australian society stays unchanged nevertheless, as they still suffer from disproportionate rates of unemployment, illiteracy, and addiction issues ⁽¹⁷⁶⁾. Also, a number of

¹⁷⁴ [Australian Government - Department of Health, 2013]

¹⁷⁵ [Wahlquist, 2016]

¹⁷⁶ [Minority Rights Group, 2017]

reported abuses in state prisons in the northern territory lead to a number of protests in 2016 (¹⁷⁷). The coding of the political situation of the Aboriginal people stays unchanged although occasionally members of this community achieved high political offices. Their representation nevertheless stays unsystematic and depending on single individuals in the traditional parties.

The Aboriginal Australians are continued to be coded powerless until 2021. The indigenous communities still face immense social and economic discrimination, with poor living standards, lack of access to basic health services, poverty, unemployment, and lack of education. Aboriginal people also face disproportionate levels of detention, often for minor offenses. While making up around 2 percent of the total Australian population, indigenous Australians compromise around 28 percent of the adult prison population (¹⁷⁸; ¹⁷⁹; ¹⁸⁰).

In 2020, tens of thousands of people marched through Australia as part of the Black Lives Matter protests. The protesters stressed the similarities between what has been happening in the US and the injustices towards Indigenous people in Australia, drawing "attention to racial profiling, police brutality, and the more than 400 Indigenous people who have died in police custody since a royal commission into the problem was held in 1991" (¹⁸¹; ¹⁸²; ¹⁸³; ¹⁸⁴).

Further, challenges emerging due to climate change, such as wildfires, disproportionately affect the indigenous population in Australia (¹⁸⁵). There were also some positive policy developments for Aboriginal Australians. For example, in July 2019, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt, announced that within the next three years a referendum should be held to recognize Australia's indigenous people in the constitution (¹⁸⁶).

¹⁷⁷ [Farrell & Davidson ,2016]

¹⁷⁸ [Human Rights Watch, 2020]

¹⁷⁹ [Minority Rights Group International, 2020]

¹⁸⁰ [Minority Rights Group International, 2020a]

¹⁸¹ [Henriques-Gomes and Visontay, 2020]

¹⁸² [Allam, Wahlquist, and Evershed, 2020]

¹⁸³ [McGowan, 2020]

¹⁸⁴ [Allam, 2020]

¹⁸⁵ [Minority Rights Group International, 2020]

¹⁸⁶ [Human Rights Watch, 2020]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Australia

From 1946 until 1962

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites	0.84	DOMINANT
Asians	0.04	DISCRIMINATED
Aboriginal people	0.02	DISCRIMINATED

From 1963 until 2021

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites	0.84	DOMINANT
Asians	0.04	IRRELEVANT
Aboriginal people	0.02	POWERLESS



Figure 31: Political status of ethnic groups in Australia during 1946-1962.



Figure 32: Political status of ethnic groups in Australia during 1963-2021.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Australia

From 1946 until 1962

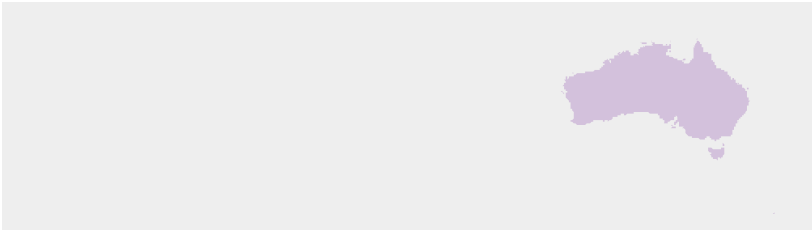


Figure 33: Map of ethnic groups in Australia during 1946-1962.




Group name		Area in km ²	Type
	Whites	7 686 693	Statewide
	Aboriginal people	0	Dispersed
	Asians	0	Urban

Table 13: List of ethnic groups in Australia during 1946-1962.

From 1963 until 2021

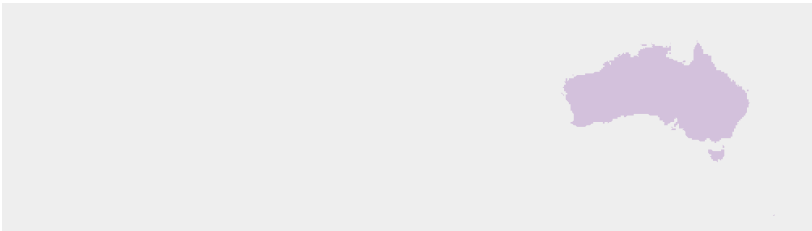


Figure 34: Map of ethnic groups in Australia during 1963-2021.



Group name		Area in km ²	Type
	Whites	7 686 693	Statewide
	Aboriginal people	0	Dispersed

Table 14: List of ethnic groups in Australia during 1963-2021.

Conflicts in Australia

Starting on 2003-03-19

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Australia	Government of Iraq		2003-03-19			
Government of United Kingdom	Government of Iraq		2003-03-19			
Government of United States of America	Government of Iraq		2003-03-19			