

**The High Court of Australia**

# **Resources & Classroom Ideas for the Mabo Decision**



# Teacher Resources

Content information and resources to further your understanding of the Mabo Decision

## Mabo case summary



By the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies  
This web page provides a condensed summary of the Mabo case, with links to further resources on native title and Eddie Mabo.

By the High Court of Australia

This is the judgment by the High Court of Australia, commonly referred to as the Mabo decision. Justice Brennan wrote the lead judgment, stating terra nullius is legal fiction and outlining how English common law was adopted in Australia.

## Mabo judgment



## Rights case study



By the Australian Constitution Centre  
This resource outlines the facts of the case and unpacks the term 'terra nullius'.

By Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies  
Native title and land rights are two methods of recognising Indigenous rights, use and interest in land. This web page outlines the difference between native title and land rights.

## Native title v Land rights





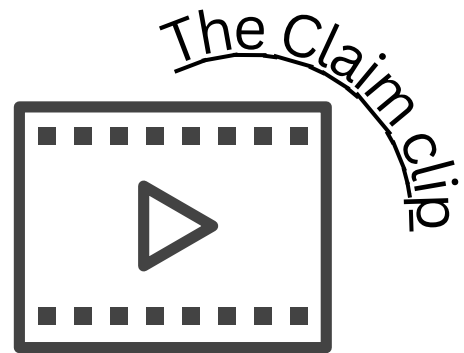
# Classroom Resources

Valuable resources to further your students' learning



By The State Library of Queensland  
This six part series introduces listeners to Eddie Mabo's story. In Episode 4 host Rihanna Patrick and her guests unpack the concept of 'terra nullius', provide an overview of the two Mabo cases and look at international Indigenous rights at the time.

*Land Bilong Islanders: The Claim* by Yarra Bank Films and made available by the NFSA  
This clip visually introduces the Murray Island and some of the plaintiffs in the Mabo case.



*Land Bilong Islanders: Murray Islander Law* by Yarra Bank Films and made available by the NFSA  
This clip outlines the role and significance of the Murray Island Courthouse since 1898 and its documented use of traditional Marlo law to resolve cases.

By the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure  
This explainer video unpacks the concept of native title through an illustration of pre and post-colonial landscape.



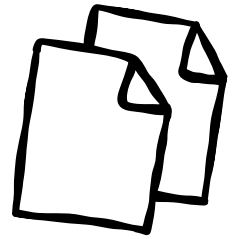
# Classroom Activities

Ideas to engage your students with the Mabo Decision and its impact on Australian society



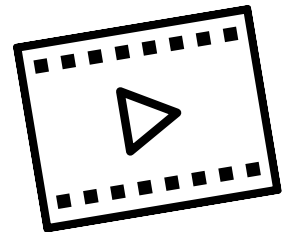
Create a class mind map of wonderings around native title, Eddie Mabo, the High Court of Australia, and Indigenous rights.

Develop a glossary of new terms and ideas, including terra nullius, native title, common law, statutory law, precedent, and jurisdiction.



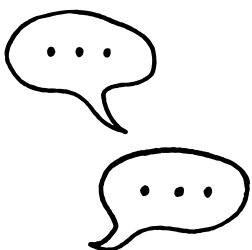
Design a diagram to identify Australia's court hierarchy and the powers of the High Court of Australia.

Produce a stop motion film to unpack the term 'terra nullius' and its impact on Australia.



Explore the stories of the other plaintiffs in the case – Reverend David Passi, Sam Passi, James Rice and Celuia Mapo Sale.

Create a timeline of key events that led to the Mabo decision.



Examine one of the many ABC articles or videos celebrating the anniversary of the Mabo decision. What does your source say about the impact of this case on Australian society? Compare the perspectives to a newspaper article from 1992 (Stuck where to start? Try [Trove](#)).

