1788 Settlement of Australia as a British colony begins.

1812 In Attorney-General (NSW) v Brown, the ‘bare título’ of the Aboriginal colonies are decided to be in the exclusive possession of the Crown from settlement in situ and no new matters referred to be heard.

1813 In Attorney-General (WI) v Williams, the High Court says that settlement conferred beneficial and legal ownership of all land by the Crown.

1906 The Aborigines Beneficiary Trust enacts in New South Wales to manage and dispose of lands extinguished by the operation of the Aborigines Protection Act 1897 (NSW). This is the first case of legislation to provide for Aboriginal people with common law rights and interests in land.

1908 The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FAATSI) launches a national campaign for Aborigines' rights. At present, it has a membership in response to the Government's plan to grant traditional land to the Gurindji people of Wave Hill.

1911 In the ‘Stolen Generations’ case, a land claim is made by the Wurramuwa people on behalf of their alienated forefathers who had been forcibly removed from their land. The connecting area was the first in Australia to attract significant public support for Aboriginal land rights.

1917 In Aboriginal Tracts v ex parte Aboriginal reserves in South Australia (the Aboriginal Land Act 1917 (SA)) this is the first case of legislation to provide for Aboriginal people with common law rights and interests in land.

1918 The Judicial Act 1918 (Cth) is passed by Federal Parliament, making a provision for the States and others to discriminate on the basis of race.

1919 The Federal Government successfully negotiates the return of a portion of traditional lands to the Gurindji people. During an historic ceremony Prime Minister George Reid presents the lands to the Gurindji people, and hands them the relevant documents for 3,236 square kilometres excised from Wave Hill station. The Gurindji people later obtain freehold underpinned by a process of inquiry and recommendation by an Aboriginal Land Commissioner.

1927 In the High Court decision in Coes v Commonwealth (No 1) (1927) 20 CLR 175. Aborigines are able to claim title to their undisturbed Crown land and Aboriginal pastoral leases based on traditional allotments, and on the recommendation of the Aboriginal Land Commissioner. Extinguishing Aboriginal reserves can be transformed to traditional owners without the need for a claim process. The judgment of the High Court was accepted on an Aboriginal reserve in Queensland.

1929 In Commonweath v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the existence of common natural title will be declared to have been extinguished. It is also introduced for the first time the notion of extinguishment for past acts and widen the ambit of future acts that may be committed in relation to land without extinguishment.

1929 The Judicial Act 1929 (Cth) is passed to assist in implementing the Council of Australian Governments' National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. It provides a new future act process for Crown construction of public housing on freehold and improved to provide by the Indigenous Land Corporation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund. The ILC's main functions are to assist Indigenous peoples to acquire land and to manage Indigenous-held land in a sustainable way to provide cultural, social, economic and environmental benefit to Indigenous peoples.

1930 The High Court rules that the commonwealth law providing for a common law declaration of tenure is limited to lands in Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, of which part is subject to pastoral leases.

1930 The Native Title Act 1930 (Qld) is passed by the Federal Parliament, establishing a process for the recognition of native title, notwithstanding that the commonwealth law is declared to have been extinguished. It is also introduced for the first time the notion of extinguishment for past acts and widen the ambit of future acts that may be committed in relation to land without extinguishment.

1930 The High Court rules that the commonwealth law providing for a common law declaration of tenure is limited to lands in Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, of which part is subject to pastoral leases.

1931 In the High Court decision in Bunker v Western Australia (1931) 39 CLR 11, the High Court finds that the Queensland Coast Islands Declaratory Act is inconsistent with the Racial Discrimination Act 1901 (Cth). The High Court says that Queensland's legislation does not apply to the islands, and that the Act is therefore invalid.

1959 In the High Court decision in Wilson v Anderson (1959) 100 CLR 180, the High Court finds that s 24MD of the Native Title Act permits the Crown to extinguish native title by compulsory acquisition of land, even where the only interests existing in the area concerned are native title rights and interests.

1962 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth (1962) 107 CLR 417, the High Court finds that the right held by the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by the Wik and Wik Way Native Title Claim Group v Queensland (1997) 104 FCA 129.

1971 The Attorney-General (NT) Act 1971 (Cth) is enacted. It reverses the effect of the 2007 amendments, putting the Federal Court more in line with the High Court's decision in Mabo.

1972 The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund are established. The national panel of experts established by the Commonwealth is the first Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) to be established in Australia. It provides a new future act process for Crown construction of public housing on freehold and improved to provide by the Indigenous Land Corporation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund. The ILC's main functions are to assist Indigenous peoples to acquire land and to manage Indigenous-held land in a sustainable way to provide cultural, social, economic and environmental benefit to Indigenous peoples.

1973 In the High Court decision in Coes v Commonwealth (No 2) (1973) 105 CLR 96, the High Court rejects a constitutional challenge to the Native Title Act by Western Australia (1996) 187 CLR 1.

1975 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that a native title right to hunt or fish for traditional purposes is not extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

1977 In the High Court decision in Lardil Peoples v Queensland (1977) 118 CLR 7, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

1990 In the High Court decision in Nulgit v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the Queensland Coast Islands Declaratory Act is inconsistent with the Racial Discrimination Act 1901 (Cth). The High Court says that Queensland's legislation does not apply to the islands, and that the Act is therefore invalid.

1991 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

1992 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

1995 In the High Court decision in Nulgit v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the Queensland Coast Islands Declaratory Act is inconsistent with the Racial Discrimination Act 1901 (Cth). The High Court says that Queensland's legislation does not apply to the islands, and that the Act is therefore invalid.

1997 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

1998 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

2002 The Native Title Amendment Act 2002 (Cth) creates new amendments to the Native Title Act, creating a non-exclusive property right, co-exist with such interests where no inconsistency arises in the enjoyment of rights. In the event of inconsistency, the non-exclusive property right is extinguished and the rights of the existing owner prevail.

2007 The Native Title Amendment Act 2007 (Cth) amends the Native Title Act by providing a new future act process for Crown construction of public housing on freehold and improved to provide by the Indigenous Land Corporation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund. The ILC's main functions are to assist Indigenous peoples to acquire land and to manage Indigenous-held land in a sustainable way to provide cultural, social, economic and environmental benefit to Indigenous peoples.

2009 In the High Court decision in Mabo v Queensland (2009) 232 CLR 1, the High Court affirms that native title confers non-exclusive rights over sea country. The traditional owners have their native title recognised over the Wellesley Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria, based on laws and customs which exhibit a ‘normative system’ of traditional laws and customs from sovereignty to present, without substantial interruption.

2010 Following a 2010 Federal Court judgment in the Commonwealth v Wik (2010) 216 FCA 1717, the high Court affirms that sea country on the Torres Strait. The traditional owners have their native title recognised over the Wellesley Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria, based on laws and customs which exhibit a ‘normative system’ of traditional laws and customs from sovereignty to present, without substantial interruption.

2011 The Native Title Amendment Act 2011 (Cth) amends the Native Title Act by providing a new future act process for Crown construction of public housing on freehold and improved to provide by the Indigenous Land Corporation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund. The ILC's main functions are to assist Indigenous peoples to acquire land and to manage Indigenous-held land in a sustainable way to provide cultural, social, economic and environmental benefit to Indigenous peoples.

2012 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

2013 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

2014 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

2015 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

2016 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

2017 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

2018 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

2019 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

2020 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.

2021 In the High Court decision in Wik v Commonwealth, the High Court finds that the traditional right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes is extinguished by Queensland legislation, and that extinguishment requires a specific act of Parliament.