

Question 7 - Equality + Difference

Since British Colonisation ~~1901~~, Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders have been treated unequally and their ~~off~~ basic human rights ignored.

In a government policy that ran from 1901-1968, Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their families. This has now been considered an act of genocide whereby children are removed from one group and taken to another group with the intent of destroying that group. The children were placed in missionaries in order to assimilate them into white society. They were forced to practice a spirituality unknown to them, deny their language and speak English, eat strange foods and act in a different way. This form of deculturation had a dramatic effect in the loss of Aboriginal peoples' land, language, laws, spirituality, belief systems and of course loss of self identity.

The events of the past cannot be ignored

when talking about the status of Aboriginal people in Australia today and scenarios for their future. It is obvious that the past actions have lead to ~~an~~ breakdown in Aboriginal society. ~~an~~

Aboriginal people, today face enormous inequalities which have lead to their low socio-economic status. Employment rates are low, Education rates are low, Drug use rates are high and life expectancy for an Aboriginal person is much lower compared to the rest of the Australian population. All of these statistics have placed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a priority population group in Australia. In order to reduce inequalities, problems such as poor access to Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, Lack of education specific to Aboriginal culture and heritage (would also increase self identity) and forms of compensation need to be addressed and acted upon.

~~By 1968~~ In 1968, Aboriginal people were given citizenship rights. 34 years later, (today) they are still trying to have these rights upheld. This is a huge form of inequality as all citizens should have the same rights regardless of their culture or ethnicity. They also need rights to protect their cultural heritage and prevent acts of assimilation.

The government has recognised the past as an act of genocide and a gross violation of Human rights. They have also recognised what needs to be done to reduce inequalities, increase socio-economic status and give Aboriginal people a sense of identity, (the Bringing Them Home Report), the problem is that this report lies gathering dust somewhere - nothing is being done!

Reconciliation is ultimately a people based movement. We as people put the government in control and we can remove them and take away their control. This means that

In order to provide a promising future for Aboriginal people, community based initiatives must be established, partnerships must be made and prejudice and discrimination must be forgotten.

Aboriginal people continue to lack authority and power. They were controlled by the state in 1901, and still are today due to inequalities. There is a lack of Aboriginal people in powers of position such as members of parliament and police officers. Aboriginal people need to have more control over their lives, to be given self-determination in order to give them a sense of identity. Once again this could easily happen (Aboriginals gain control) with the help of both the communities and Government.

In the ~~70~~ 1970's and 80's there was an increase in the rights of Aboriginal people eg. Mabo judgement, yet today, Aboriginal people have only gained 0.2% of their

land back. This is a gross violation of human rights as they are not being given what is rightfully theirs, due to bias media coverage. The Australian population has a negative attitude towards land rights. They see it as Aboriginal people stealing ~~THEIR~~ land. These attitudes are based on prejudice.

Over the past 10 years, there has been an increased awareness on Aboriginal culture, history and spirituality, ^{in Australian society}. This is a positive step forwards to reducing inequalities and improving economic status of Aboriginal people, as the more people know about each other, the less likely the opportunity for discrimination and prejudice.

As the inequalities in human rights, the low socio-economic status and the lack of identity experienced by Aboriginal people today leads to an unpromising future, (passed down in generations through socialization) it needs to be changed

Aspects of change have occurred ~~and~~^{and}
~~identified~~ problems have been identified. This
means that the future looks more promising
as these problems can now be solved
by not only the Government, but all
Australian peoples.