
Civil Rights Movement In The Us And Australia Throughout The 1950's And 1960's

Civil Rights Essay

Throughout the 1950's and 1960's in the US and Australia there were changes that were beginning to happen. The changes are known as the 'Civil Rights Movement'. The civil rights movement was a movement where black people in the United States wanted to end racism, have more freedom and have the same rights as every other person. These movements heavily influenced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to do the same thing in Australia and get the rights, freedoms and the land they deserve.

The civil rights movement in the United States had many African Americans behind it. The movement had many powerful events such as speeches and people standing up for themselves. These speeches and other forms of protesting were peaceful which meant no form of violence at all which worked because the white people had no reason to fight them or cause any form of violence because they were not. A powerful speech was done by Martin Luther King. It was a peaceful protest and worked very efficiently because of his meaningful words and how there was no violence at all. An evidential event of someone standing up for themselves was when a lady by the name of Rosa Parks. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was asked to vacate her seat for a white man, and she didn't and continued to sit down and stand up for herself. The civil rights movement was a very strong, powerful movement and was pushed forwards by peaceful protests, speeches like MLK's and acts of self-empowerment where Rosa Parks chose to not stand up for a white man.

The civil rights movement throughout the 1950's and 60's in the US heavily influenced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to start doing the same things as the black people in the US to get the same treatment. They followed the African Americans by doing things peacefully and without violence. The indigenous people had more than enough reasons to turn violent, but they didn't, and this got the message across better because the white people just had to listen. One reason for them to be violent is the 'stolen generation'. The stolen generation was between 1910 and 1970, children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decent were taken away from their families to interbreed them with white people to lessen the population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. On February 13, 2008, Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd made a speech apologising to all Indigenous peoples of Australia for the actions of previous governments. The Aboriginals were influenced in many ways by what the black people in the US did peacefully like people taking action and events to raise awareness. In 1963 the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory went to the Australian parliament and presented the Yirrkala Bark petitions. These petitions were in the native language along with an English translation and were passed to the Australian House of Representatives. The petition said that the land belonged to the Yolngu people and they could no longer farm minerals from the land. These were a big step forwards in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people getting original ownership of the land. Another peaceful way of getting the message across was the 'Australian Freedom Ride'. In February of 1965 a group of students from the University of Sydney known as the Student Action for Aborigines' drove a bus around country towns in NSW to raise awareness and promote the fact that Indigenous people across Australia should have

equal rights to the white people and have their land back. This was run by a man by the name of Charlie Perkins who was an Aboriginal activist and the first Aboriginal Australian to graduate from the University of Sydney in 1965. This bus ride raised awareness for the segregation that Indigenous people across Australia were facing and worked well because we were not realising the other side of the story. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were heavily influenced by the African American people of the US by doing very similar peaceful things they conveyed the message that they were trying to send off well.

The civil rights movement in Australia was very effective and had many positive lasting impacts on Australian society even to this day. There were many things that happened to achieve this such as the 1967 referendum, the Land Rights and Native Title acts and the apology speech by prime minister Kevin Rudd in 2008. These acts worked very well in creating a more equal, harmonious Australia because they were peaceful and non-violent. On the 27 May 1967, the Australian government held a referendum as to whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should have equal rights to non-Indigenous Australians. The vote had a huge turnout and 90% of the Australian population voted yes for Indigenous people to have equal rights to non-Indigenous people. This was and still is the largest yes vote in Australia's history. This was a massive achievement for Indigenous people and such a big moment for all the activists because of how long it had taken to achieve this. Eddie Mabo was a Torres Strait Islander who fought and won a legal case for Indigenous people to be rightful owners of the land. The legal proceedings started on May 20, 1982 and Eddie won the case on June 3, 1992. Unfortunately, Eddie passed away on January 21, 1992 but this was huge for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders because the Land Rights and Native Title acts meant that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were now the rightful original inhabitants and owners of the land.

The US civil rights movement was a big factor in the civil rights movement in Australia because Indigenous admired what Black people had done in the US and saw no reason that they couldn't do the same thing. Indigenous people did many of the same techniques the African Americans had done because they had worked. These techniques included peaceful protesting, like the Freedom Ride in 1965 which raised awareness, petitions, like the Yirrkala Bark petitions, court cases, like the one where Eddie Mabo took the Queensland government to court for land rights for Indigenous people and referendum like the very important and impactful one in 1967 which had a 90% yes vote for Indigenous Australians to have equal rights non-Indigenous Australians. These techniques worked because they were non-violent and promoted peace and equality for everyone no matter what race.