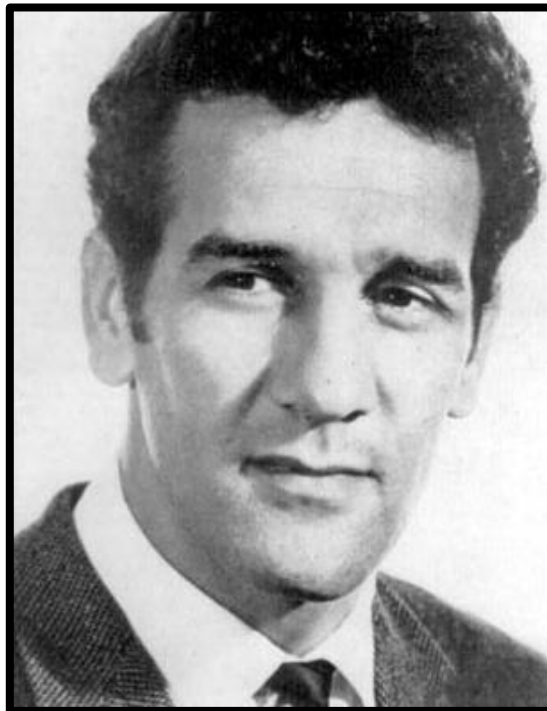


NATIONAL WINNER
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OLIVIA NOLAN
ST MARY'S ANGLICAN
GIRL'S SCHOOL
CHARLES PERKINS – AUSTRALIA'S
MARTIN LUTHER KING

CHARLES PERKINS AUSTRALIA'S MARTIN LUTHER KING



SOURCE: Smoke Signals, April 1966

Scholar, footballer, activist, bureaucrat and human rights champion, Charles Perkins, was all of these. Throughout his life, he campaigned and advocated on behalf of indigenous Australians. It is hard not to admire this man's passion, commitment and fortitude. From humble beginnings in Alice Springs, Charles helped to change Australia's constitution, and drew international attention to the plight of his people.

By Olivia Nolan

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders please note that this essay may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

Charles Perkins: Australia's Martin Luther King

"He (Perkins) was a moral force for all Australians, making [Australia] a better and fairer place to live," James Spigelman, Australian judge.¹

Charles Perkins, an Aboriginal activist, changed the course of Australian history. Like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Charles was a crusader for the rights of his people and, in doing so, created a better Australia for the country's traditional owners. Charles (or Charlie as he was often called) was the first Aboriginal to graduate from university, and the first indigenous man to head a Government Department (The Department of Aboriginal Affairs).² Charles led the 1965 Australian Freedom Ride, which highlighted racial discrimination and indigenous Australians' appalling living conditions. His involvement in the Advancement of Aboriginal Affairs was a precursor to The 1967 Referendum, and ground-breaking changes in Federal Government policy towards indigenous Australians. His devotion to indigenous issues throughout his life brought much criticism. Nonetheless, Charles was ordained a National Treasure, and is now widely regarded as one of the most outstanding Australians of the 20th Century.

Charles' passion was ignited during his turbulent childhood in Telegraph Station, Alice Springs.³ The son of Martin Connolly, a half-caste of Kalkaddon descent, and Hetti Perkins of

¹ Spigelman J. 2001. A moral force for all Australians *Walking Together, Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation* 30: 12.

² Read, P. (2017). *Interview with Author of Charles Perkins Biography*.

³ Hughes R. 1998. Interview with Charles Perkins for Australian Biography project. Screen Australia. <http://www.australianbiography.gov.au/subjects/perkins/interview1.html>

Arreernte descent, Charles was separated from his extended aboriginal family in 1938, at just two years of age⁴. This treatment was part of a cruel government policy called 'Protection' (1918-1953)⁵, which separated half-caste aboriginal children from their tribal families.⁶ Under the auspices of The Northern Territory Half-Caste Association, Charles was removed to a mission to train him to integrate into the white community.⁷

The mission Charles lived in was called The Bungalow.⁸ Mr J. McEwen, Federal Minister for the Interior, visited The Bungalow in 1937. His observations of the frightful conditions which Charles and its other inhabitants endured suggest widespread abuse and neglect.

There I saw a state of affairs which honourable members will find difficult to believe - 120 half-caste children, and 13 or 14 adult full- blooded and half-caste women, the parents of some of the young half- caste children, living in that most deplorable old building, which, when it rained heavily, took in the water almost as if there were no roof at all. The dormitories were a disgrace. ... 120 children were being accommodated in two dormitories, where they slept on two sets of wire mattresses. The first set, which accommodated 36 children, stood 1ft. 9in. from the floor, and 2ft. 4in. above their heads as they lay was another set of mattresses accommodating another 36 children... I know many stud stock breeders who would not dream

⁴ Nma.gov.au. (2017). *Collaborating for Indigenous Rights 1957-1973*. [online] Available at: http://www.nma.gov.au/indigenous/people/pagination/charles_perkins [Accessed 21 Aug. 2017].

⁵ Coughlan, F. (1991). Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council. *Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council*, pp.pg 12-25.

⁶ Government Policy re Aborigines in the Northern Territory, 1914-1937. (1988). [Paper Files and Documents] National Australian Archives, Northern Territory.

⁷ Australianbiography.gov.au. (2017). *Charles Perkins - Interview Transcript tape 1*. [online] Available at: <http://www.australianbiography.gov.au/subjects/perkins/interview1.html> [Accessed 21 Aug. 2017].

⁸ Department of Home and Territories, Central Office (1914). *Alice Springs Bungalow Central Australia File*. [Newspaper clippings, reports, correspondence, plans] National Archives of Australia, North Territory.

of crowding their stock in the way that these half-caste children were huddled in this institution in Alice Springs (Australia, House of Representatives Parliamentary Debates 1939:181).”⁹

Despite condemnation of The Bungalow’s conditions, the mission operated for twenty eight years from 1914 until 1942 when Charles left.¹⁰ After this, he lived for a couple of years with his mother in a mud hut in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), in a multi-cultural area known as Rainbow Town¹¹ five miles from the post office in accordance with the prevailing law.¹²

By ten years of age, Charles was living at a boy’s hostel in Adelaide (St. Francis) run by Father Percy Smith.¹³ He left at fifteen (1952) without completing school and gained employment as a fitter and turner at British Tube Mills. This is where Charles played soccer something he described as giving him “a sense of happiness”. “Soccer to me, he once said, is one way of breaking down barriers between national, racial and language difficulty.”¹⁴ In 1957, he was scouted and moved to England to play for Everton. However, he soon returned upon the realisation that championing indigenous issues was where his passion truly resided.

⁹ Parliament of Australia, House of Representatives (1939). *House of Representatives Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*. Canberra: House of Representatives, pg1.

¹⁰ Department of Home and Territories, Central Office (1914). *Alice Springs Bungalow Central Australia File*. [Newspaper clippings, reports, correspondence, plans] National Archives of Australia, North Territory.

¹¹ Perkins, C. (1999). *Biography - Charles Nelson (Charlie) Perkins - Indigenous Australia*. [online] la.anu.edu.au. Available at: <http://ia.anu.edu.au/biography/perkins-charles-nelson-charlie-810> [Accessed 22 Aug. 2017].

¹² Alrc.gov.au. (2017). *Changing Policies Towards Aboriginal People | ALRC*. [online] Available at: <http://www.alrc.gov.au/publications/3.%20Aboriginal%20Societies%3A%20The%20Experience%20of%20Cont> act/changing-policies-towards-aboriginal [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

¹³ Department of Territories (1946). *Australian Board of Missions - Technical training of half-castes (boys) at St Francis House, Semaphore, South Australia*. [Letters and Photographs] National Archive of Australia, 1955/508 PART 1.

¹⁴ Adair and Stronach, D. (2014). *Kwementyaye (Charles) Perkins: Indigenous Soccer Player and Australian Political Activist*. 7th ed. Canberra, pp.pg 25-27.

On returning to Australia, he decided to finish school. After matriculating, Charles enrolled in Sydney University and graduated in 1966, the first Aborigine to do so, proving his point –that it was lack of opportunity, not ability that kept indigenous Australians from positions of authority. The 30,000 indigenous Australians currently holding university degrees may not have succeeded if not for Charles. ¹⁵

During his university tenure, Charles and Ted Noffs established The Foundation of Aboriginal Affairs to assist Aboriginal people migrating from rural areas to Sydney to find jobs and housing.¹⁶ By 1965, more than 400 people were using its services. ¹⁷

University was a forum for Charles to campaign about Aboriginal affairs. His Student Action for Aborigines (SAFA) group inspired by the American Freedom Ride, embarked upon its own freedom ride around New South Wales. ¹⁸**(SOURCE 1)**

Its goals were to:

- *Draw public attention to fundamental aboriginal problems in health, education, housing;*
- *Break down social discriminator barriers to the extent possible; and*

¹⁵ Korff, J. (2017). *Aboriginal students in higher studies at university*. [online] Creative Spirits. Available at: <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/aboriginal-students-in-higher-studies-at-university> [Accessed 22 Aug. 2017].

¹⁶ Read, P. (2001). *Charles Perkins*. Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, p.pg 70.

¹⁷ *The Foundation of Aboriginal Affairs 1963-1977*. (2002). [video] Directed by T. J Russell. Australia: Australian Screen.

¹⁸ Nla.gov.au. (2017). *Papers of Charles Perkins*. [online] Available at: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-291812290/> [Accessed 22 Aug. 2017].

- *Stimulate the interest of aborigines in improving their situation within society.*¹⁹

To achieve these aim, SAFA adopted Martin Luther's principle of passive resistance or **peaceful picketing**.

During protests against **colour bars**, Freedom riders conducted a survey of both Europeans and Aboriginals, the findings of which were released in a report.²⁰ Emotive questions about social differences, perceived intelligence, education and living standards were included in the questionnaire. **(SOURCE 2)**

At Walgett and Moree, the Freedom riders clashed with crowds. In Walgett, they demonstrated outside the Returned Services League (RSL), which barred Aboriginal ex-service personnel from its membership.²¹ They also demonstrated against a color bar at a women's-wear store. Ann Curthoys, who was part of the Freedom Ride said in Walgett "*Conditions very bad – had to use filthy water, tin shacks with mud floors, overcrowded. "Obviously considerable discrimination in the town – especially the Oasis Hotel, the RSL, a frock shop."*

(SOURCE 3)

In Moree, Charles and the other Freedom riders, picketed outside the town swimming pool against a Council Ordinance which mandated "that no person, being a full-blooded or half-caste aboriginal native of Australia, _ or being a person apparently having a mixture of

¹⁹ Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (1966). *Perkins, Charles Nelson Volume 1*. [Paper files and documents] National Archives of Australia, A6119, 3660. Canberra.

²⁰ STUDENT ACTION FOR ABORIGINES. (1965). [Press Release] Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Sydney.

²¹ Tribune (1965). Heroic Story of Freedom Ride. [online] pp. 2. Available at: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/236347752/25603819> [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

aboriginal blood, shall use or occupy, or be present in or upon, or be allowed or permitted or invited to use or occupy or be present in or upon the premisesof the Council known as the Bore Baths, or in or upon any of the buildings or places enclosed therewith." ²²

Following heated debate, six Aboriginal children were allowed into the pool. When the ride discovered the ban had not been lifted, they returned to protest again and were pelted with rubbish, eggs, and tomatoes. **(SOURCE 4)** The events at Moree Baths were seminal for the indigenous civil rights movement. The Freedom Ride gained widespread media attention both in Australia and internationally, including an article in The New York Times. ²³

SAFA compiled its survey and other findings from the Freedom Ride into a report highlighting appalling housing, employment and health conditions throughout the indigenous population. The Freedom Ride, and subsequent report, forced all of Australia to look at the way it treated its indigenous population. Indeed, The NSW Aborigines Welfare Board even announced a significant housing programme for Moree. ²⁴

Another ground-breaking development (which followed) was the 1967 referendum. The referendum altered two parts of the constitution, and was instrumental in reforming Aboriginal Affairs at both the State and National Level. ²⁵ Prior to this, indigenous Australians

²² Moree Council Ordinance. (2009). [eBook] New South Wales: Department of Environment, pp. 1. Available at: <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/Od8b4121-1e89-4fae-849f-bc770287b91c/files/moree-baths.pdf> [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

²³ Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (1966). *Perkins, Charles Nelson Volume 1*. [Paper files and documents] National Archives of Australia, A6119, 3660. Canberra.

²⁴ Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (1966). *Perkins, Charles Nelson Volume 1*. [Paper files and documents] National Archives of Australia, A6119, 3660. Canberra.

²⁵ The 1967 referendum; race, power and the Australian. (2007). Canberra, A.C.T.: Aboriginal Studies Press.

were counted separately in the census and their rights were regularly ignored.²⁶ Public pressure (the referendum passed by a whopping 90.77% of votes) may not have come to without Charles Perkins and The Freedom Ride.²⁷

After this, both media and politicians increasingly courted Charles. Following discussions with Prime Minister, Harold Holt, after the referendum, Charles wrote a letter setting out his ideas on Aboriginal self-rule.²⁸ In this letter, he also touched on the issue of land ownership and recognition of Aboriginal status as Australia's original owners. **(SOURCE 5)** His dream was for Aboriginal self-determination.²⁹

Subsequently, the Office and Council for Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) was formed in 1967 and Charles took up the post of research officer in 1969.³⁰ Within two months of his arrival, the office established Aboriginal publications, Aboriginal Hostels of Australia's and a National Aboriginal Sports Foundation.³¹ Charles proved once again that he was relentless.

After more campaigning, The Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) was created by the Whitlam Government at the end of 1972.³² The Department was responsible for:³³

²⁶ Australian Census Rights. (1954). *Australian Census 1894-1954*, [online] pp.pg 4-5. Available at: [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/B207140FE5757989CA257AF40014D933/\\$File/13010_1960%20section%209.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/B207140FE5757989CA257AF40014D933/$File/13010_1960%20section%209.pdf) [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

²⁷ Referendum 1967 - Proceedings in Parliament and submissions of case. (1967). [Letter, correspondings and Reports] National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Read, P. (2001). *Charles Perkins*. Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, p.pg 134

³⁰ *The Life and Times of Charles Perkins*. (2009). [DVD] Directed by R. Perkins. Australia.

³¹ Read, P. (2001). *Charles Perkins*. Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, p.pg 150

³² Governor General (1972). *Commonwealth of Australia Administrative Arrangements*. [Government Gazette] National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

³³ Ibid

- Matters related to the Aboriginal people of Australia;
- The development and administration of national policies for the advancement and welfare of the Aboriginal people, including the administration of welfare activities in the Territories; and
- Special laws for Aboriginal people

The DAA also promoted self-determination, a policy introduced by the Whitlam Government.

³⁴ Charles advocated this policy, which is regarded as “the cornerstone of government policy on Aboriginal Affairs.”³⁵

As one of the first Indigenous Australians to take up a prominent political role, Charles inspired politicians like Linda Burney, the first Indigenous woman elected to the House of Representatives. Speaking at the Charles Perkins Oration last year, Linda revealed that she “used heroes like Charlie Perkins to inspire (her).”³⁶

Charles was a fearless and outspoken political opponent who was often targeted by the establishment. After a particularly virulent attack on the Western Australian Country Liberal Party in 1974, ³⁷Charles garnered criticism from an array of politicians culminating in a year-long suspension without pay. ³⁸

³⁴ Roberts, D. (1994). Self-determination and the Struggle for Aboriginal Equality. *Aboriginal Australia from University of Queensland*, 15, pp. 212-236 Chapter 14.

³⁵ *Ibid* pg. 236-240

³⁶ Burney, L. (2016). *Charles Perkins Oration*.

³⁷ Charles Nelson Perkins Volume 3. (1973). [Newspapers, Correspondings] National Archives of Australia, A1191. Canberra.

³⁸ Charles Nelson Perkins Volume 3. (1973). [Newspapers, Corresponding] National Archives of Australia, A1191. Canberra.

Undaunted, Charles moved to Alice Springs and became Chairman of the Central Land Council campaigning for traditional owners' land rights.³⁹ As a result of the Council's vigorous lobbying, The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* was enacted.⁴⁰

The Act legally recognised the Aboriginal system of land ownership and made law the concept of inalienable free hold title.⁴¹ Charles even recommended that Australia be barred from United Nations (UN) membership until racism against the indigenous population was eliminated. **(SOURCE 7)** His petitioning did not go unheeded with the UN commissioning a report on Aboriginal conditions.⁴²

Charles returned to The Department of Aboriginal Affairs in 1976, as Assistant Secretary of the Coordination and Strategy Branch, followed by a position in the Research and Overview Branch. He stayed away from the media until 1980 when he became Chairman of the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC), the highest public service position achieved by an Aboriginal.

The Commission was tasked with assisting "communities and groups of Aboriginals to acquire land...to obtain finance for housing... to train Aboriginals in relation to matters of the

³⁹ Central Land Council History. (2015). *Central Land Council Annual Report*, 3, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁰ Central Land Council History. (2015). *Central Land Council Annual Report*, 3, pp. 2-3.

⁴¹ House of Representatives (1976). *An Act providing for the granting of Traditional Aboriginal Land in the Northern Territory for the benefit of Aboriginals, and for other purposes. (No. 191 of 1976)*. [Government Legislation] National Archives of Australia, 1976/191. Canberra.

⁴² Department of Foreign Affairs (2017). *United Nations - Human rights - Australian Aboriginals and other minorities [including Charles Perkins]*. [Letter, Newspapers, Documents] National Archives of Australia, 929/5/3 PART 4. Canberra.

Commission...to engage business enterprises and to give advice and recommendations to the Minister."⁴³

New approvals for housing loans three-fold within 6 years, and by 1988 the budget skyrocketed to \$121 million.⁴⁴ By 1988, the annual value of housing loans provided by the ADC reached \$31.5 million; housing grants totalled \$36.5 million; \$7.3 million was distributed in housing assistance; and the commercial development program dispersed \$26.3 million for enterprise and land acquisition projects.⁴⁵ Despite its fabulous progress, the ADC was reviewed by the House of Representative on a number of occasions between 1982 and 1984.⁴⁶

When Charles was offered the post of Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, he jumped at the chance again leading the way as the first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to head a commonwealth department on a permanent basis. Charles shaped the department into a dynamic and helpful organization. Eileen Perkins, Charles wife, describes his "door (as) always open and his phone number available to everyone 24/7".⁴⁷ Bill Gray, in charge of negotiations for national land rights, noted that Charles was away visiting communities almost every week.⁴⁸

⁴³ Establishment of Aboriginal Development Commission. (1980). [Letters and Documents] National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

⁴⁴ Horton, D. and McKenzie, K. (1994). *The encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*. Canberra, ACT: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

⁴⁵ Ibid pg. 73-76

⁴⁶ House of Representatives (1984). *Review of delivery of services financed by Aboriginal Development Commission*. [Report] National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

⁴⁷ Perkins, E. (2017). *Interview with the wife of Charles Perkins*.

⁴⁸ Read, P. (2001). *Charles Perkins*. Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, p.pg 220

Finally, Charles tireless efforts were officially recognised in 1987 when he was awarded the Order of Australia.⁴⁹ Prime Minister Bob Hawke captured the essence of Charles beautifully in a comment that he (Perkins): *"sometimes found it difficult to observe the constraints usually imposed on permanent heads of departments because he had a burning passion for advancing the interests of his people"*.⁵⁰

Charles left political life in 1988 to set up a number of organisations, which to this day, are active in promoting better quality of life for indigenous Australians.⁵¹ That he personally displayed stoicism to become the longest recorded survivor of a kidney transplant is testimony to Charles, the man, and what an incredible man he was. Charles passed away in October 2000.⁵² He was given a State funeral and his indigenous family bestowed on him the mourning name of Kumantjayi Perkins.

His peaceful protest, controversial commentary and fearless campaigning changed the course of Aboriginal Affairs in Australia. Charles has made all our lives better. However, until the indigenous community breaks out of the cycle of poverty, and education and health outcomes are improved, Charles Perkins Freedom Ride must continue.

⁴⁹ Theorderofaustralia.asn.au. (2017). *Order of Australia Association: Official National Website Homepage*. [online] Available at: <http://www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au> [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

⁵⁰ Farquharson, J. (2017). *Obituary - Charles Nelson (Charlie) Perkins - Obituaries Australia*. [online] Oa.anu.edu.au. Available at: <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/perkins-charles-nelson-charlie-810?query=occupation:%22Indigenous+rights+activist%2Fsupporter%22&rpp=200> [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

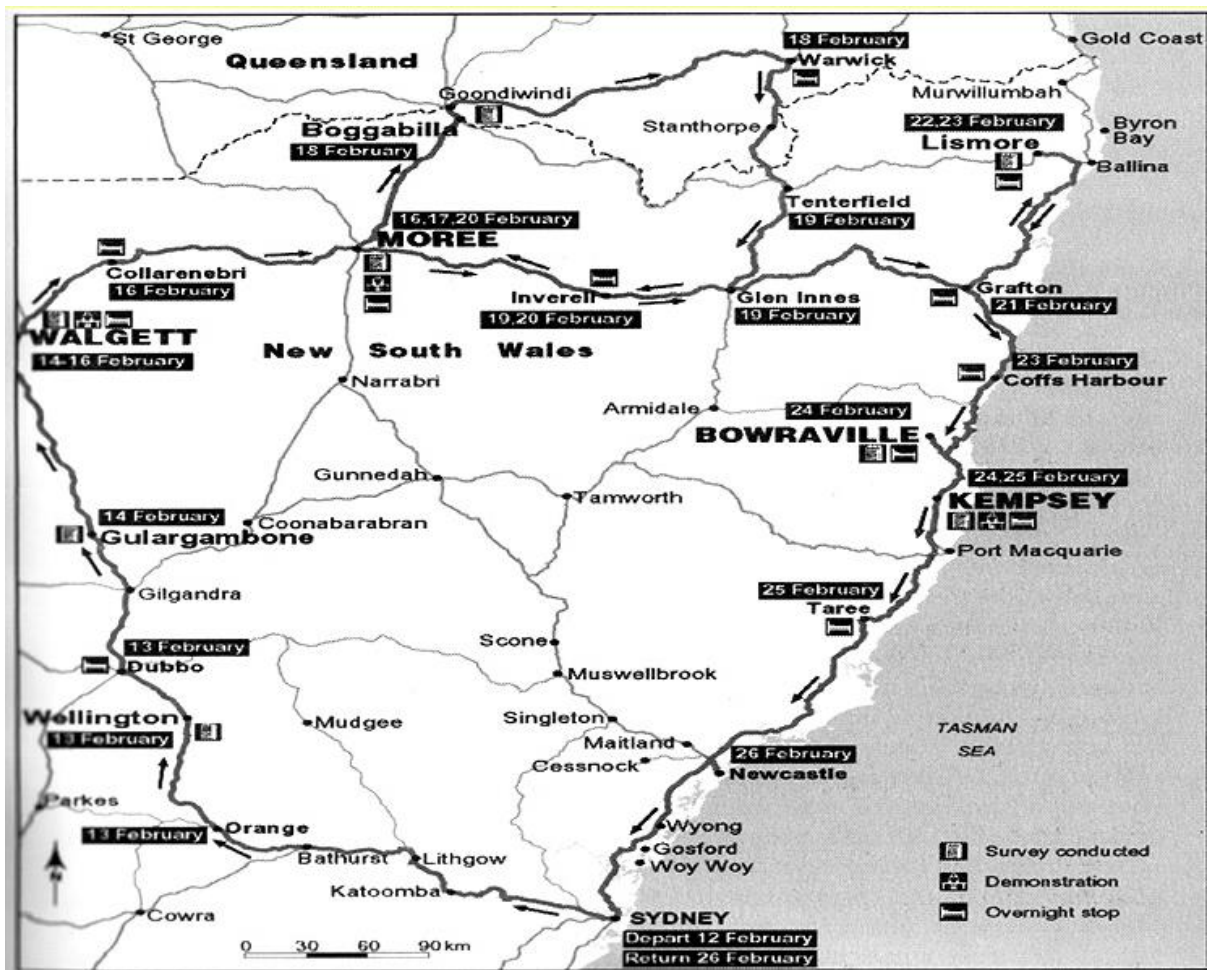
⁵¹ Naa.gov.au. (2017). *Charles Nelson Perkins - Fact sheet 225 – National Archives of Australia, Australian Government*. [online] Available at: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs225.aspx> [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

⁵² Ibid

APPENDIX

SOURCE 1

Curthoys, A. (2002). *Freedom Ride: A Freedom Rider Remember*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin



SOURCE 2 PART 1

S.A.F.A. Form No.1/1965 Names _____ Age: Under 21 M/Female
Over 21

ABORIGINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

TOWN: _____

1. Are the white people giving the Aborigines a fair chance? Yes/No
2. Would good education benefit the Aborigines? Yes/No
3. Are the Aboriginal people as good as the white people in every way? Yes/No
4. Should the Aborigines be given more say in their affairs? Yes/No
5. Do you know how many Aborigines are on the Aboriginal Welfare Board? Yes/No
6. (a) If a committee of white people and Aborigines was set up in the town to deal with Aboriginal assimilation would you like to see 50/50 representation on it? Yes/No
- (b) Would you like a majority of white people? Yes/No
- (c) Would you like a majority of Aboriginal people? Yes/No
7. Do you think the Aboriginal Welfare Board is doing a good job? Yes/No
8. Is it harder for Aborigines to get jobs in the town than white people? Yes/No
9. Is there much discrimination against Aborigines in this town or this State? Yes/No
10. Do you think that the Aboriginal situation has improved at all over the last 20 years? Yes/No
11. Aborigines are not counted in the census and are not accepted for military service - do you think this is wrong? Yes/No
12. Do you think that Aboriginal people are happier than white people? Yes/No
13. Can you say that you have never been to the doctor? Yes/No
14. Do you take your babies to the Baby Health Centre (if there is one)? Yes/No
15. Did all your children get their needles from the doctor when they were small? Yes/No

Circle Answer

16. Would you prefer your home to be: Gift/Purchased by Loan/Rented?
17. Should Aborigines be: on reserves/or in towns?
18. Why do you think jobs are hard to get: Colour/Ability/or Class Distinction?
19. Do you think the Aborigines should stand up to their rights/or just accept the situation as it is?
20. Should Aborigines preserve some of the old customs/or adopt all the new ones?
21. Is there: often/sometimes/hardly ever someone in your family who is sick?
22. Do you believe, if someone is sick, in waiting to see if they will get better/or in calling for medical help immediately?
23. When you seek medical help whom do you see first: your friends/Matron/Hospital/Doctor?
24. Is visiting the doctor: easy/not too bad/hard to do?
25. Were your children born: at home/in hospital?

Write Answer

26. In what ways are Aboriginal people discriminated against?
27. If your children had a chance to go on to higher education, what things could prevent you from allowing them to do?
28. How do you think the Aboriginal situation could be helped?
29. What do you think should be done to help raise the health standards of your people?

SOURCE 2 PART 2

<http://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/freedom-ride/european-questionnaire.pdf>

EUROPEAN QUESTIONNAIRE

TOWN: _____

1. The Aboriginal problem exists because the Aborigines are misunderstood - do you agree? Yes/No
2. The Aborigines are just as honest and public-spirited citizens as the Europeans - do you agree? Yes/No
3. There are both "good" and "bad" Aborigines as there are both kinds of Australians - do you agree? / Yes/No
4. The dislike of many Aboriginal people is based on prejudice, but is it justified? *Yes/No* Yes/No
5. The Aborigines are morally inferior to most other people, do you agree? Yes/No
6. The Aborigines should have more power and influence in the running of this country - do you agree? Yes/No
7. The Aborigines are an economic and social burden to this country - do you agree? Yes/No
8. Aborigines do not know the value of money - do you agree? Yes/No
9. Aborigines are just as loyal to the country in which they live as any other citizens - do you agree? Yes/No
10. Aborigines fail to face up to responsibility - do you agree? Yes/No
11. Aborigines, who still have their separate customs, should give them up and become average citizens - do you agree? Yes/No
12. The Aboriginal problem has been much exaggerated - do you agree with this? Yes/No
13. Does it worry you that the Aboriginal population is increasing at a rate about twice as fast as that of the European population? Yes/No
14. Would you welcome an Aboriginal neighbour in your street? Yes/No
15. Aborigines can be relied upon in anything they do - ? Yes/No
16. Would you work on a Committee in the town for the welfare of Aborigines? Yes/No
17. Do you think white people are happier than Aborigines? Yes/No

Circle Answer

18. The Aborigines are on their own in society - because:
 (a) of social differences. (b) their own inclination.
19. Would you prefer Aborigines to live on the reserves/or in the town?
20. Do you think that the Aborigines' generally lower standard of living is due to
 (a) lower intelligence or (b) insufficient education.
21. Most Aborigines are unskilled workers. Do you consider this due to:
 (a) heredity and environmental factors or (b) their own lack of initiative and ambition.

Write Answer

22. What sort of qualities would a "good" Aborigine have?

23. What sort of qualities would a "bad" Aborigine have?

SOURCE 3

Curthoys, A. (2002). *Freedom Ride: A Freedom Rider Remember*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin

The morning & did some surveys for a few hours. Most of the people I spoke to were very shy & diffident, & said they were quite happy. Conditions were bad - had to use filthy water, tin stacks with mud floors, overcrowded. Said Welfare board O.K. The impression we got later from the town aborigine was much more critical & discontented. Obviously considerable discrimination in the town - especially the Cass Hotel, the R.S.C., a ~~the~~ food shop. Aborigines not accepted socially by white community. About 12:00 we began to demonstrate outside the R.S.C. We just stood in a long line outside the R.S.C. holding

SOURCE 4

Curthoys, A. (2002). *Freedom Ride: A Freedom Rider Remember*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin



LITTLE DIXIE

... with the Freedom Riders

Moree and Walgett

WHILE officialdom has on the whole chosen to ignore the significant events taking place this week in northern NSW the Minister for Health, Mr. Sheahan, raises a lone voice in condemnation of the color bar.

Mr. Sheahan says bluntly that any hospital practising racial discrimination is in danger of having its government subsidy withdrawn.

Apart from Mr. Sheahan, politicians—and in particular Mr. Gus Kelly, who as Chief Secretary is responsible for Aboriginal Welfare Boards—appear to hope that if they don't mention the problem it will go away.

This is wishful thinking. The incidents in Walgett and Moree are a clear indication that the problem is growing, rather than lessening. The vocal minority groups in both towns are only too aware that the living conditions of Aboriginals, as well as the social and employment sanctions against them, are a blot on their communities.

Instead of resenting the interest taken by the students these country centres should welcome it. For years they have complained that they bear an unfair share of responsibility for the Aboriginal population.

Instead of pelting the students with rubbish and intimidating their bus driver they should be glad the facts are being exposed.

Only in this way will the government be induced to make the effort to correct the second class status of NSW's 20,000 half-caste and full-blood Aboriginals.

MOREE, in northern NSW, became a little Dixie at the weekend when students visited the town for the second time in their anti-segregation tour and encountered their worst reception yet.

Some of the students were punched and jostled. A girl picketing the color-barred swimming pool was spat on.

Some of the crowd yelled "String 'em up" and a former alderman who sided with the students was picked up and dropped roughly in the gutter.

The students spent last night at South Grafton licking their wounds.



Victim

Jim Spigelman will remember his stand on the color bar at Moree. He was knocked to the ground in a wild demonstration. Earlier it was quiet when Charles Perkins met aboriginal children outside the pool, below.

Students bring turmoil to a NSW town



Out!

Moree's Mayor, Alderman William Lloyd, shows two students the way out. He led John Howe away (above) then took Beth Hansen to the gate (below).



SOURCE 5

Perkins' Submission on the Aboriginal Question. (1967). [Letter] National Archives of

Following an interview in New York with the Prime Minister, the Hon. H.R. Holt, I hereby submit for consideration my humble recommendations. The lack of elaboration in my submission is due to two factors. One is the note of urgency with which the material was compiled. Secondly, most of my technical data has already been forwarded back to Australia. The principles and corresponding views expressed are the ones which I consider relevant to the Australian Aboriginal situation. They are my opinions alone and not a reflection of any organisation to which I belong. I do not wish to write a comprehensive critique of Aboriginal Affairs in Australia today, nevertheless, some general remarks are included to complement principles generally expressed.

When discussing Aboriginal Affairs, what must be ultimately defined is who is an "Aboriginal". Biological, social and legal factors are relevant in consideration of an adequate definition. Respective states throughout Australia have formulated their own definitions - all are unsatisfactory and unrealistic. I define an Aboriginal as (a) any person of Aboriginal descent and (b) who wishes to be identified as an Aboriginal and/or can be identified as such. There are problems involved in interpretation of any definition. They can be overcome in various ways. In Canada and the U.S.A. a roll is drawn up and every Indian is registered. If an Indian is not on the roll then he or she is not considered to be an Indian legally. A corresponding situation could exist here for Aborigines. Some would criticise this method on the basis of a division being created in Australian society. This may have some validity however, significant benefits can be gained from Aboriginal identification, pride in race and eventual full and independent participation in the community.

*How
carries?*

A Federal Aboriginal Affairs Bureau, based in Canberra should be established which caters for the needs of Aboriginal people throughout Australia. The organisation should:-

1. Be the responsible agency for Aboriginal people throughout the Commonwealth of Australia.
2. Formulate national policy pertaining to Aboriginal Affairs.
3. Administer through existing State Departments the new Federal policy.
4. Have a Minister as the responsible head.
5. Be as free as is reasonably possible from the political party sphere.
6. Be staffed with trained, competent personnel with Aborigines given preference for positions of responsibility.
7. Be allocated sufficient monies enabling fulfilment of all acceptable programmes. Finance should not be restricted. In America over 400,000,000 dollars are spent on Indian Affairs. This amount caters for the needs of only 400,000 registered Indians.

The Federal Aboriginal Affairs Bureau should be the main instrument of social change. It should be the body which stimulates change where necessary; formulates and implements programmes; co-operates with existing agents in the general community and provides the basic organisation for the rehabilitation of the Aboriginal in Australia. It has many functions and some of the more important ones are listed and analysed.

3. HOUSING

The Federal Aboriginal Affairs Bureau should undertake to constructively programme housing of Aboriginal people. Indiscriminate or chance housing programmes must never be tolerated. Aborigines should be consulted about any housing proposal pertaining to themselves or the group as a whole. Settlement housing, where constructed, should not be in rows or congregated in a small area. Design should be up to general community standards. The concept of "transitional housing" should be eliminated. In its place should be an accepted standard housing scheme with suitable training and selection of prospective tenants.

4. SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY

A survey should be immediately undertaken throughout Australia. This survey should comply with accepted procedure and employ only trained personnel. There should be two broad objectives of such a survey:-

- (1) Compile statistics on the Aboriginal population in Australia. This should include such matters as numbers, population concentration, occupations, education level, attitudes, housing conditions and health. No comprehensive survey has ever been completed on the Aboriginal people of Australia. There are difficulties involved, however, with the right planning and people, valuable material can be collected.
- (2) The material obtained from such a sociological survey can provide the basis for all short or long range programmes involving Aborigines. It will be the reference point which will enable administrators or policy makers realise the extent and depth of the question with which they are dealing. At the present it is a case of "the blind leading the blind," for example, no one really knows how many Aborigines there are or what are the conditions they are living under. Present policy on Aboriginal Affairs is generally guess work, hence the lack of progress and current social stagnation in Australia today. Present policy makers and administrators are generally untrained and uninformed of the actual situation. Frustration is the inevitable result.

5. LAND-OWNERSHIP

The matter of past ownership of land in Australia pertaining to Aborigines is much too complex for me to deal with in several short paragraphs. I do feel however, that this matter should be investigated thoroughly and arrangements made which will benefit Aboriginal people. This benefit must be collective and not individual. There must be recognition that Aborigines originally had ownership of land in most areas of Australia. Compensation then should be negotiated on this basis. Finance or justification for obtaining finance can be correlated with this principle.

6. LAW PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS ON THE GROUNDS OF RACE, ETHNIC OR NATIONAL GROUPING.

Some provisions should be made in the Federal Constitution which complies with the proposed suggestion. There is no doubt racial discrimination

Annotated Bibliography:

Primary Sources-Archives

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (1966). *Perkins, Charles Nelson Volume 1*.

[Paper files and documents] National Archives of Australia, A6119, 3660. Canberra.

These archives provided information on Charles Perkins' life between 1962-1969 including newspaper articles on the Freedom Ride, his graduation and other useful information. It also included letters regarding Charles Perkins' social activities

Charles Nelson Perkins Volume 3. (1973). [Newspapers, Corresponding] National Archives of Australia, A1191. Canberra.

This archive provided information on Charles Perkins' life from 1973-1980. This archive contains reliable and useful information on the beginning of DAA, ADC and the events leading up to the suspension of Charles in 1975.

Department of Foreign Affairs (2017). *United Nations - Human rights - Australian Aboriginals and other minorities [including Charles Perkins]*. [Letter, Newspapers, Documents] National Archives of Australia, 929/5/3 PART 4. Canberra.

This documents letters from the Australian Government to the UN and vice versus about Charles' visit with Robert Liddle to the Australian House. These letters provided useful information which was both accurate and reliable.

Department of Home and Territories, Central Office (1914-1942). *Alice Springs Bungalow Central Australia File*. [Newspaper clippings, reports, correspondence, plans] National Archives of Australia, North Territory.

This collection documents the planning (including floor plans) and establishment of the Bungalow. Furthermore, it provides reports of the reserve from Government officials and letters detailing the purpose of the reserve.

Department of Territories (1946). *Australian Board of Missions - Technical training of half-castes (boys) at St Francis House, Semaphore, South Australia.* [Letters and Photographs]
National Archive of Australia, 1955/508 PART 1.

This collection provides information about the St Francis House, where Charles stayed from 10 -15 years of age. Letters and photographs about and of the hostel are in this collection.

Establishment of Aboriginal Development Commission. (1980). [Letters and Documents]
National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

These archives contain letters and government documents in relation to the ADC. In particular, a government document from the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs detailing the responsibilities and goals of the commission.

Governor General (1972). *Commonwealth of Australia Administrative Arrangements.*
[Government Gazette] National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

This document was written by the Governor General showing the roles and responsibilities of the DAA.

Government Policy re Aborigines in the Northern Territory, 1914-1937. (1988). [Paper Files and Documents] National Australian Archives, Northern Territory.

This document displays the Commonwealth's administration of Aboriginal people between 1918-1939. This helped to give insight into Charles' childhood.

House of Representatives (1984). *Review of delivery of services financed by Department of Aboriginal Affairs*. [Report] National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

This report written by House of Representatives reviews the services delivered by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and suggests improvements to some programs within the Department.

Perkins' Submission on the Aboriginal Question. (1967). [Letter] National Archives of Australia, A1209. Canberra

This letter from Charles to Harold Holt discusses the need for a Federal Bureau of Aboriginal Affairs and the responsibilities of this Bureau. It also discusses the need for Aboriginal land rights to be identified. This letter was a major precursor to the establishment of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

Referendum 1967 - Proceedings in Parliament and submissions of case. (1967). [letter, corresponding and reports] National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

These collection provides newspaper cuttings, parliament proceedings and reports about the 1967 referendum. Furthermore, it shows the purpose of this referendum and the results of this in Australia.

Newspapers, Reports

Australian Census Rights. (1954). *Australian Census 1894-1954*, [online] pp.pg 4-5. Available at:[http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/B207140FE5757989CA257AF40014D933/\\$File/13010_1960%20section%209.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/B207140FE5757989CA257AF40014D933/$File/13010_1960%20section%209.pdf) [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

This Government report documents the result of the census between 1894-1954. In the first pages it specifies that due to Constitutional law aboriginal are not counted in the census.

This constitutional law was changed in 1967.

Tribune (1965). Heroic Story of Freedom Ride. [Online] p.Pg 2. Available at:
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/236347752/25603819> [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

This newspaper reports the freedom riders and their protests in Moree and Walgett. It identifies the colour bars that were present in the towns and the reaction of the protest from the residents.

Health: The Present Situation 1965. (1965). [Report] Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Sydney., Sydney.

This health report released by the SAFA uses the results of their survey from the Freedom Ride to provide information about Indigenous Australians Health. It presents shocking comparisons between the health of Indigenous Australians and white Australians. Through estimates given by doctors they suggest the influence of these health statistics and solutions. It provides deep insight into the plight of Indigenous Australians at that time.

STUDENT ACTION FOR ABORIGINES. (1965). [Press Release] Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Sydney.

This document was released to the press before the SAFA left Sydney. Written by Charles Perkins, it details the aims of the trip including to demonstrate the racial discrimination happening in NSW and the attitudes Europeans have of Aboriginals and vice versa. It also reports the dates of their departure and return.

Parliament of Australia, House of Representatives (1939). *House of Representatives Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*. Canberra: House of Representatives, p.1.

Mr. McEwen, the Federal Government Minister for the Interior, reports on the affairs at the Bungalow to the House of Representatives. This disturbing report helps to give you an understanding of what conditions Indigenous Australians lived in.

Interviews and Speeches

Hughes R. 1998. Interview with Charles Perkins for Australian Biography project.

This interview provides an understanding of Charles Perkins and his life. In 12 tapes, Hughes asks Charles questions spanning from his childhood to his time in Arrente Council. It provides information about his turbulent childhood and the criticism he has faced throughout his life.

Perkins, E. (2017). *Interview with the wife of Charles Perkins*.

This interview was conducted between the 18th and 26th of July via email. Via email, I asked Eileen Perkins, Charles' wife, questions regarding his personality, the impact of the Freedom Ride, his involvement in the OAA and DAA and the legacy he left for his people. This interview was very useful and gave me a different perspective into both his work and family life.

Read, P. (August 11th 2017). *Interview with Author of Charles Perkins Biography*

Author of Charles Perkins, Peter Read, a renowned academic and historian, gave information on Charles Perkins tenure at the DAA, the key outcomes of the Freedom Ride and how the media portrayed Charles. In the interview he also mentioned how Charles had influenced other Aboriginal activists and what achievements resulted in Charles being named a National Treasure. This interview provided me great information which I used throughout my essay.

Burney L. (2016). *Charles Perkins Oration*.

In this Oration Linda Burney, the first Aboriginal in the House of Representatives, talks about Charles Perkins and his dedication to human rights and social justice for Indigenous Australians. She talks about the “fire in the belly” and what the next 50 years should hold for Aboriginal Affairs.

Secondary Sources:

Books, Reports and Journal Articles

Adair and Stronach, D. (2014). *Kwementyaye (Charles) Perkins: Indigenous Soccer Player and Australian Political Activist*. 7th ed. Canberra, pp. 25-27.

This book talks most in depth about the soccer career of Charles and the impact soccer had on him. It also talks about the racial barriers that sports can break down.

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Central Land Council History. (2015). *Central Land Council Annual Report*, 3, pp. 2-3.

This annual report talks about the history of the Central Land Council including Charles’

position as Chairman. It also provides the impact of the Land Council for land rights.

Coughlan, F. (1991). Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council. *Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council*, pp.pg 12-25.

This article was very useful and provide extensive detail of the history of reserves and missions and state law in regard to Indigenous Australians. The article touched upon the Bungalow and the town that Charles Perkins lived in after the Bungalow called Rainbow Town.

Curthoys, A. (2002). *Freedom Ride: A Freedom Rider Remember*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin
Ann Curthoys' book relives the experience of the Freedom Ride, drawing largely upon a diary written during the journey and the recollections of indigenous and non-indigenous people who were involved. Contemporary media reports as well as secondary accounts supplement the story, drawing attention to the impact of the ride and highlighting the ways in which the events have been remembered.

Horton, D. and McKenzie, K. (1994). *The encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia*. Canberra, ACT: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

This book provides an array of information about policies, organisations that concern Indigenous Australians. It provides information about the DAA and ADC and the impact these organizations had for Indigenous Australians

Moree Council Ordinance. (2009). [eBook] New South Wales: Department of Environment, p.Pg 1. Available at: <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/0d8b4121-1e89-4fae-849f-bc770287b91c/files/moree-baths.pdf> [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

Written by the Department of Environment, this details the Ordinance that was in place in

Moree when the SAFA protested outside their baths as apart of their Freedom Ride. It also what the country town in like today and the current situation for Indigenous Australians living there.

Read, P. (1990). *Charles Perkins*. Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin.

Both a reliable and useful source this book provides pivotal information about Charles' childhood in Alice Springs to his role in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. It contains some primary sources including interviews, archives and some secondary sources. I used some quotes from the interviews conducted by Peter Read in my essay.

Roberts, D. (1994). Self-determination and the Struggle for Aboriginal Equality. *Aboriginal Australia from University of Queensland*, 15, pp. 212-236 Chapter 14.

This university article gives information into the Aboriginal policy of self determination. He provides a history of the policy and the definition of self determination. Roberts also talks about the impact of the policy on Government policy and Aboriginal Affairs.

The 1967 referendum; race, power and the Australian. (2007). Canberra, A.C.T.: Aboriginal Studies Press.

This text gives information on the 1967 referendum and the events which led up to it. Briefly, it touches upon the Freedom Ride as being an event which inspired the 1967 referendum. It also mentions the legacy of the 1967 referendum and what it means to Indigenous Australians today.

Documentaries

The Foundation of Aboriginal Affairs 1963-1977. (2002). [video] Directed by T. J Russell.

Australia: Australian Screen.

This documentary intercuts interviews with historical footage to tell the history of The Foundation of Aboriginal Affairs, an organisation significant in the push for the 1967 referendum. This interesting documentary essentially documents the centralisation of an organised resistance and the self-determination that allowed Indigenous peoples to harness resources to provide services to Indigenous peoples in need of assistance.

The Life and Times of Charles Perkins (Series: Firestarter.) (2009). [DVD] Directed by R.

Perkins. Australia.

This documentary traces the life of Charles Perkins from his humble beginnings to his death. Directed by his daughter, Rachel Perkins, this documentary provides a different perspective of his life.

Websites

Farquharson, J. (2017). Obituary - Charles Nelson (Charlie) Perkins - Obituaries

Australia. [online] Oa.anu.edu.au. Available at: <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/perkins-charles-nelson-charlie->

[810?query=occupation:%22Indigenous+rights+activist%2Fsupporter%22&rpp=200](http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/perkins-charles-nelson-charlie-810?query=occupation:%22Indigenous+rights+activist%2Fsupporter%22&rpp=200)

[Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

This obituary provides an unbiased recount of the life of Charles Perkins. It details the legacy of he has created and the impact he has had for his people. This source used primary sources (interviews).

Korff, J. (2017). Aboriginal students in higher studies at university. [online] Creative Spirits.

Available at:

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/aboriginal-students-in-higher-studies-at-university> [Accessed 22 Aug. 2017].

This website provided statistical evidence for the university rates for Indigenous Australians in 2014-2016. Optimistically, it showed that university rates have gone up tremendously in the past few years.

Naa.gov.au. (2017). Charles Nelson Perkins - Fact sheet 225 – National Archives of Australia, Australian Government. [online] Available at: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs225.aspx> [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

This provide brief but useful information on the life of Charles Perkins. It provided dates of his birth and death and the mourning name of bestowed upon him after his death.

Nma.gov.au. (2017). Collaborating for Indigenous Rights 1957-1973. [online] Available at: http://www.nma.gov.au/indigenous/people/pagination/charles_perkins [Accessed 21 Aug. 2017].

This provides unbiased information on Charles Perkins contribution to Aboriginal Affairs and the major achievements he has made. It also provided information on his childhood and his opinion on specific issues.

Robert J (2017). Biography - Charles Nelson (Charlie) Perkins - Indigenous Australia. [online] ia.anu.edu.au. Available at: <http://ia.anu.edu.au/biography/perkins-charles-nelson-charlie-810> [Accessed 22 Aug. 2017].

Using Charles Perkins autobiography "A Bastard like Me", he provides in depth information on his education, occupations and residence. He also provides quotes from Charles' biography to further back up as evidence. Despite the fact that it was useful it was bias, as it used only Charles' autobiography as a source.

Theorderofaustralia.asn.au. (2017). Order of Australia Association: Official National Website Homepage. [online] Available at: <http://www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au> [Accessed 23 Aug. 2017].

This website provides a list of names of people who over the past 60 years have been awarded the Order of Australia, a prestigious award. Names include Charles Perkins, who was awarded it in 1987

Glossary

Half castes: a term now considered derogatory for people of Aboriginal and white parentage.⁵³

Peaceful-picketing: picketing is the act of two or more people congregating together at a particular place for the purpose of informing all who come by of their vies and opinion on the matter of controversy.⁵⁴

Colour bars: a social and legal system in which people of different races are separated and not given the same rights and opportunities⁵⁵

Assimilation policy: The policy of assimilation means in the view of all Australian governments that all Aborigines and part-aborigines are expected eventually to attain the

⁵³ <http://www.australianstogether.org.au/stories/detail/the-stolen-generations>

⁵⁴ https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/HRC_assembly_Hale.doc

⁵⁵ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/opportunity>

same manner of living as other Australians and to live as members of a single Australian community⁵⁶

Self-determination: While there is no commonly agreed definition of self-determination, it is generally defined as “the right of Indigenous Australians to make decisions on issues relating to them, and to manage their own affairs.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/catalogue_resources/18801.pdf

⁵⁷ Roberts, D. (1994). Self-determination and the Struggle for Aboriginal Equality. *Aboriginal Australia from University of Queensland*, 15, pp. 212-236 Chapter 14.