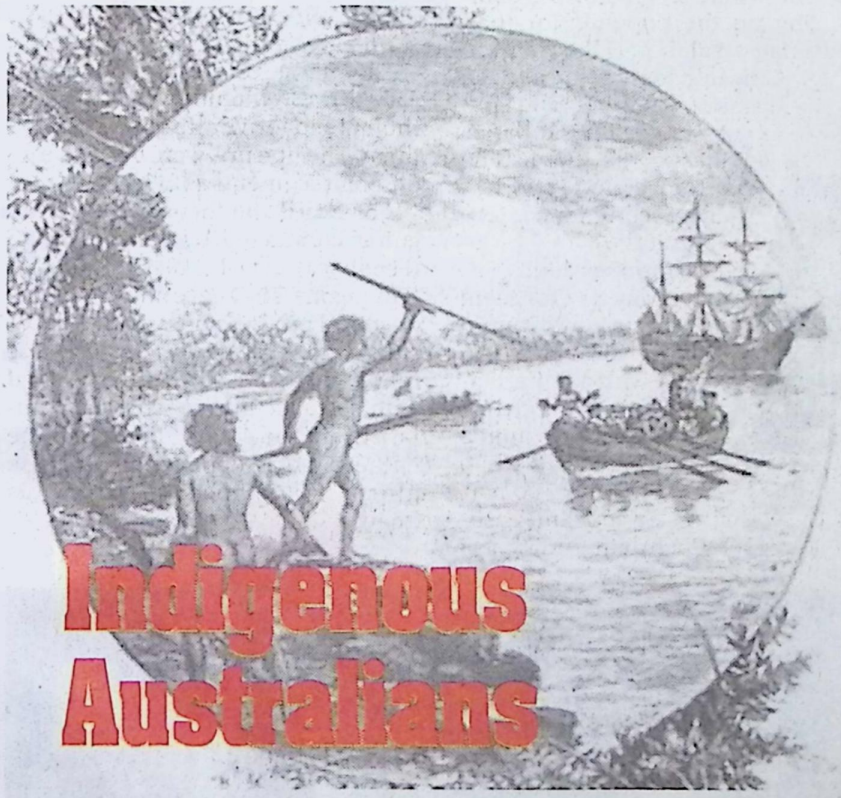


Indigenous Australians

Indigenous Australians or **Aborigines** are the first human inhabitants of the Australian continent and its nearby islands. The term includes both the **Torres Strait Islanders** and the **Aboriginal People**, who together make up about 2.5% of Australia's population. The latter term is usually used to refer to those who live in mainland Australia, Tasmania, and some of the other adjacent islands. The Torres Strait Islanders are indigenous Australians who live in the Torres Strait Islands between Australia and New Guinea. Indigenous Australian are recognised to have arrived between 40,000 and 70,000 years ago though the lower end of the range has wider acceptance.

The term *Indigenous Australians* encompasses many diverse communities and societies, and these are further divided into local communities with unique cultures. Fewer than 200 of the languages of these groups remain in use all but 20 are highly endangered. Prior to the arrival of European settlers the population of Indigenous Australians was estimated to be up to 1 million. The distribution of people was similar to that of the current Australian population, with the majority living in the south east centered along the Murray River.

Although the culture and lifestyle of Aboriginal groups have much in common, Aboriginal society is not a single entity. The diverse Aboriginal communities have different modes of subsistence, cultural practices, languages, and technologies. However, these peoples also share a larger set of traits, and are otherwise seen as being broadly related. A collective identity as Indigenous Australians is recognised and exists along names from the indigenous languages which are commonly used to identify groups based on regional geography and other affiliations. These include: *Koori* (or *Koorie*) in New South Wales and Victoria; *Murri* in Queensland; *Noongar* in southern Western Australia; *Yamatji* in Central Western Australia; *Wangkai* in the Western Australian Goldfields; *Nunga* in southern South Australia; *Anangu* in northern South Australia, and neighbouring parts of Western Australia and Northern Territory; *Yapa* in western central Northern Territory; *Yolngu* in eastern Arnhem Land (NT) and *Palawah* (or *Pallawah*) in Tasmania.

These larger groups may be further subdivided; for example, Anangu (meaning a person from Australia's central desert region) recognises localised subdivisions such as Yankunytjatjara, Pitjantjatjara, Ngaanyatjara, Luritja and Antikirinya.

The word aboriginal, appearing in English since at least the 17th century and meaning "first or earliest known, indigenous," (Latin: Ab meaning from and origine; the beginning) has been used in Australia to describe its indigenous peoples as early as 1789. It soon became capitalised and employed as the common name to refer to all Indigenous Australians. Strictly speaking, "Aborigine" is the noun and "Aboriginal" the adjectival form; however the latter is often also employed to stand as a noun. Note that the use of "Aborigine(s)" or "Aboriginal(s)" in this sense, i.e. as a noun, has acquired negative, even derogatory connotations among some sectors of the community, who regard it as insensitive, and even offensive.[3] The more acceptable and correct expression is "Aboriginal Australians" or "Aboriginal people", though even this is sometimes regarded as an expression to be avoided because of its historical associations with colonialism. "Indigenous Australians" has found increasing acceptance, particularly since the 1980s.

The Torres Strait Islanders possess a heritage and cultural history distinct from mainland indigenous traditions; the eastern Torres Strait Islanders in particular are related to the Papuan peoples of New Guinea, and speak a Papuan language. Accordingly, they are not generally included under the designation "Aboriginal Australians." This has been another factor in the promotion of the more inclusive term "Indigenous Australians."

-Source:Wikipedia.com