

**My Place for Teachers  
Decade Overview 1960s**

Decade Summary	1968
<p>The 1960s was a decade in which the children of the post-war era began reaching maturity and exerting their influences and ideologies onto the Australian cultural landscape. These influences were reflected by large-scale protests and public demonstrations against conscription, the Vietnam War and established rules and restrictive morals. They campaigned for independence and equality of women in the workplace, fairer wages, a free accessible system of education, and the recognition of and a struggle for rights of Indigenous Australians.</p> <p>This was the era of extraordinary popularity for the US singing star Elvis Presley and the British band the Beatles, which toured Australia in 1964. The youth generation evolved as a strong market to determine the direction of popular culture. Television and radio shortened the 'tyranny of distance' for Australians and the people emulated the latest fashions, fads and fancies of their European and United States counterparts. The Australian public embraced president JF Kennedy and mourned his death, they followed the latest fashions from Carnaby Street, London, and supported every effort to modernise their lives.</p> <p>The year 1966 saw the first visit to Australia by a US president Lyndon Baines Johnson. He came to boost support for the USA's military presence in Vietnam. The catch cry heralded by prime minister Harold Holt (1908–67) during Johnson's visit was 'all the way with LBJ'. Young men who won the conscription lottery of birthdays (the draft) were trained and transported to Vietnam to fight in a foreign land.</p>	<p><b>January</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senator John Gorton becomes prime minister after the disappearance of Harold Holt, presumed drowned off Portsea, Victoria.</li> <li>• The Tet Offensive is launched during the Vietnam War. North Vietnamese troops attempt to take significant South Vietnamese strongholds in the one offensive action.</li> </ul> <p><b>February</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Draft Resistance Movement is formed. They declare that the group not only opposes conscription, but intends to destroy it.</li> <li>• WC Wentworth is appointed the first minister for Aboriginal Affairs, although he has no department under his control.</li> </ul> <p><b>May</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mineral investment boom begins on the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX).</li> <li>• The Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi visits Australia.</li> </ul> <p><b>December</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The breathalyser test for drink-driving is introduced in NSW.</li> </ul>

## History and Politics

<b>The Vietnam War</b>	<p>In 1961 and 1962, Ngo Dinh Diem, leader of the government in South Vietnam, repeatedly requested security assistance from the USA and its allies. In 1962, prime minister Robert Menzies sent 30 Australian military advisers to Vietnam to help train the South Vietnamese Army. In November 1964, the Commonwealth Parliament reintroduced compulsory military service (the National Service Scheme) for 20-year-old men.</p> <p>By early 1965, due to South Vietnam's inability to resist communist insurgents from North Vietnam, the USA commenced a major escalation of the war. By the end of the year, the USA had committed 200,000 troops to the conflict and had asked its allies to similarly commit troops. Later that year, prime minister Robert Menzies announced the decision to send a battalion of combat troops to Vietnam. The Australian Labor Party (ALP) and its leader Arthur Calwell were strongly opposed to Australia taking part in the war. In June, Menzies declared that Australia was at war in Vietnam.</p> <p>Sir Robert Menzies retired in January 1966 and was succeeded as prime minister and Liberal Party leader by the former treasurer, Harold Holt. After winning the 1966 elections, Holt increased Australian troop numbers in Vietnam to 6,500 and sent conscripts there for the first time.</p> <p>In 1966, the Battle of Long Tan ended with 18 Australian soldiers being killed, 24 wounded and 245 Vietcong killed. In 1967, Australian troops fighting in Vietnam increased to 8,300. In 1969, a gallup poll showed a change in attitude towards the war, with 55 per cent of voters surveyed in favour of Australian troops being withdrawn and 40 per cent wanting the troops to remain.</p>
<b>Decimal currency</b>	<p>On 14 February 1966, the first banknotes of Australia's new decimal currency were issued. A keen monarchist, Robert Menzies had wanted to call the new unit 'the Royal', but this was met with little enthusiasm. The name of the currency issue became the 'dollar'.</p> <p>The decision to change to decimal currency provided a challenging opportunity to design a completely new series of coins incorporating typically Australian motifs. The 1, 2, 5, 10 and 20 dollar denominations for notes were chosen on the belief that they represented the best combination to make up any given amount with the least number of notes.</p>
<b>Funding non-government schools</b>	<p>In May 1964, the Menzies government brought in legislation that provided for government financial grants to non-government schools for science-teaching facilities. Church schools would now receive direct 'state aid' for the first time in a century, since the introduction of 'compulsory, secular and free' education acts in the 1870s and 1880s.</p> <p>The Catholic church had established its own primary and secondary schools based on Catholic teaching orders, but had been denied government assistance for more than a century. Until 1963, the Australian Labor Party, which was the party of choice for many Catholics (despite the formation of the Democratic Labor Party), was opposed to government assistance for church schools. By the 1960s, many Catholic communities could no longer rely on bazaars and fetes to fund increasingly costly schooling. The nature of schooling had changed; one teacher in front of a large class of 60 students or more became a scene of the past.</p> <p>The Catholic community launched political campaigns as a measure for change. In 1962, one such incident was the closing of the Catholic schools in Goulburn, not far from Canberra, thus putting unbearable strain on the local state schools with increased enrolments.</p>
<b>Abolishing the White Australia Policy</b>	<p>By 1965, both major political parties had removed 'White Australia' from their political platforms. Prime minister Harold Holt became convinced that Australia's immigration policy could no longer be based on the racial exclusion of non-European people.</p>

	<p>One of the first legislative changes Holt implemented upon becoming prime minister was to allow a number of non-European 'temporary residents' to become permanent residents and Australian citizens according to the same rules that apply to European migrants. This was the beginning of the end of the White Australia Policy that had shaped Australia's approach to immigration since Federation.</p> <p>During the 1940s and 1950s, most migration to Australia included not only British but other Europeans ethnic communities. But now new communities from countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt began to arrive. By the early 1970s, more than 5 per cent of the annual intake of Australia's immigrants was from Asia.</p>
<p><b>Recognising the rights of Indigenous Australians</b></p>	<p>In 1960, the Department of Native Affairs in Western Australia issued a directive to cease removing Aboriginal children from their parents to be placed on mission stations for education.</p> <p>In 1961, North Queensland activists were instrumental in instigating the first public inquiry into 'floggings'; an aspect of the management regime on the state-run Hope Vale reserve.</p> <p>In 1962, the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act</i> was amended to allow Indigenous Australians the right to enrol and to vote in federal elections. Some states were reluctant to enforce this ruling and delayed providing the same rights for state and local elections.</p> <p>On 12 February 1965, activist Charles Perkins led the famous Freedom Ride bus trip with a group of Sydney University students to publicise the segregation of and discrimination against Indigenous Australians in NSW.</p> <p>In 1966, Vincent Lingiari led approximately 200 Gurindji stockmen, women and children off Wave Hill cattle station in protest against intolerable working conditions and poor wages. They established a camp at Wattie Creek and began a nine-year struggle, which developed into a successful claim for the return of traditional Gurindji lands.</p> <p>In May 1967, 90.8 per cent of Australian voters chose 'Yes' in a national referendum that proposed, firstly, to make laws apply to all Australians and not exclude Indigenous peoples, and secondly, to include Indigenous peoples in census counts. This occurred after a decade-long campaign to remove discriminatory provisions from the Constitution of Australia, including several massive petitions and hundreds of public meetings campaigning for Indigenous Australians.</p>

## Society and Culture

### 60's Pop culture

On 4 July 1960, the quiz TV show *Pick-a-Box* began being sponsored by BP. It was one of the longest-running and most popular Australian TV programs.

In 1963, an American physicist, Julius Sumner Miller (1909–87), appeared in his own science-based ABC TV series called *Why is it So?* The show was a hit, partly due to Miller's enthusiasm and also for his way of presenting science as 'fun'. The program was broadcast from 1963 to 1986.

In 1964, at the height of Beatlemania, the Beatles toured Australia. In Adelaide, the band was greeted by an estimated 300,000 people (approximately one-third of the city's population) lining the 15-kilometre route from the airport.

In 1965, the Seekers folk group produced the single *I'll never find another you*. It was the first Australian single to sell a million copies.

In June 1969, the live rock musical *Hair* had its first performance in Australia at the Sydney Metro Theatre. In one scene, the cast appeared naked on stage.

In the late 1960s, Australian television was connected to the international satellite system. Along with the rest of the world, Australians could now watch world events televised live, such as the first moon landing in 1969.

On 30 October 1965, the British supermodel, Jean Shrimpton, triggered an international controversy when she attended Derby Day at Melbourne's Flemington racecourse in a mini-skirt with no hat, gloves or stockings.

### Anti conscription movement

In November 1964, the Commonwealth Parliament reintroduced compulsory military service (the National Service Scheme). Upon turning 20, if chosen by a lottery system, men were required to serve two years' military service on a full-time basis in regular army units, and could be sent overseas.

In 1965, the Save Our Sons movement was formed seeking the repeal of the *National Service Act 1964* (Cth). Women, including Jean McLean, led it. The Save Our Sons group campaigned against conscription and supported draft resisters, speaking on behalf of conscientious objectors at rallies.

In the same year, Youth Campaign Against Conscription (YCAC) was formed. In 1965, they published an advertisement in *The Australian* newspaper declaring why they opposed conscription. In 1966, prime minister Harold Holt announced that he was going to send national servicemen (conscripts) to Vietnam.

In 1968, the Draft Resistance Movement was formed. The first man to be sent to a civilian jail for non-compliance was John Zarb. The anti-conscription movement became stronger between 1966 and 1969. In June, Simon Townsend (host of the television program *Simon Townsend's Wonderland*) was granted exemption from national service due to his imprisonment for being a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War.

### Equality for women

In 1965, while publicans still faced fines of between £10 and £20 pounds if they served women in public bars, Merle Thornton (mother of Sigrid Thornton) and Rosalie Bogner chained themselves to the public front bar of Toowong's Regatta Hotel in Queensland to protest against gender segregation.

	<p>In 1969, feminist and political activist Zelda D'Aprano began working for the Meatworkers' Union. The meat industry was used as a test case for equal pay for women. When the case failed, D'Aprano chained herself to the doors of the Arbitration Court building to protest against the decision.</p> <p>In December 1969, the Arbitration Commission granted women equal pay for equal work. The case established an important first principle that affected 18 per cent of women workers, mostly teachers and nurses.</p>
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## Science and Technology

### Infrastructure

In 1960, the Chadstone Shopping Centre in Melbourne was opened by the Victorian premier Henry Bolte (1908–90), and became the largest shopping centre in Australia.

In the same year, the NSW premier Robert Heffron opened Warragamba Dam after 12 years of construction. The Warragamba was the largest mass gravity dam in the southern hemisphere, and held about four times the volume of water as Sydney Harbour. It still provides more than 80 per cent of Sydney's water supply.

In 1962, the final sections of the Sturt Highway were sealed with tar. This was the first time an entirely sealed road connected Adelaide and Sydney.

Between 1963 and 1972, the Ord River irrigation scheme in the Kimberley region of Western Australia was constructed.

On 3 March 1966, a public protest was held to support Jørn Utzon, the architect of the Sydney Opera House, who had resigned his commission claiming he was owed payment from the NSW Government. About 1,000 people marched on the state parliament house. Patrick White, who later won the Nobel prize for literature, along with Australia's foremost architect Harry Seidler, presented premier Robert Askin with a 3,000-signature petition demanding Utzon's reinstatement.

### The mining boom

In the 1960s, Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP) in partnership with Esso Standard Oil found large quantities of natural gas and oil in Bass Strait. It soon supplied 70 per cent of Australia's petroleum. Around the same time, it began mining iron ore, manganese and coal for export. Colloquially, it was termed 'the big Australian' and found international recognition.

In 1963, Aboriginal people at Yirrkala in the Northern Territory sent a petition on bark to the federal parliament protesting about mining corporation Nabalco's plans to mine bauxite on their sacred land.

In April 1964, the Moonie–Brisbane oil pipeline was opened, and Australia's first commercial oilfield came into production.

In July 1964, Western Australian Petroleum struck oil and gas on Barrow Island, northwest of Exmouth. The field was brought into production in 1967.

In September 1964, the Australian Worker's Union and lobbyist Pat Mackie led an industrial dispute against Mt Isa Mines after a disagreement on how the wealth of the field should be shared. As a result of this eight-month dispute, the mine temporarily closed and the Queensland Government declared a state of emergency in the region.

In January 1966, nickel ore deposits were discovered at Kambalda, WA, by Western Mining Corporation. Shortly afterwards, the corporation began construction of an extraction plant for processing the ore.

In March 1969, natural gas was first piped from Moonie to Brisbane, the first city in Australia to receive a supply of natural gas.

### Communications

In 1960, less than five years after it arrived in Australia, nearly 70 per cent of homes in Sydney and Melbourne had television.

In 1962, Robert Menzies opened the Sydney–Canberra–Melbourne coaxial cable system, the first major step in the direction of 'subscriber trunk

	<p>dialing' (STD).</p> <p>In 1963, COMPAC (the Commonwealth Pacific Cable) was opened. It connected Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Hawaii and Vancouver in Canada.</p> <p>In 1963, the federal government gave approval for the USA to set up a naval communication station at North West Cape, WA, and a space tracking station at Tidbinbilla near Canberra.</p> <p>In 1969, the Parkes Radio telescope in NSW plotted the progress of the first crewed flight to the Moon and sent pictures of the Moon walk around the world.</p>
<p><b>Railway expansion</b></p>	<p>In April 1962, the official Sydney–Melbourne standard-gauge train left Sydney for Melbourne. For the first time in 80 years, passengers were able to remain on the one train for the entire journey, and no longer had to change trains at Albury due to differences in rail gauges.</p> <p>In November 1969, the final section of the Sydney to Perth standard-gauge railway line was completed. Two months later a goods train made the first-ever run over the entire coast-to-coast line. A month later, the first passenger train carried passengers on the Indian–Pacific line between Sydney and Perth.</p>