

NAME:

## Year 10 – 1967 Referendum

Read the '1967 Referendum' (page 10) section of the fact book and complete the following activities.

1. The Referendum sought to change sections 51 and 127 of the Constitution. Why might these sections have been included in the first place?
2. Summarise the arguments made by the 'yes' case.
3. Describe in your own words what the 1967 Referendum did.
4. What were some of the positive impacts of changing these sections?
5. Why do you think the 1967 Referendum was so successful?
6. What was the significance of the outcome for Indigenous Australians? Did it have any impact on their lives?



# Teacher Guide – Year 10 – 1967 Referendum

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**1. The Referendum sought to change sections 51 and 127 of the Constitution. Why might these sections have been included in the first place?**

It is not entirely clear why these sections were originally included in the Constitution. Indigenous Australians were barely mentioned in the deliberations in the 1890s and the resulting Constitution in 1901 only mentions them twice. At this time it was still thought that Indigenous Australians were a ‘dying race’ and thus their future was not important. One potential reason for the inclusion of section 127 is that it was simply too difficult to count the Indigenous population.

**2. Summarise the arguments made by the ‘yes’ case.**

The yes case stated that the proposed amendments to the Constitution would remove the belief that the Constitution discriminated in some ways against Indigenous Australians. In addition, the changes would allow the Commonwealth to make special laws for Indigenous Australians if necessary or desirable. The yes case argued that the Commonwealth’s object would be to cooperate with the States to ensure that they acted in the best interests of Indigenous Australians. They also stated that section 127 was completely out of harmony with the national attitudes and modern thinking of Australia.

**3. Describe in your own words what the 1967 Referendum did.**

Student responses will vary but they should state that the Referendum repealed section 127 of the Constitution and amended the wording of Section 51 by removing the words ‘other than the Aboriginal race in any state’.

**4. What were some of the positive impacts of changing these sections?**

The main positive impacts were that the federal government could now legislate on Indigenous affairs, when previously it was the domain of each individual State. Secondly, Indigenous Australians were now counted in the Census. This was a positive development as the Census is vital for determining funding for certain groups and areas.

**5. Why do you think the 1967 Referendum was so successful?**

The Referendum was so successful as it was unanimously supported by both sides of parliament. This meant that a ‘no’ case was never published. This bipartisan support for the issue was reflected in public opinion, with the highest ever yes vote recorded in a referendum.

**6. What was the significance of the outcome for Indigenous Australians? Did it have any impact on their lives?**

The outcome of the 1967 Referendum was significant for a number of reasons. First of all, the overwhelming yes vote showed Indigenous Australians that the wider Australian public supported them. The two changes made to the Constitution didn’t have an immediate impact on the lives of Indigenous Australians. However, it did enable the federal government to implement legislation such as the 1993 Native Title Act, which has had a significant impact on the lives of many Indigenous Australians.