

But there were still deep problems, as made clear by the organisers of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy erected on Australia Day 1972 on the lawn opposite Parliament House. The Tent Embassy has signified the alienation of Aboriginal people in their own country. It still stands today and protesters from the Tent Embassy were involved in a scuffle with Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott on Australia Day 2012. The protesters were upset by comments Mr Abbott had allegedly made earlier in the day.

Following the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, and other land rights legislation, Aboriginal land councils developed bodies through which Aboriginal people could negotiate, but often against very difficult odds. Aboriginal women have formed their own organisations, such as the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council established in central Australia in 1980 as a forum for Aboriginal women from 25 communities in three states.

In 1982 Eddie Mabo and four other Murray Islanders in the Torres Strait challenged the Queensland Government's claims to the islands, arguing for their own continuous traditional rights to the land. In 1992 the High Court ruled in favour of Mabo's claims, dramatically overturning long-standing assumptions about land ownership in Australia.

Women's Liberation Movement

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the 'First Wave' **feminist** movement fought for and won women's **enfranchisement** in many countries, as well as other legal rights.

In World Wars I and II, women participated in a range of new roles, though rarely as soldiers. In the 1960s, the 'Second Wave', or Women's Liberation Movement, erupted in countries around the world, fuelled by protests about women being limited to roles as housewives, and about legal,

educational and employment inequalities. Other specific issues related to the protests were access

to birth control (particularly the contraceptive pill) and legal abortions.

Several books inspired the new movement, including Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), which revealed the unhappiness and frustrations of housewives; and Robin Morgan's widely read collection *Sisterhood is Powerful* (1970). One of the movement's most celebrated texts was *The Female Eunuch* (1970) by Australian writer Germaine Greer. Greer's book caused outrage and controversy because it focused on sex and urged women to behave freely and radically.

In contrast to the earlier 'First Wave' movement, the new movement's broad agenda included issues of women's sexual pleasure, racial equality, lesbian and homosexual rights, domestic violence and rape. Most of those involved were young women, who were at first derided as 'Women's Libbers'. The movement achieved many legislative victories in Australia, including the legalisation of abortion, the criminalisation of rape in marriage and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*.

The feminist movement in Australia was directly connected to those overseas, but it had its own local and specific dimensions. One very Australian event occurred on 31 March 1965 when three Brisbane women protested their exclusion from the men-only front bar at the Regatta Hotel in Toowong. Two of the women chained themselves to the bar foot-rail, and the third took the key from the lock and threw it into the river. The event attracted an enormous amount of publicity.

Aboriginal women were politically active in the Aboriginal Civil Rights Movement, but often felt that the women's movement focused on white women's issues – Aboriginal women were worried about maternal and infant mortality, the effects of alcohol, and losing their land, their culture and their children. One of the leading Aboriginal women's activists has been Jackie Huggins, of both the Bidjara and Birri-Gubba Juru people in Queensland, and author of *Sister Girl* (1998). In 2001 Huggins was awarded the Australia Medal for her work with Aboriginal people. Huggins has argued that Aboriginal women have largely rejected white feminism because they were **alienated** and **marginalised** by the movement, and that racism is a more urgent concern.

feminist a person who believes that women and men are equal and should enjoy all the same rights

enfranchise to give someone the right to citizenship or the right to vote

alienated isolated

marginalised treated as insignificant