Unit 2 Rights and freedoms
(1945–the present)

Introduction to rights and freedoms

The 20th century was a century of social change. Key events of World War II – such as the Holocaust – had highlighted the inequalities that existed around the world. They were such extreme examples of discrimination and persecution that the horror of them prompted many individuals around the world to stand up and demand freedom and equal rights for all. The United Nations formed out of the ashes of World War II and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted.

In Australia, an Aboriginal rights movement emerged from the 1930s onwards – celebrating major victories in the 1960s – as Aboriginal people achieved equal citizenship and were entitled to vote in federal elections for the first time.

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chapter 10

Source 1 The Aboriginal Tent Embassy on the lawns of Old Parliament House in Canberra was established in 1972 to protest against the Australian government's refusal to recognise Aboriginal land rights. Today, it still stands as a reminder of the struggle for Aboriginal rights and freedoms.

10A

How did the outcomes of World War II shape the modern world?

1 text to come

10B

In what ways have people fought for rights and freedoms since 1945?

1 text to come

UNIT 2 Rights and freedoms (1945–the present)

This unit is MANDATORY:
• Rights and freedoms.
It must be completed by all students.

10.1 How did the consequences of World War II shape the modern world?

The aftermath of World War II in Europe

After World War II, Germany was divided into four zones of occupation (see Source 1). Each sector was occupied and administered by the armed forces of one of the Allied powers. Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States all controlled separate parts of the country and the capital city of Berlin was also divided in this way.

After the war it became clear that the communist government of the Soviet Union was keen to expand its authority in the region. It set out to achieve this by influencing the governments of a number of countries in central and eastern Europe that the Russian Army had liberated during the German retreat in the final days of the war. These countries became Soviet 'satellite states' meaning that although they were officially independent, they were heavily influenced by the Russian government and military. Russian satellite states included Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Albania. The nation of Yugoslavia formed at the end of World War I also emerged from World War II as an independent communist state allied with the Soviet Union.

The division of Germany

In 1949 the British, French and American occupation zones in Germany were combined to create a new country called the Federal Republic of Germany (or West Germany). That same year, the Soviet zone was officially renamed the German Democratic Republic (or East Germany). A patrolled border fence was erected between East and West Germany and people living in the Soviet occupation zone at this time were no longer permitted to leave (see Source 2). From this time onwards, the border between Soviet-controlled countries in Eastern Europe and

GERMANY: BRITISH, AMERICAN, FRENCH AND SOVIET OCCUPATION ZONES AFTER WORLD WAR II

Source 1　　　　Source: Oxford University Press

democratic countries Western Europe became divided by what British Prime Minister Winston Churchill described as the 'Iron Curtain' (see Source 2).

Although Berlin lay behind the Iron Curtain, the western half of the city was still under Western control. It effectively became an island of democracy

surrounded by a sea of communism. In fact, from June 1948 until May 1949, the only way to get food and supplies into West Berlin was by plane – an event known as the Berlin blockade.

The start of the Cold War

By the time World War II ended in 1945, it was becoming clear that the balance of power around the world was shifting. The once great imperial powers of Britain and France had been devastated by the war and struggled to rebuild their cities and economies. In their place, two **superpowers** emerged – the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Although the USA and USSR had worked as allies against the Axis powers during the war, they actually shared a deep mistrust of one another, mainly because the two countries were founded on such different ideological approaches (see Source 3):

* the USA was founded on democratic principles and its economy was based on the system of capitalism
* the USSR was founded on socialist principles and its economy was based on the system of communism.

From 1946 to 1991, the fierce lack of trust between the USA and USSR fuelled many diplomatic disputes. Although no actual fighting ever took place, relations between the two superpowers over this period were so frosty that the situation became known as the **Cold War**.

CENTRAL EUROPE: THE IRON CURTAIN IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

Source 2　　　　Source: Oxford University Press

Source 3 A comparison of key features of capitalism and communism

	Capitalism	Communism
Government control	• Multi-party democracies with voting rights for citizens • Freedom of speech and protest • Belief that government should not interfere in the economy any more than necessary	• Single-party control • Belief that the government should control the economy for the benefit of all citizens
Competition	• Competition is healthy and encourages individuals to be the best they can be	• Competition pits people against each other. Working together for the common good is seen as the best way to motivate people
Profit	• Profits are considered fair reward for owners of business • Different wages and salaries for different jobs is considered fair and encourages people to aim higher	• Profits kept in the hands of a few private business owners is seen as the exploitation of the workers • Collectives should distribute profits evenly

Source 4 Protecting yourself during the early years of the Cold War in the USA meant not only taking out insurance against natural disasters but also against the threat of a nuclear attack by the USSR.

Source 5 Workers constructing the Berlin Wall in 1960. The wall became an enduring symbol of the Cold War in Europe.

The Cold War period was characterised by propaganda campaigns, international spying, and fierce public competition over sporting events such as the Olympic Games. Of greatest concern, however, was competition between the USA and USSR to possess the largest armies and nuclear weapons stockpiles. This competition was known as the international **arms race**.

While all of these issues dominated world affairs during the Cold War, the international arms race became a key global concern because it presented the very real threat of a nuclear war.

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan

By 1947, the USA had become increasingly concerned about the growing power of the USSR. In March 1947, US President Harry Truman told the American Congress that it was America's job to contain the spread of communism. This became known as the Truman Doctrine.

Truman believed that communism took hold when people faced financial hardship. In order to limit the spread of communism across Europe, the United States offered financial aid to European countries that had been badly affected by the war. This program was called the Marshall Plan and involved the distribution of around $13 billion worth of US aid designed to get the economies of Europe going again. Food, machinery

and many other things were shipped to democratic countries in Europe. The Soviet Union and its allies were also offered aid, but did not accept. The Premier of the USSR, Joseph Stalin, saw this as an attempt by the USA to dominate Europe by making it dependent on American handouts.

Berlin: a city divided

In the decades following the division of Germany, the differences between life in the communist East and capitalist West became very obvious. West Germany's economy grew rapidly and the standard of living there increased greatly. By comparison, personal freedoms in East Germany were severely limited and the economy struggled. As a result, around 3 million people left East Germany for West Germany between 1949 and 1961 despite attempts by the Russians to stop this. Most of these people were able to leave the East by crossing into West Berlin. This situation was humiliating for the government of East Germany, so on 13 August 1961 (one day after around 4000 East Germans had crossed into West Berlin), a temporary barbed wire fence was erected to stop people from leaving the East. This was soon replaced by a heavily-guarded concrete wall that entirely surrounded West Berlin, known as the Berlin Wall (see Source 5). The division of Germany remained in place until 1990 when the country was reunified. Over that time, the Berlin Wall became the most enduring symbol of the Cold War in Europe.

## Growing tensions between the USA and the USSR

The Cuban Missile Crisis

One of the most serious and potentially dangerous events of the Cold War was a confrontation between the USSR and the USA that took place in October 1962. Known as the Cuban Missile Crisis, this event was the closest the world has ever come to an outright nuclear war. Today it is remembered as one of the defining events of the Cold War.

In 1959, a communist rebel named Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba, overthrowing the government of Fulgencio Batista (a corrupt leader who was supported by the US government). Soon after coming to power, Castro brought most Cuban industries under state control and nationalised American-owned companies. This meant that private companies and assets became the property of the Cuban government. As a result, many investors in the USA (including the US government) lost commercial investments they had in Cuba. In retaliation against this move, the American government halted all aid to Cuba and stopped importing Cuban sugar. This was very damaging to Cuba's economy as sugar was its primary export. Castro asked the USSR for help, and in 1960, the USSR signed an agreement to buy 1 million tonnes of Cuban sugar every year.

This alliance with the USSR made the USA very nervous. In April 1961, the CIA (a US government spying agency) helped a group of Cuban anti-communists to invade Cuba with the goal of overthrowing Castro. The invasion failed and was a public embarrassment for the USA.

In September 1961, Castro asked Russia for weapons to defend Cuba against any future US attacks. About a year later, photographs of Cuba taken by American spy planes revealed Soviet nuclear missiles under construction at various sites in Cuba. These sites brought every city and town in the USA within range of Soviet nuclear missiles (see Source 6). President John F. Kennedy made a televised announcement to the
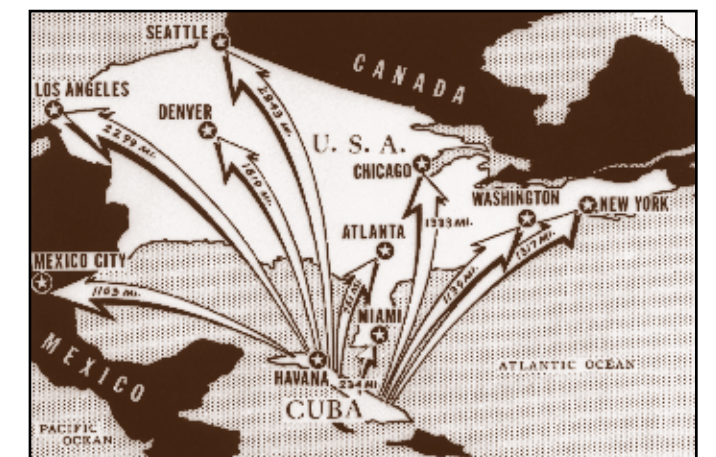
Source 6 Distances of major US cities from Cuba

American people on 22 October 1962 that they were under threat. He also proclaimed that any nuclear missile launched from Cuba would be regarded as an attack on the US by the USSR, and demanded that the Soviets remove all weapons from Cuba.

For a few days in late October, US naval ships formed a blockade of Cuba to prevent additional Russian missiles and equipment from reaching the island, and Soviet field commanders in Cuba were prepared to use nuclear weapons to defend the island if the USA invaded. It seemed very likely that there would be a war between the USA and the USSR.

Luckily, President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev were able to reach an agreement whereby the Soviets removed their missiles from Cuba in exchange for a commitment by the USA not to invade Cuba.

The space race

Another key element of Cold War rivalry between the USA and the USSR was space exploration. This was seen as necessary for national security and became a public symbol of technological superiority. In many ways, the 'space race' became a way for the two superpowers to compete without direct military conflict.

The space race became particularly serious when the USSR successfully launched a satellite, called *Sputnik 1*, in October 1957. Ten days later, they launched a second satellite called *Sputnik 2* – this time with a dog inside it. The dog, named Laika, survived the flight and was the first animal to orbit the Earth. This caused huge concern in the USA, where it was felt that American superiority in terms of education and technology was being threatened.
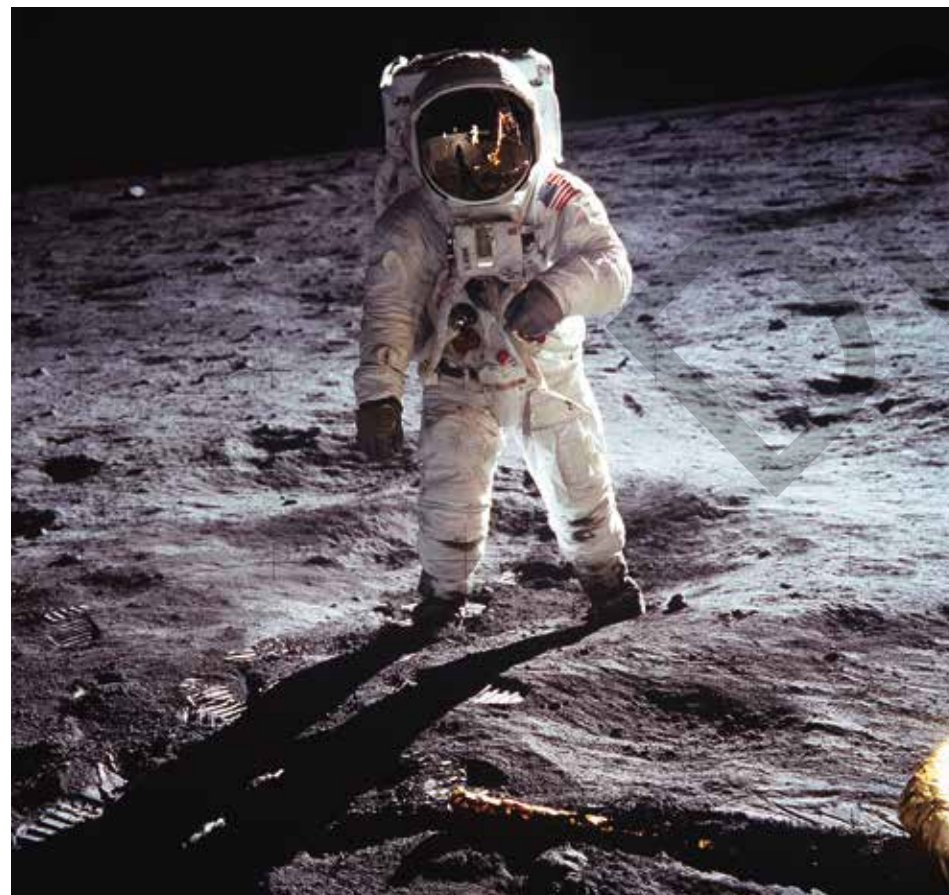
The following year, the USA sent a satellite into space and established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to coordinate and plan its future space program. Once again, the Russians moved ahead of the Americans in the space race by successfully sending the first manned flight into space in April 1961. This triggered a pledge from President Kennedy in May 1961 that the USA would be the first nation to land a man on the moon. This goal was achieved by *Apollo 11* on 20 July 1969 (see Source 7).

The end of the Cold War

In addition to the enormous costs of the international arms race, the economies of both nations were strained by the high cost of the space race. Throughout the 1980s, the Soviet Union was also fighting an expensive and frustrating war in Afghanistan. When the reformist politician Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he was determined to end the Cold War and to bring economic and political reform to the Soviet Union. He initiated dramatic agreements with the United States, which involved both nations agreeing to reduce the amount of money and energy they were investing in the arms race. He also took steps to introduce more democratic political processes across the Soviet Union.

These initiatives rapidly improved relations between the United States and the USSR, ultimately bringing an end to the Cold War. What Gorbachev failed to anticipate, however, was that without the Communist Party and Soviet Army maintaining complete control of all the Soviet satellite states, the Soviet Union would soon break apart. Attempted political reforms at home left the Soviet Union unwilling to defend challenges to its authority in many countries across Eastern Europe. During 1989 and 1990, the Berlin Wall came down and Germany was reunified. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, borders opened and free elections were held that ousted communist regimes. In August 1991, Gorbachev resigned as leader of the Soviet Union. By October of that year, 10 Soviet republics had declared their independence and the Soviet Union collapsed. With stunning speed, the Iron Curtain was lifted and the Cold War came to an end.

Source 8
The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 came to symbolise the triumph of democracy and the end of the Cold War.

Source 7 Astronaut Buzz Aldrin was part of the first space mission to land men on the moon – *Apollo 11*.

Check your learning 10.1

Remember and understand

1 Define the following terms in your own words:
   a the international arms race
   b the space race
   c the Cold War.

2 Why did the East German government build a wall around the western part of Berlin?

3 What was the Cuban Missile Crisis and why is it regarded as such a significant historical event?

Apply and analyse

4 Why do you think Churchill referred to the border between East and West Europe as the 'Iron Curtain'?

5 Why was the USA so concerned about the relationship between Cuba and the USSR? Do you believe their fears were justified?

Evaluate and create

6 Examine Source 7 carefully and complete the following tasks.
   a Conduct research online to determine why this source was produced, who produced it, and when it was published.
   b Do you think this source is an example of propaganda? Justify your response.

10.1 How did the consequences of World War II shape the modern world?

The 20th century was an era of social change. The events of World War II highlighted the inequalities that existed around the world. The **Holocaust** was such a horrific example of discrimination and persecution that it prompted many individuals around the world to stand up and demand freedom and equal rights for all.

The formation of the United Nations

Immediately following the end of World War II, the **United Nations (UN)** formed with the goal of preventing future wars. A few years later in 1948, a document outlining a set of rights to which all human beings are entitled was released. The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, as it was known, was the first international declaration of its kind. It marked a new era of international cooperation and outlined a vision for the post-war world.

The UN was officially formed at the end of World War II in 1945, during a meeting of 50 nations in San Francisco. All nations present at the conference signed the Charter of the United Nations, which set out the purpose and rules of operation of the UN. The key goals of the UN were to prevent war and ensure the wellbeing and freedom of all peoples.

ASIA–PACIFIC REGION: THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT AFTER WORLD WAR II

Source 2

Source: Oxford University Press

Source 1 Flags outside the current United Nations building in New York

Structure of the United Nations

The structure of the United Nations is based around its charter. The United Nations Charter consists of 111 articles that, together, explain how the United Nations works.

The Charter established five separate branches of the United Nations:

1. The General Assembly – The General Assembly discusses and makes decisions about issues of international peace and security. All members of the United Nations are represented in the General Assembly.
2. The Security Council – This consists of five permanent members (USA, USSR, Britain, China and France) and six non-permanent members. The Security Council has the task of maintaining peace and security at an international level. The Security Council can recommend the use of a blockade or other financial imposition on any country that decides to break international law. If these do not work, then the Security Council can call on the United Nations to use military force.
3. The Economic and Social Council – The main task of this branch is to promote and improve the economic and social wellbeing of those living in the member states.
4. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) – The ICJ is the main judicial body of the United Nations.
5. The Secretariat – This is the body that runs the United Nations. The Secretary-General is the chief administrative officer of the United Nations.

The main involvement of the UN in modern conflicts has been to supply peacekeeping forces. The UN Peacekeeping Forces may only be deployed when both parties involved in a conflict accept their presence. There are two types of peacekeeping operations – unarmed observer groups and lightly armed military forces. Military forces are only allowed to use their weapons for self-defence.

The United Nations was not only formed to promote security around the world but to also promote the wellbeing and freedom of all peoples. The defeat of Germany and the freeing of Jewish prisoners from concentration camps by Allied soldiers brought the full horrors of the Holocaust to the attention of the world. There was global agreement that such a thing should never be allowed to happen again.

One of the first actions of the United Nations was to draft a declaration of human rights. The declaration was ratified in 1948. Article 1 of the declaration stated that 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'.

The struggle for rights and freedoms

A number of movements around the world were formed to fight for the recognition of a range of rights and freedoms. These can be grouped broadly into three categories:

1. Independence movements – In the immediate post-war period, a number of former colonies around the world fought for their independence from their imperial masters.

2. Racial equality movements – Around the world, traditional views and established laws based on racial difference were challenged. In the United States, African Americans (together with other disadvantaged cultural and ethnic groups) set out to remove all forms of social and legal discrimination based on race. A similar movement in Australia campaigned for equal rights for Indigenous Australians and the repeal of laws which deprived Indigenous Australians of civil liberties. In the 1960s, two major victories were celebrated in Australia. For the first time, Aboriginal people achieved equal citizenship and were entitled to vote in federal elections. The 1960s also marked the beginning of a determined attempt to achieve land rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

3. Gender equality movements – Across the Western world in countries like Australia, the United States and Britain, women campaigned for equality at all levels of society.

Together, these movements brought about enormous social and political changes that influenced the modern world. Many of these rights are taken for granted by people today, but the struggle for the acceptance and recognition of many of these rights took enormous courage and determination.

Independence movements

The post-war period saw a wave of different groups start to demand their human rights. Countries under the control of the old empires saw their chance to fight for self-rule. Other groups who were disadvantaged in society because of their race or sex also started to demand equal rights around this time and organised into movements to bring about change.

The immediate post-war years saw a wave of **decolonisation** sweep across the world. Once-powerful empires (such as Britain, France, the Netherlands and Spain) that had been weakened by the war faced growing opposition from those living under colonial rule. Over a few years, European powers were forced to withdraw from their colonies and recognise their independence (see Source 2). The process of decolonisation began in India and Pakistan, both countries gaining independence from British rule in 1947. From here, the movement swept across Asia, with Indonesia breaking away from the Netherlands in 1949 and France giving up control of Vietnam in 1954. This desire for self-rule later swept across other parts of the world. By the early 1980s old colonial countries throughout Africa, Asia and the Caribbean had all gained their independence.

Racial equality movements

During this period, people in many Western societies questioned old attitudes, beliefs and ways of doing things. Traditional attitudes towards racial and ethnic groups within society were challenged by a range of grassroots organisations and social movements that raised awareness about inequality. These groups fought hard for the acceptance and recognition of a range of basic human rights. Over time, these movements brought about change by changing attitudes and gaining support from the broad population. Many of these organisations are still active today as the struggle for personal freedoms and democratic rights continues. The following tables highlight some significant events and ideas that influenced the struggle for rights and freedoms in the United States and Australia.

Source 3 Dr Martin Luther King, Jr after the March on Washington in 1963

Source 4 Protesters outside the Aboriginal Tent Embassy

Gender equality movements

The other major movement of the period was the struggle for gender equality. Across the Western world, including countries like Australia, women campaigned hard for equality. Although by 1920 all Australian women (with the exception of Indigenous women) had the right to vote and run for parliament, they were a long way from enjoying equal status with men in other areas of Australian society. Despite entering the workforce during World War II, after the war many women were expected to return to their duties as mothers and homemakers. Married women were prohibited from holding permanent government positions and women generally were expected to give up their jobs to men returning from the war. Those who chose to continue working faced discrimination in the form of unequal employment opportunities and lower pay.

Over time, rising female participation in the workforce, social changes and technological advances all contributed to rapid changes in the roles of women in Australia. By the late 1950s, women were demanding equal pay for their work and attempting to overturn the widely held belief that it was a man's role to act as financial provider. In 1969, the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission ruled that men and women working in Australia should be paid equally.

The 1970s saw the emergence of women's liberation movements, inspired by figures such as Germaine Greer (a prominent feminist writer and thinker). Greer's book *The Female Eunuch* (published in 1970) asserted that women were enslaved within society by discrimination and commonly accepted values of male superiority. Greer argued that women should strive to break free of these conditions and that the male domination of society must be fought (see Source 5). Feminists achieved some notable successes in these years, including the passing of the *Maternity Leave Act 1973* and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* (South Australia). These pieces of legislation protected a woman's right by law to maternity leave and protected people against being victimised for complaining about discrimination.

An overview of the struggle for rights and freedoms by African Americans		
Civil rights movements and actions	Section 10.2	• The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is passed by the United Nations in 1948 • **Segregation** (separation of blacks and whites) is widespread in the southern states of the USA • In 1954 (in *Brown vs the Board of Education*) the US Supreme Court rules segregation in US schools to be unconstitutional (illegal) • The case of Emmett Till in 1955, (in which a 14-year-old African-American boy was murdered for talking to a white woman) brings national attention to the issue of race relations in the USA • In 1955, Rosa Parks refuses to give her seat to a white woman on an Alabama bus • In 1957, nine African American students try to enrol at the all-white Little Rock Central High School, Arkansas. The US army is sent in to enforce their right to attend the school. • Early 1960s, a mixed group of African-Americans and white-Americans, ride buses throughout the Southern States testing the end of segregation. Known as the Freedom Riders, the group exposes that many southern states are ignoring the ruling of the Supreme Court. • The March on Washington in 1963 sees around 250 000 people travel to the US capital to hear Martin Luther King, Jr. (leader of the African-American civil rights movements) give his famous 'I have a dream' speech (see Source 3).

An overview of the struggle for rights and freedoms by Indigenous Australians		
How Indigenous Australians were disadvantaged	Section 10.1	• In the first Australian census after Australian Federation in 1901, Indigenous Australians were not counted. • An **assimilation** policy was introduced in 1937 – Aboriginal people of mixed race were to be assimilated into white society. • Segregationist practices until the 1960s excluded Indigenous Australians from mixing with white people and from holding certain jobs. • **Stolen Generations** – from the late 19th century until the 1970s Indigenous children were removed from their families to be brought up in 'white' families or state-run institutions
Indigenous rights movements and actions	Section 10.2	• Indigenous Australians boycott sesquicentenary (150th anniversary) of British settlement in 1938 and instead hold a Day of Mourning. An address is given by Jack Patten, President of the Aborigines Progressive Association. • Australian Freedom Riders take a bus journey through rural NSW to protest segregation
Significant Indigenous Australians	Section 10.2	• Jack Patten, leader of the Aborigines Progressive Association (NSW) • William Cooper, leader of the Australian Aborigines League (Vic) • Albert Namatjira, Aboriginal artist • Doug Nicholls, VFL player for Carlton and Fitzroy • Eddie Gilbert, cricketer • Charles Perkins, leader of the Freedom Riders • Lowitja O'Donoghue, founding chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and Order of Australia recipient
Indigenous land rights	Section 10.2	• The Wave Hill walk-off, 1966 – Indigenous pastoral workers demand equal pay and a return of traditional lands. This was the first land rights claim. • 1971 – the Aboriginal flag was designed • 1972 – Aboriginal Tent Embassy established on the grounds of parliament in 1972 (see Source 4) • 1992 – Eddie Mabo wins native title to family land on Murray Island. This decision was followed by the *Native Title Act* in 1993 • 1996 – the Wik decision allows for native title on land under pastoral lease. The Native Title Amendment Bill in 1997 effectively overturns native title.
Changes to government attitudes	Section 10.2 Section 10.3	• 1967 Referendum gets a 'yes' to count Indigenous Australians in the census. This would lead to Indigenous Australians also getting full voting rights. • In Prime Minister Keating's Redfern Park speech in 1992, Keating acknowledged past injustices towards Indigenous Australians. • In 2008, Prime Minister Rudd says sorry to the Stolen Generations

With the introduction of the federal *Sex Discrimination Act* in 1984, and the appointment of the first Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Pamela O'Neil, sex-based discrimination in most areas of Australian life became illegal. Despite these gains, feminists continued to combat sex-based prejudice and discrimination in Australian society. They targeted issues such as sexist language and attitudes, as well as the depiction of women in the media as second-class citizens and/or sexual objects. Gender equality activists have also continued to campaign for equal pay and recognition in the workforce. Even today, women still do not enjoy the same levels of income as men across many sectors of the workforce.

Check your learning 10.2

Remember and understand

1 In what year was the United Nations officially formed and what are its key goals?

2 In what year did India achieve independence from British rule?

3 By what year were all Australian women legally able to vote and run for parliament?

Apply and analyse

4 Conduct some brief research on the federal *Sex Discrimination Act* passed in 1984. What did the Act outlaw? How did the introduction of the Act change conditions for women living in Australia?

5 In your own words, define the term 'decolonisation'. Where did this first take place and what were the reasons for this change?

Source 5 Protesters at the International Women's Day march in Sydney, 1972