

The identification of Indigenous people in Australia

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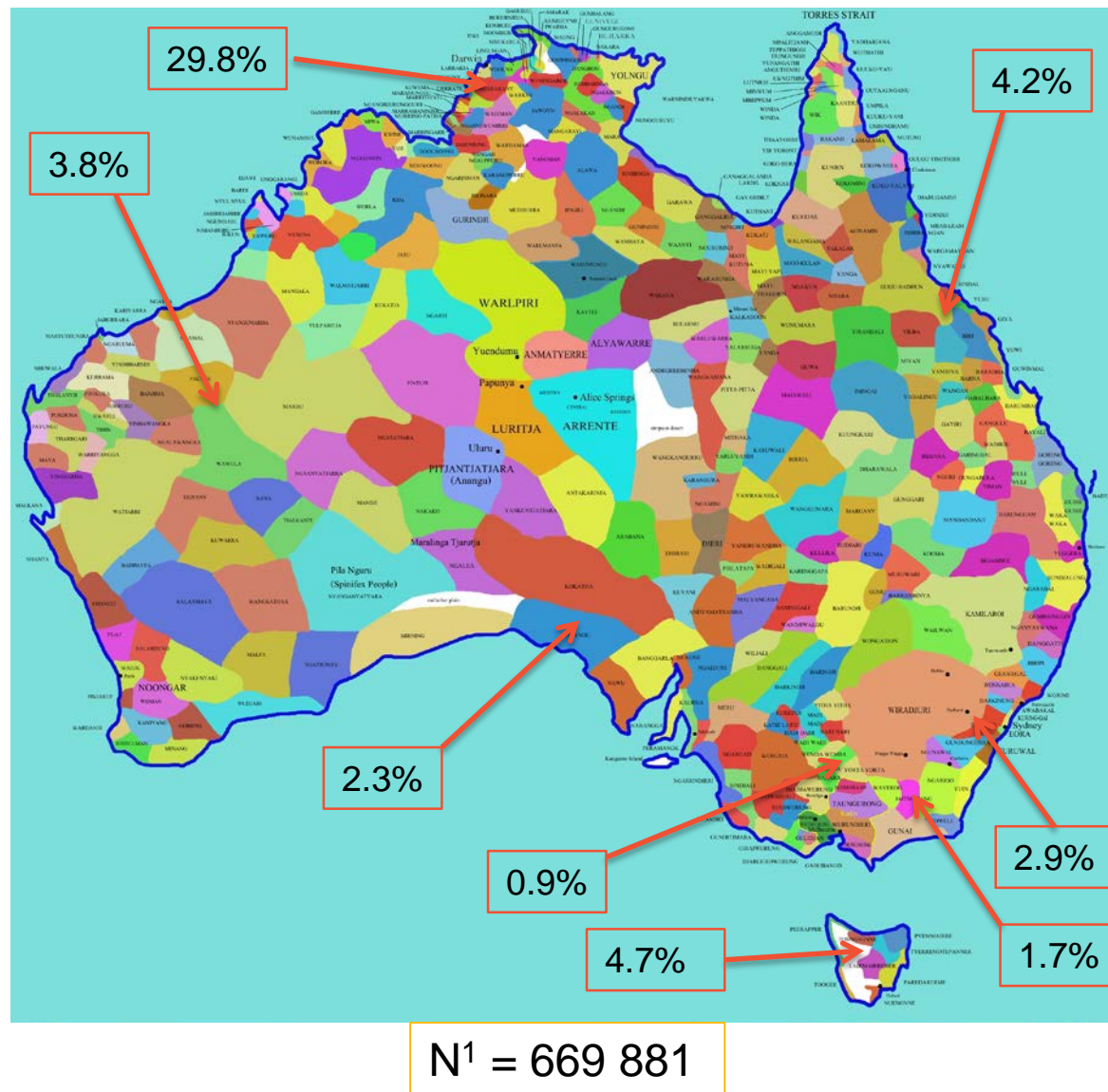


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Contextualising Indigenous Identification



Indigenous population counts

Year	Populations count Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
<1788	318,000–750,000 ¹
1901	93,000 ¹
30 th June 1991	282,979 (Census) ¹
30 th June, 1996	386,049 (Census) ¹
30 th June, 2001	427,094 (Census) ¹
30 th June 2006	517,200 (Census) ²
30 th June 2011	548,370 (Census) ³ (2.5%) 90% Aboriginal; 6% Torres Strait Islander; 4% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
30 th August 2013 2020	669,881 (Post enumeration survey) ⁴ (3%) est. population 721,000

¹ 1301.0 – Year Book Australia, 2002 Australian Bureau of Statistics 25 January 2002

² 4705.0 - Population Distribution, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006

³ 2075.0 - Census of Population and Housing - Counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2011

⁴ 3238.0.55.001 - Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2011 (released 31st August, 2013)

Indigenous Identification Timeline

- **49,000 years ago:** Geological evidence of Indigenous peoples existence.
- **1770:** James Cook claims possession of the east coast of Australia.
- **1788:** The First Fleet lands in Port Jackson. The settlement of Australia begins.
- **1837:** ‘Protectors of Aborigines’ are appointed in Australia.
- **1901:** Australia becomes a Federation. The Constitution states that Aboriginal people will not be counted in the census.
- **1905:** The *Aborigines Act (WA)* is passed.
- **1948:** The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is adopted by the United Nations, and supported by Australia.
- **1967:** National referendum is held to amend the Constitution. Australians confer power on the Commonwealth to make laws for Indigenous people. Indigenous people are included in the census for the first time.
- **1978:** Commonwealth Definition of Indigenous people in Australia was adopted by the Federal Cabinet.

The standard identification question

Since 1981

Is the person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

1 No

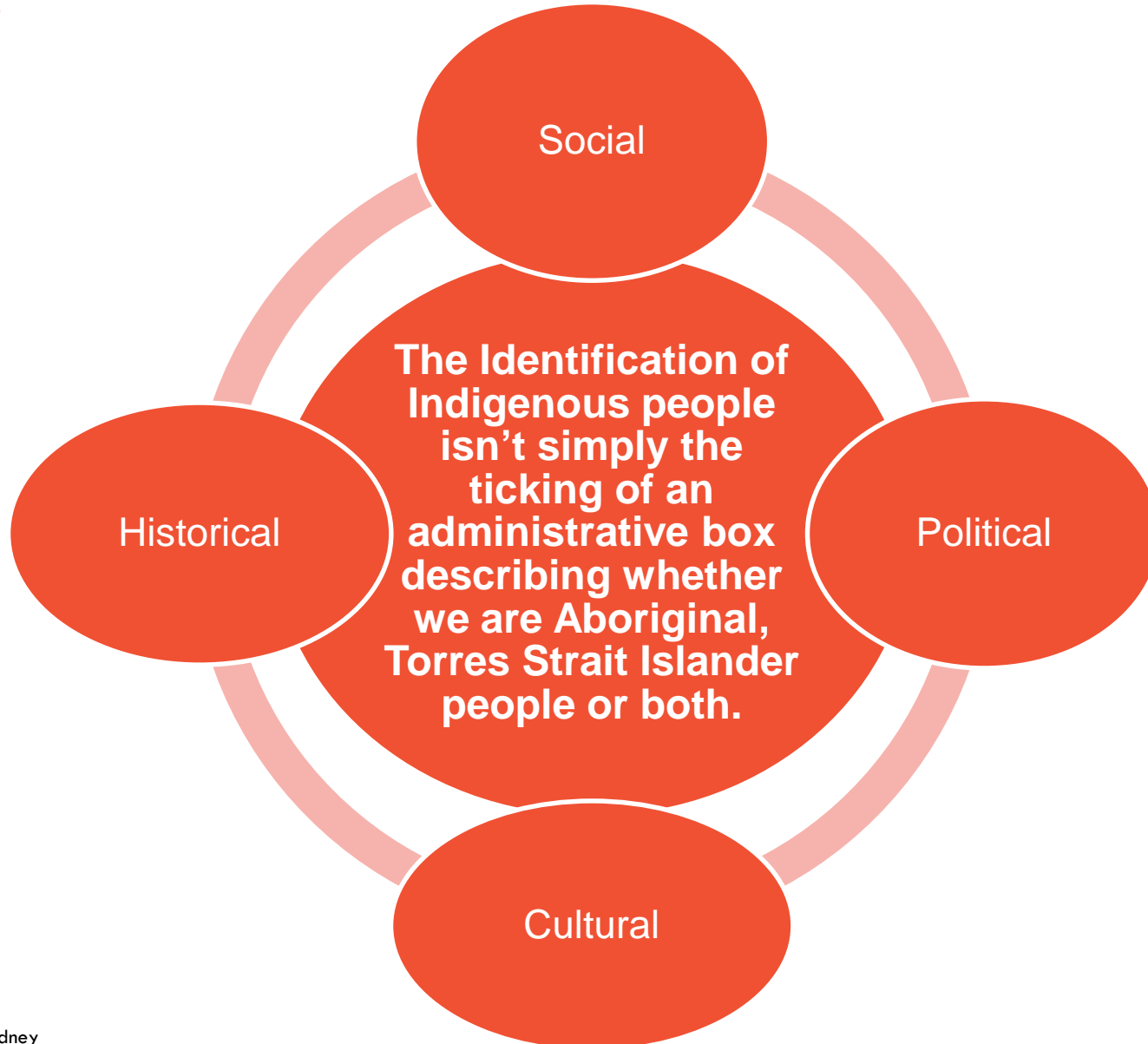
2 Yes, Aboriginal

3 Yes, Torres Strait Islander

For those of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, both 'Yes' boxes should be ticked.

'Commonwealth Definition': *An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.*

Factors impacting the identity and identification of Indigenous people



Acknowledgements

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- University of Sydney's Wingara Mura Leadership Program
- The Lowitja Institute

References

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Changes in the standard Indigenous identification question

1966

State person's race. For persons of European race where ever born, write European. Otherwise state whether Aboriginal, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, etc., as the case may be. If more than one race give particulars, for example, $\frac{1}{2}$ European, $\frac{1}{2}$ Aboriginal, $\frac{3}{4}$ Aboriginal, $\frac{1}{4}$ Chinese, $\frac{1}{2}$ European- $\frac{1}{2}$ Chinese.

1971

What is this person's racial origin? (If of mixed origin indicate the one to which he considers himself to belong) (Tick box only or give origin only)

- 1 European origin*
- 2 Aboriginal origin*
- 3 Torres Strait Islander origin*
- 4 Other origin (give only).*