

MABO DAY

**MONDAY 3rd JUNE
2013**



JOIN US

**at Federation Square Melbourne
(corner of Flinders & Swanston St)
at 12:00pm**

**To celebrate the 21st Anniversary of the historic
High Court judgement delivered on the 3rd June
1992 that recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islanders had rights to land in law because of their
prior occupation of this land.**

WHY CELEBRATE ON MABO DAY

When Australia was invaded and colonised on the 26th January 1788, the British colonisers acted as if this land was uninhabited. Over forty thousand years of civilisation was swept aside in an orgy of destruction that resulted in the violent dispossession of people who had a long and fruitful association with the land.

For 204 years the legal fiction of TERRA NULLIUS – the land of no one, was used to legally reward the murderers who colonised this land although the original inhabitants had never ceded sovereignty.

In 1982 three traditional land owners from the Island of Mer in the Eastern Torres Strait, Eddie Koiki Mabo, Father Passi and Grandfather Rice, set in train a series of events that began in the Queensland Courts and ended in the High Court of Australia that overturned the doctrine that Australia was unoccupied (terra nullius) at the time of the British invasion. The High Court of Australia on the 3rd June 1992 ruled that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests in land and water survived the assertion of sovereignty by the Crown.

The judgement caused consternation among Australian land owners. It didn't take long for the spirit and the letter of the judgement to be buried in bucket loads of extinguishment by successive Federal Governments.

Twenty one years after the High Court judgement gave Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders rights to land in law, the question of sovereignty, the extent of native title and a need for a treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians continues (despite attempts by successive Federal governments to bury the issue) to be the single most important impediment to reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

HAPPY MABO DAY!!

Bring your family and friends to celebrate Mabo Day at midday at Federation Square next year on the 3rd June.

Ellen Jose / Torres Strait Islander Elder whose family comes from Mer. Now living in Melbourne.