



[ROOM 3]

Large
print
captions

memorial
and
resistance

eight days in
Kamay

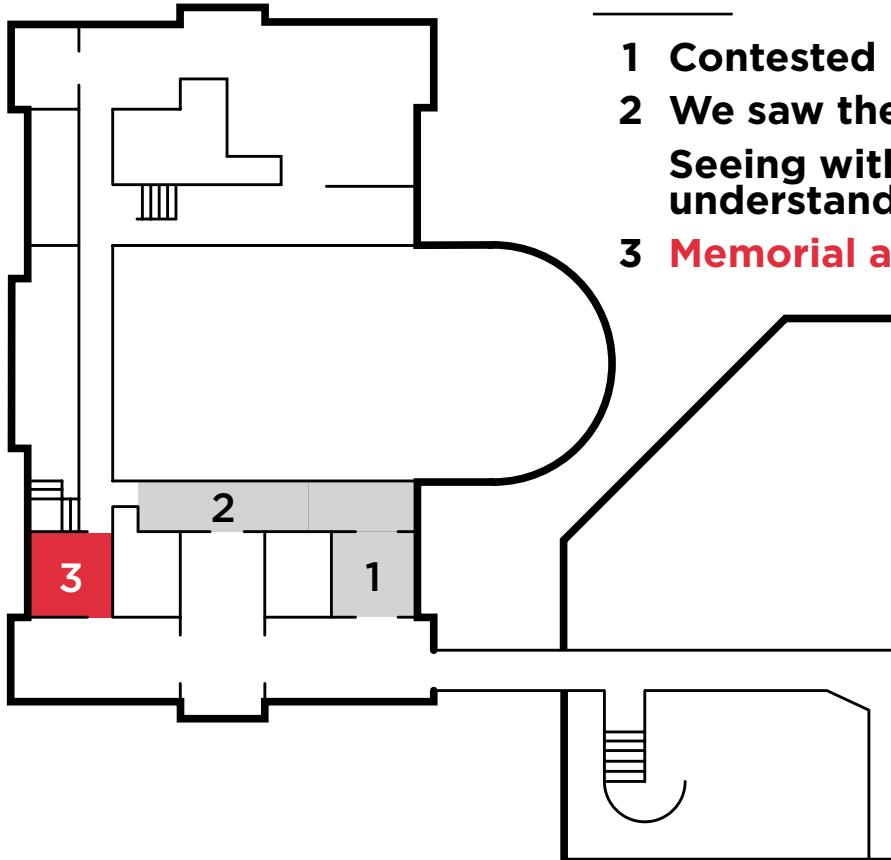
Sensitivity notice

This exhibition explores the topic of first contact and features the names, images and voices of people who are now deceased. It refers to historical events and violence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visitors may find distressing, and includes historical documents that contain words and descriptions which are now considered offensive.

The State Library of NSW respectfully acknowledges the trauma of this history and its ongoing impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Eight Days in Kamay Rooms

- 1 Contested legacies
- 2 We saw them coming
Seeing without understanding
- 3 Memorial and resistance



Memorial and resistance

For the 200th anniversary of the *Endeavour*'s visit to Australia's east coast, celebrations and commemorations were held across the nation. It culminated in a re-enactment on 29 April 1970, the day the ship entered Kamay (Botany Bay) and sent a landing party ashore.

But for Indigenous Australians, the anniversary was not cause for celebration. Indigenous leaders urged their communities to boycott all the events and declared 29 April a 'Day of Mourning'. Wearing red headbands to symbolise the blood shed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since the arrival of the British in 1770, they rallied the evening before, and spent the night in silent vigil. During the re-enactment at Kurnell the following afternoon, they gathered to lay wreaths on the opposite side of the bay.

Many well-known and emerging Indigenous activists were involved in the protest. Together with protests in other state capital cities, it brought considerable attention to the burgeoning Aboriginal land rights movement and the campaign for improved conditions for First Nations people and their communities. It also compelled a re-examination of Australian history and the continuing legacy of colonisation.

The photographs in this room were taken for the weekly *Tribune* newspaper, a long-time supporter of Aboriginal rights and among the media reporting the Day of Mourning protests.

**They are part of a larger *Tribune photo-negative* archive donated to the Library in 1992 and now fully digitised for online access.
They are displayed here courtesy of the Tribune/SEARCH Foundation.**

[VIDEO LABEL]

'Aborigines protest'

screened on *This Day Tonight*, ABC TV, April 1970

Run time: about 6 minutes

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[SECTION THEME]

The night before

On the evening of 28 April 1970, Indigenous leaders from NSW, Queensland and Victoria rallied at Sydney's lower Town Hall, followed by an all-night vigil at Australia Square. They were voicing their resistance to the official celebrations that would take place at Kurnell the following day, and calling for radical change to the treatment and rights of Indigenous Australians.

The public meeting was organised by the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI). Formed in 1958, this was the first national Indigenous rights organisation, and had been highly successful in its campaign supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the 1967 referendum on Aboriginal rights.



[ITEM LABEL]

Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker)

‘It is time Aborigines dug their heels in and said: “This is my land — shift me if you dare.” Our true supporters will stand with us. They’ll never GIVE the land to us, when they can sell it for Yankee dollars. We must take land back, and demand decent employment, housing and health under legislation written by Aborigines and Islanders. If you remain silent, it means you want to see us disappear from the face of the earth. But we are going to fight for our future.’

Queensland activist and poet Kath Walker was Noonuccal woman of Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). Her 1964 poetry collection *We Are Going* was the first book published by an Aboriginal woman. In 1970 she was the Queensland state secretary of FCAATSI. Speaking at the Town Hall rally, she wears a plaque around her neck inscribed, ‘Discarded Government Property’.

ON 161/Item 532; FL4564189. Quote from *Tribune*, 6 May 1970



[ITEM LABEL]

Paul Coe

‘Cook was directly responsible for the subjugation and suppression of the Aboriginal People of Australia, whereas, the White Australian Establishment is directly responsible for the exploitation and destruction of a unique race, and their culture, today.’

Paul Coe is a Wiradjuri man originally from Cowra, NSW. In 1970 he was an art student at East Sydney Technical College and a passionate activist for Aboriginal legal rights. Coe was involved with the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra, and he helped establish and later chaired the Aboriginal Legal Service in Redfern. He went on to study law and became a barrister.

ON 161/Item 534; FL4565892. Quote 13 April 1970, from Alan Roberts Sydney University Broadside collection, HF 2014/33



[ITEM LABEL]

John Newfong

‘ Low Wages. No wages.
Atrophy and ill health.
A landless people in
our fathers’ land!
For the last 200 years,
this, unfortunately, has been the
“badge of all our tribe”. ’

John Newfong was Australia’s first mainstream Indigenous journalist. A Ngugi man, originally from Brisbane, he had been the campaign secretary for the Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and actively supported the 1967 Referendum campaign. He moved to Sydney when offered a job with the *Sydney Morning Herald*. At the beginning of 1970 he was elected general secretary of FCAATSI.

ON 161/Item 534; FL4565896. Quote from Day of Mourning protest program, April 1970



[ITEM LABEL]

Bert Groves

‘ We object to efforts to make us a cheap carbon copy of the whites. Is their civilisation really better than ours was before the white man came? I’m proud of my Aboriginal ancestry and ashamed of my bit of white ancestry. ’

A Kamilaroi man originally from Caroona, near Quirindi, NSW, Bert Groves was a founding member of FCAATSI and a member of the Sydney-based NSW Aborigines Welfare Board in the early 1950s. He was president of the re-formed Aborigines Progressive Association in 1963, and also worked for the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs, established in 1964 to support Aboriginal people living in Sydney.

ON 161/Item 533; FL4567257. Quote from *Tribune*, 6 May 1970



[ITEM LABEL]

Pastor Frank Roberts

‘How can we endorse them when today the Aboriginal child mortality rate is one of the highest in the world? After 200 years of European Settlement, the Aboriginal has been left very demoralised.’

Frank Roberts was a Bundjalung man from Cabbage Tree Island, Richmond River, NSW. His father, Frank Roberts snr, had also been a pastor, committed to improving the living conditions and wellbeing of Aboriginal communities in the Lismore area. Roberts jnr served on the Anglican Board of Missions between 1968 and 1974.

ON 161/Item 532; FL4564185. Quote from *Tribune*, 11 February 1970



[ITEM LABEL]

Dulcie Flower

A trained nurse and Meriam woman from the Torres Strait Islands, Dulcie Flower moved to Sydney in 1960 to study midwifery. She was general secretary of FCAATSI in 1968 and, in 1971, helped

establish the Aboriginal Medical Service in Redfern, which gave free medical care to Aboriginal people. In 2019 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to the Indigenous community and to the 1967 Referendum Campaign.

ON 161/Item 532; FL4564220



[ITEM LABEL]

Len Watson

‘We must put aside shame, study and identify with our Aboriginal and Islander culture, otherwise there is no hope for our peoples. Violence is going to start. I don’t want to see it, but it’s coming for sure.’

Len Watson was a member of the Brisbane Tribal Council. He spoke out passionately and candidly about the discrimination and racism experienced by black Australians and lobbied for improved rights and conditions.

ON 161/Item 534; FL4565893. Quote from *Tribune*, 6 May 1970



[ITEM LABEL]

Faith Bandler

‘We have millions of allies around the world today, in the struggle for dignity.’

Faith Bandler was well-known as general secretary of FCAATSI, appearing as its spokesperson for the 1967 referendum campaign for Indigenous rights. Faith's father was a South Sea Islander (from Ambrym Island) and her Australian-born mother had a Scottish-Indian background. Faith was a lifelong advocate for Indigenous rights and a successful author, writing about her life and activist career.

ON 161/Item 535; FL4565894. Quote from *Tribune*, 6 May 1970



[ITEM LABEL]

Red headbands symbolising the blood spilt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders since the arrival of the British in 1770 were handed out along with land rights badges at the Town Hall meeting.

ON 161/Item 532; FL4564193



[ITEM LABEL]

Linda 'Trudy' Longbottom

‘The Government should have brought the Queen to La Perouse, to see our conditions of life, and to give us a deed to the land there that is rightly ours.’

Trudy Longbottom was a community leader from La Perouse. She was a staunch land rights campaigner, helping to establish the NSW Aboriginal Land Council in 1977.

ON 161/Item 532; FL4564200. Quote from *Tribune*, 6 May 1970



[ITEM LABEL]

Bruce McGuinness

‘The long years of suppression have taught us we have to come out fighting. We are becoming radical, we inevitably talk about black power, and we will no longer be content with a secondary role in society. We say to the white man: “If you were an Aborigine, would you put up with it?”’

Bruce McGuinness was a Wiradjuri man born in Cootamundra NSW but he spent most of his life in Melbourne. He was a tireless activist for Aboriginal rights, originally associated with the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League. In 1969 he became Victorian state director of FCAATSI.

161/Item 532; FL4564209. Quote from *Tribune*, 6 May 1970



[ITEM LABEL]

Doug Nicholls

‘I know we can proudly hold our own with others if given the chance.’

Sir Douglas Ralph Nicholls, from Yorta Yorta country along the Murray River in southern NSW, was the first Aboriginal Australian to be knighted, in 1972, and the first to serve as a state governor, in 1976–77. Alongside a stellar sporting career as a boxer, sprinter and footballer, he was a committed Christian, an activist and a pioneering campaigner for reconciliation.

ON 161/Item 534; FL4565895. Quote from 1938 Day of Mourning protests, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* online

[SECTION THEME]

The procession

‘It was easily the biggest national protest in Aboriginal history, with participants from all three eastern States; and Aboriginal leaders feel it may mark a significant turning point.’

Margaret Jones, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 April 1970

After an all-night vigil in Australia Square, protesters gathered in Hyde Park, where Aboriginal pastors addressed the crowd in several Aboriginal languages. Then, carrying placards displaying the names of Indigenous nations across Australia, they marched in silent procession up Oxford Street and along Flinders Street to the Captain Cook Hotel at Moore Park, and continued by motorcade to La Perouse.

While the Day of Mourning was reported as the biggest national Aboriginal protest to date, it drew on a long and tireless tradition of activism and protest, including the 1938 Day of Mourning on the 150th anniversary of British settlement in Australia.

[ITEM LABEL]

Carrying placards displaying the names of Indigenous nations from across Australia, and wearing badges supporting Aboriginal land rights, protestors leave Hyde Park and head up Oxford Street in silent procession.

Continuing on foot to Moore Park — following protests at Cooks' Cottage in Melbourne's Fitzroy Gardens the day before, supporters from Melbourne travelled by bus to join the Sydney procession.

Images:

Protesters leave Hyde Park and head up Oxford Street in silent procession.

ON 161/Item 533; FL4567261, FL4567262, FL4567264, FL4567268, FL4567269, FL4567271



[SECTION THEME]

Protest at La Perouse

‘I could have been at Kurnell to shake hands with the Queen, but I chose to be on this side of the bay with my people, to mourn this sad day.’

**community leader Trudy Longbottom,
*Sydney Morning Herald, 30 April 1970***

While the Royal Navy Band played, the Premier and Queen delivered speeches and Cook's 1770 landing was re-enacted at Kurnell, the motorcade of mourners and their supporters arrived across the bay at Frenchmans Beach at La Perouse. An Aboriginal mourning ceremony was led by Pastors Frank Roberts and Doug Nicholls, and poet and activist Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) read a verse of mourning. From the shoreline, wreaths of mourning and remembrance were cast into the water, and from the headland, the protesters turned their back to the royal yacht as it sailed out of the bay.



Image:

Protesters with signs representing Indigenous groups from across Australia form a line at Frenchmans Beach.

29 April 1970

ON 161/Item 535; FL4566407

**Poem read by Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker)
to the crowd at Frenchmans Beach, La Perouse,
29 April 1970:**

Today, at the enactment of Cook's landing,
We, who are the strangers now,
Come with sorrow in our hearts.

The Bora Ring, the Corroboree,
The sacred ceremonies,
Have gone. All gone.

Turned to dust on the land,
That once was ours.

Oh spirits from the unhappy past,
Hear us now.

We come, not to disturb your rest.

We come, to mourn your passing.

You, who paid the price,
When the invaders spilt your blood.

Your present generation comes,
Seeking strength and wisdom in your memory.

The legends tell us,
When our race dies,
So, too, dies the land.

May the Mother of Life,
Wake from her sleeping,
And lead us on to the happy life,
That once was ours.

Oh Mother of Life,
Oh spirits from the unhappy past,
Hear the cries of your unhappy people,
And let it be so...

Oh spirits... Let it be so.



[ITEM LABELS]

Following an Aboriginal mourning ceremony presided over by Pastor Frank Roberts (left), Trudy Longbottom and John Newfong prepare to carry wreaths to the shoreline.

ON 161/Item 535; FL4567295



As wreaths are floated on the waters of Kamay, the protesters call for justice, land rights and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

ON 161/Item 535; FL4567306



After casting their wreaths into the bay, Pastor Doug Nicholls (centre) and protesters make their way to La Perouse Point.

ON 161/Item 535; FL4567314



Protesters stand at La Perouse Point, ready to turn their backs on the royal yacht as it leaves Kamay.

ON 161/Item 535; FL4566413

[SHOWCASE THEME]

The re-enactment ceremony

The centrepiece of the long list of events organised by the Captain Cook Bi-Centenary Celebrations Citizens' Committee was a re-enactment of Cook's landing at Kurnell on the shores of Kamay (Botany Bay). Attended by Queen Elizabeth II and a who's who of dignitaries, the re-enactment included a cast of 54 actors and was televised across Australia.

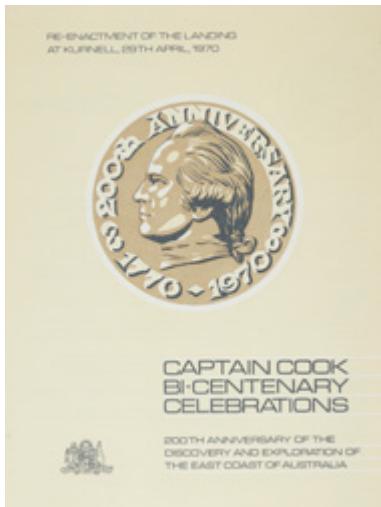
Inspired by descriptions of stingrays in the journals of Cook and members of the *Endeavour* crew, the performance included the spearing of a stingray, which was held in place by scuba divers under a canoe and released on cue.

Original held by NSW State Archives and Records
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Mitchell Library copy, MP/0069

‘We need to remind ourselves from time to time that we are also architects of the future.’

Queen Elizabeth II, 29 April 1970

**View the official ceremony online at
www.sl.nsw.gov.au/kamay**

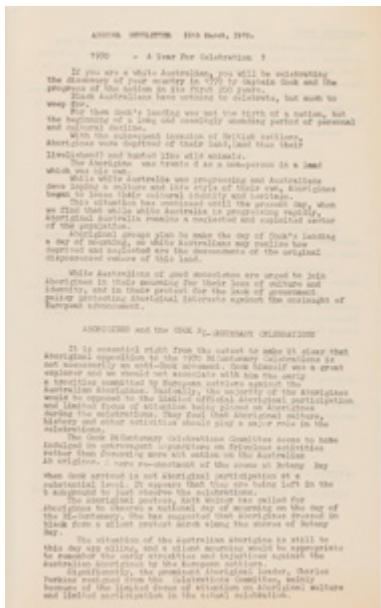


[ITEM LABELS]

Program for the re-enactment ceremony held at Kurnell, 29 April 1970

produced by the Captain Cook Bi-Centenary Celebrations
Citizens' Committee

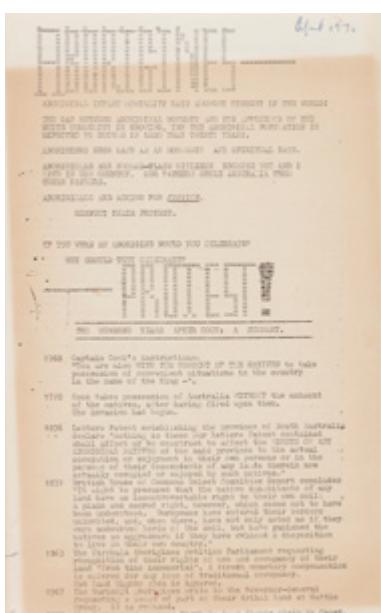
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Program for the Day of Mourning ceremony held at La Perouse, 29 April 1970

produced by the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI)

Alan Roberts, Sydney University Broadside collection,
1968-72. HF 2014/33



Flyer supporting the Day of Mourning and Aboriginal land rights

produced by the Sydney University Students Representative Council (SRC)

Alan Roberts, Sydney University Broadside collection,
1968-72. HE 2014/33

**View the full documents at
www.sl.nsw/kamay-text**



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