For Colin, Andrew and Hannah
The wind of change is blowing through this continent and, whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it.

*Harold Macmillan, 1960*

Behind the headline events of the 1960s, there was both a replacement of local standards and ways of doing things with more open, national ones; and a search for grassroots participation and community, a dialectical interaction of changing consciousness and institutions, and the explosion of classic social questions into politics and into the streets.

*David Chalmers, 1991*
Introduction:
The Place of Race in the 60s Phenomenon

Race relations: ‘The key to tying together the history of the modern world.’

Although historians and social commentators argue about the meaning of the ‘60s, none deny that dramatic and irreversible changes took place somewhere from the late 1950s through to the mid 1970s. ‘The 1960s seem like another country,’ wrote Dennis Altman in 1988. Perceptions changed, expectations were raised and demands made that ultimately reoriented society. In Australia, as in the United States and Europe, power bases shifted when those who demanded greater autonomy resisted traditional authority. Young men rejected the call of war, young women refused to accept a life of domesticity and black and indigenous people demanded equality.

In Cold War America, when conformity and conservatism were most valued, the Civil Rights Movement was the primary and initial source of the public disruption that came to symbolise the 1960s. This is why Milton Viorst can argue that the theme of social disorder ‘made a cohesive historical unit of the period from Greensboro in 1960 to Kent State in 1970,’ and that ‘[f]or most Americans the decade of the 1960s began the day that four freshmen from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College…sat down at the lunch counter and asked for a cup of coffee.’ American scholars who write about the 1960s unfailingly
recognise the important contribution African Americans made in formulating a method, an ideology and a language of protest. The Civil Rights Movement, when African Americans willingly took issue with the assumptions under which they habitually lived, threatened the American status quo well before women’s liberation, the anti-war movement, environmentalism, the counter culture or the generation gap. Existing racial paradigms faltered under the scrutiny of the new moral perspective offered by African Americans and their supporters. Once the existing pattern of race relations was damaged it was easier to question generational, gender and other authority relations in a similar, if not imitative, manner. Those known best for radicalism and rebellion in the 1960s acknowledged an intellectual debt to the Civil Rights Movement. ‘As we grew,’ declared the radical political student organisation, Students for a Democratic Society [SDS] in 1962, ‘our comfort was penetrated by events too troubling to dismiss. First, the permeating and victimising fact of human degradation, symbolised by the southern struggle against racial bigotry, compelled most of us from silence to activism.’

Although the Civil Rights Movement had clear domestic origins in years of prejudicial treatment of African Americans under slavery and afterwards, it was also part of the wider postwar emergence of black and indigenous power through decolonisation. Fredric Jameson is one of the few scholars to link racial empowerment in Africa with the rise of the ‘60s as a phenomenon. ‘It does not seem particularly controversial,’ wrote Jameson, ‘to mark the beginnings of what will come to be called the 60s in the Third World with the great movement of decolonisation in British and French Africa.’ Jameson is mistaken, not in the substance of his comment, but in his assessment of historical judgement. Generally, historians are yet to give other than passing reference to decolonisation although Jameson claims that independence and revolution in African countries—Ghana, Congo, Algeria—marked the ‘convulsive birth’ of the sixties. The connection was the impassioned demand for freedom and autonomy; freedom from the control of a colonial power in Africa, or from what was repeatedly described as ‘internal’ or ‘domestic’ colonialism elsewhere. The experience of African Americans was not ‘classical colonialism’, explained Robert Blauner, but the subjugation of one race by another was most easily described in the language of colonialism.
American writer Eldridge Cleaver, who wrote the searing collection of essays expressing black resentment and bitterness published as *Soul on Ice* in 1968, argued in the radical paper *Ramparts* in the same year that ‘Black people are a stolen people held in a colonial status.’ According to Robert Blauner, the colonial model provides the framework ‘that can integrate the insights of caste and racism, ethnicity, culture, and economic exploitation into an overall conceptual scheme.’ The versatility of this model can explain why decolonisation offered freedom on so many levels, why it became such a dramatically influential demonstration of liberation and why Africa could be labelled the ‘continent of the sixties’. SDS identified the ‘worldwide outbreak of revolution against colonialism and imperialism’ as a test ‘of our own commitment to democracy and freedom’.

As a major player in decolonisation, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan insisted on visiting Africa in 1960 to see for himself what was happening there and to refine his understanding of the pressure for reform. He coined the phrase ‘wind of change’ to describe his sense that the national expression of black consciousness was a spreading force, all-embracing and unstoppable, a force that demanded accommodation. The urgency and vigour of decolonisation was not lost on American civil rights leaders either. In his 1963 ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’, an epistle explaining and justifying non-violent direct action against segregation, the undeclared spokesman for the Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King, compared the momentum sweeping Africa and Asia with the comparatively halting pace of change in America. John Lewis, one of the leaders of the Nashville sit-ins, also acknowledged events in Africa as an important example of what could be achieved and a salutary reminder of the inconsistency between American ideals and the actuality of black life:

*Sure we identified with the blacks in Africa and we were thrilled by what was going on. Here were black people, talking of freedom and liberation and independence, thousands of miles away. We could hardly miss the lesson for ourselves. They were getting their freedom, and we still didn’t have ours in what we believed was a free country. We couldn’t even get a hamburger and a Coke at the soda fountain. Maybe we were slow in*
realizing what this meant to us, but then things started moving together. What was happening in Africa, finally, had tremendous influence on us.19

Even though geographically distant and isolated, Australia could not escape the effects of Macmillan’s ‘wind of change’ or the example of America’s racial struggle. The conservative Australian government under the already long-serving Prime Minister Robert Menzies, was suspicious and fearful of the local repercussions of international black empowerment. The government was intellectually and emotionally engulfed by the Cold War, anxious about national security in the region and knowingly vulnerable on the international stage over New Guinea, immigration and Aboriginal policies. Although HV Evatt, as Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs in the previous Curtin Labor Government, had a determined international vision for Australia, he nevertheless ensured that Australia retained control over domestic matters, including policies relating to race, by demanding that the United Nations could not intervene in the affairs of any country unless international peace was at issue.20 Once in power, Menzies resisted further internationalism and insisted on the application of the United Nations’ policy of domestic jurisdiction over racial issues, but he was not to have his way.21

The issue of racial empowerment was not lost on either Aboriginal leaders or their white supporters. Encouraged by events overseas and buoyed by national organisation, they slowly embarked on a political awakening, demanded freedom from the trappings of colonialism and responded to the effects of oppression at worst and neglect at best. They forced wider Australia to recognise that a ‘wind of change’ was blowing their way.

Like African-American action, Aboriginal resistance to white control has a long history. This is perhaps best demonstrated by Henry Reynolds in The Other Side of the Frontier and Heather Goodall in her study of land politics in New South Wales, but even though Bain Attwood suggests that both of these historians emphasise continuity in their stories, the history they relate centres on local and scattered action that was uncoordinated and unsustained.22 Two of the most prominent and well-known examples of this early resistance occurred in the 1930s under the
guidance of the founder of the Australian Aborigines’ League and leader of the Cummeroogunga mission walk-off in 1939, William Cooper. He encouraged Aborigines to protest against the effects of colonialism by preparing a petition to send to King George VI, which requested that Aborigines be granted separate representation in the Federal Parliament and, along with Bill Ferguson, fellow member of the Australian Workers’ Union, he organised a Day of Mourning in Sydney for 26 January 1938. These attempts to promote Aboriginal rights, as Sue Taffe has rightly explained, ‘had, despite effort and flair, been largely ineffective.’

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, a new intensity and a new direction were present in Aboriginal politics that turned sporadic activism, local dissent and personal resistance into a discernible movement. Although historians have anguished over racism in Australian history, at least since CD Rowley published *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society* in 1970, and although after some thirty-five years the literature of Aboriginal history is rich, diverse and growing, it is only very recently that historians have explored the push for civil and indigenous rights in the postwar period. Historians have been slow to define these changes qualitatively and, in my view, they have still not examined the broader trans-national intellectual context that encouraged and sustained them.

Those who led or participated in emerging indigenous power were, perhaps most naturally, the first to record its history. Leader of the 1965 Freedom Ride, Charles Perkins in 1975; activist, Lorna Lippmann in 1981; Vice-President of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI), Faith Bandler in 1989; and long-serving President of FCAATSI, Joe McGinness in 1991, have all recorded their personal stories, followed most recently by non-Aboriginal advocate for reform, Jack Horner, in 2004. In 2002 Ann Curthoys published an account of the Freedom Ride that blended her memories and diary entries with her critical perspective as an historian, and in the same year Marilyn Lake published a biography of Faith Bandler. Peter Read had earlier published a biography of Charles Perkins. Some of the main events of the period have drawn special attention, such as the 1967 Referendum in Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus’ 1997 study *The 1967 Referendum or when Aborigines didn’t get the Vote*. Some lesser known events have also received treatment. In 1995
and 1997 Sue Taffe and I separately examined government policy relating to Aborigines in the early 1960s and in 1997 John Chesterman and Brian Galligan extended discussion on Aboriginal citizenship with their book *Citizens without Rights.* This was followed in 2000, 2001 and 2002 by John Chesterman’s articles on civil rights, subsequently incorporated into his 2005 book *Civil Rights: How Indigenous Australians Won Formal Equality,* which examined the reasons why government granted changes that resulted in increased civil rights for Aborigines. Also in 2005, Sue Taffe published *Black and White Together,* the history of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the first national organisation constituted to fight for Aboriginal rights. This book examined many of the major issues in Aboriginal activism from 1958–1973 in order to show how ‘this grassroots body developed its power to lobby governments, how campaigns to change society’s understanding of Aboriginal disadvantage were designed, and how the organization inevitably changed as its Indigenous members gained in power.’ In 2003 Bain Attwood published *Rights for Aborigines* and set his task to explore ‘the relationship between rights, race, history and Aboriginality between the 1870s and 1970’ and, in particular, to analyse the ‘historical specificity of “land rights”’. Attwood argued that Reynolds and Goodall might have overemphasised continuity in the historical expression of Aboriginal claims of land ownership without giving enough weight to points of difference and development. Attwood concentrated his study on action out of Melbourne across a one-hundred-year period. He stayed within the domestic story of Aboriginal activism, although he acknowledged Chesterman’s argument that the fear of international criticism led to reform.

There has clearly been a flurry of activity among historians interested in civil rights for Aborigines as they realised in the early 1990s that an important element of Australian political history had been left both unexplored and undervalued. Chesterman was right to ask ‘whether a case might be made for according the changes a more significant place in Australian political history’. As a result of these studies we have a much stronger understanding of the history of activism for civil and indigenous rights. However, apart from the autobiographical and biographical works, only Chesterman and Taffe have published major
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studies on the postwar period alone and yet this is the period in which most of the important changes occurred. The story, however, is still more complicated than that.

In her excellent study of FCAATSI, Sue Taffe often hinted at the broader questions of context. ‘Why were those working in the 1950s more successful than in earlier decades in publicising shameful realities?’ she asked. She wondered if this period could be described as ‘more reflective times’ and concluded that ‘[t]he late 1950s…seemed hopeful.’ 38 Throughout her book Taffe drew references to ‘an international perspective’ provided by Mary Bennett, or to ‘a complex set of circumstances’ which engaged members of FCAATSI and the new ‘social and intellectual climate of the Aboriginal rights movement in the late 1960s.’ 39 She was right to identify a changing and challenging context for Aboriginal activism. Bain Attwood similarly hinted at the process of change. ‘Critics of assimilation at this time,’ he explained, ‘articulated a perspective informed by a knowledge of policies and practices in other colonial situations,’ namely the 1934 United States Indian Reorganisation Act. 40 Attwood acknowledges when talking of assimilation, for example, that by 1963 ‘there had been a major shift in opinion’ and, similarly, he links the emergence of ‘land rights’ as a term to a particular event and time, that is, Yirrkala, 1963. 41 Although Attwood makes the strongest claim for historicity in the story of Aboriginal activism, even he does not specifically examine the 1960s as the crucible of change.

I too was encouraged in the mid 1990s to examine the early years of Aboriginal activism, but from yet another angle and for another purpose. In 1997 I explored the idea that government concern for the environment of international race awareness acted to provoke racial reform in Australia. 42 John Chesterman explored this idea as well, most prominently in his study Civil Rights, arguing convincingly that ‘international pressure has forced Australian governments to make legislative changes,’ 43 but beyond the causal connection that Chesterman examined and the reasoning given by government officials and parliamentarians is the broader and perhaps more nebulous issue of the trans-national intellectual contexts for change. In 1998 I suggested that the rise of Aboriginal activism belonged within the context of the international politics of race. 44 In this study I want to expand upon those initial ideas to demonstrate how the growth
and development of Aboriginal activism was co-existent with wider socio-political action and intellectual shifts in Australia and overseas that might be generally called the emergence of the 60s phenomenon. My story of the rise of Aboriginal activism is not focused on the history of any one organisation or group, nor the reasons why civil rights were gained, nor indeed how civil rights were understood. Rather, my telling of the race story is contingent upon understanding its place within the coming of the 60s phenomenon to Australia. My approach is intentionally broad to open up our understanding of Australia’s engagement with the ideas and the social shifts that mark the coming of the 60s as a period of significant change in Australian history. From this perspective, race, and Aboriginal activism in particular, can be better factored into the national story of the coming of the 60s.

Most historians of the 1960s have framed their studies with big events in order to demonstrate when the 60s really began and how this period was different from what came before and what came afterwards. This approach is a particular legacy of American historiography that is focused on the drama and emotion of riot, rebellion and assassination. American historian, Jon Margolis, for example, equates the 60s with ‘tumult’ and therefore sees the period beginning in 1964: ‘If the tumult did not start in 1964,’ he added, somewhat by way of justification, at least ‘it blossomed then.’

Milton Viorst, who indicatively titled his book on the sixties *Fire in the Streets*, similarly equates the period with intellectual discord and physical upheaval. Event or drama-driven analysis of the 60s, or concentration on what Arthur Marwick calls the ‘high sixties’, has left as unimportant, unmanageable or unimaginable those occasions and periods when the values or manifestations of the 60s were in their infancy, even ineffective or marginalised, or when ideas were fomenting and yet to be translated into any form of mass action.

It is a common view that mass disorder, resistance and disobedience characterise the 60s, yet it is more accurate to say that these terms are used to describe the largest and loudest outcomes of a changed sensibility that emerged slowly in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Those years experienced the beginnings of change, the first tentative and resisted steps towards a subtly new intellectual perspective that was anti-materialistic, millennial, liberating, confronting and open, political and self-conscious. The first
faltering criticism of society taken from a new moral high ground is difficult to describe and even more difficult to assess. Scholars have shied away from the nebulous and focused on the obvious. In other words, few have found interest in the coming of the 60s when the new sensibility was only gaining shape. Most concentrate on the blatant and loudest expression, perhaps because, as Todd Gitlin explains, there is a distinct uncertainty about beginnings and endings. ‘Sweeping, unsettling,’ says Gitlin, ‘and mysterious, since they [the 60s] surged up with no advance warning, anticipated by virtually no one…and melted away almost as rapidly as they had come, leaving perplexity and acrimony galore and enough continuing controversy to fuel demagogic political campaigns and stereotypic documentary films into the next millennium!’

The uncertainty of the coming of the 60s may also be linked to EJ Dionne and Allan Carlson’s belief that the 60s was really the ‘working out (not always successfully) of the many tensions the 1950s embodied: in family life, on racial matters, in politics, and in the culture.’ This theory sits neatly with George Will’s idea that ‘the 1950s were pregnant with the 1960s’ or Irving Kristol’s conceptually similar description of the counterculture as ‘not “caused”, [but] born.’ However, if we try to analyse the uncertain early 60s, however difficult that exercise may be, and examine the intellectual awakening, the faltering action and the fledgling issues that stimulated the development of movements that later enjoyed higher ranking on the political or social agenda, then we will be able to gain a more complete and nuanced understanding of the 60s phenomenon.

Australian historians of the 60s, unlike their American counterparts, traditionally gave minimal attention to matters of race in general and Aborigines in particular, other than identifying major events such as the 1965 Freedom Ride, the 1967 Referendum or the erection of the Tent Embassy in 1972. Donald Horne, for example, one of the earliest historians of this period as an era of change, was primarily interested in heralding the arrival of the Whitlam government. This is why his *Time of Hope*, published in 1980, is set between 1966 and 1972, after Menzies’ retirement and before Gough Whitlam’s election, although he admitted that ‘those times sprang, if only half-formed out of the Menzies years.’ Even so, his brief comments on race only relate to events in the late
60s in which the 1967 Referendum was ‘an important victory’.[52] In 1988 Dennis Altman quickly dismissed the Freedom Ride as suggesting ‘the emergence of new cleavages and styles of activism in Australian political life,’ but, he argued, ‘it was the various movements of the late 1960s on’ and especially protests over the Vietnam War ‘that really exploded the existing model of left politics.’[53] In 1991, Robin Gerster and Jan Bassett in *Seizures of Youth* pursued the remembered 60s where Aborigines featured very briefly as part of white Australia’s growing nationalism and sense of morality.[54]

Other histories of the period are uninterested in race at all. When AW Martin published the second volume of his biography of Robert Menzies, reviewer Jenny Hocking drew attention to the absence of Aboriginal issues. Martin explained that these issues are contemporary and ‘weren’t then on the agenda’. ‘This is simply wrong,’ says Hocking, referring to cases when Aboriginal issues were of considerable interest to the Federal Government, including Menzies’ concern to uphold the principle of domestic jurisdiction during the 1960s. ‘Even this frank acknowledgment from Menzies,’ said Hocking ‘that Aboriginal affairs were not only a domestic issue but also an issue in this international context has not influenced Martin’s view.’[55] Historical interpretation of events in the 1960s has sometimes denied the input of race—as attested to by the Martin–Hocking debate—or, more benignly, ignored it; yet David L Ransel, one time editor of the *American Historical Review*, called race relations the ‘key to tying together the history of the modern world’.[56]

The absence of race in early Australian studies focusing on the 1960s as an era of change is partly due to the popular, cultural and nostalgic focus epitomised by *Seizures of Youth; Hippie, Hippie Shake* and two delightfully self-indulgent and esoteric works, *Mondo Weirdo* and *Baby Boomers*.[57] Furthermore, said Robin Gerster and Jan Basset,

*most discussions of the 1960s, whatever their earnest historiographical intentions, are contrived exercises in myth-making. This, perhaps, is inevitable: the sixties are so entrenched as a cultural commodity and so established by the processes of memory as a fictional construct that they are as historically elusive as the Trojan Wars.*[58]
With fundamentally different intentions and purpose in studies of the 1960s there has been very little interface between historians of race and those who, according to Gerster and Bassett, ‘construct a kind of Faeryland for the middle-aged.’ The exceptions are very recent contributions to the literature. Gwenda Tavan’s 2005 study *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia* placed some emphasis on the 60s as an ‘era of dynamic change’ and begins a discussion on the White Australia debates by quoting Alan Walker, Superintendent of the Central Methodist Mission in Sydney saying that the nature and pace of change were ‘creating... almost a new Australia’. ‘There is much evidence to substantiate Walker’s claims,’ Tavan concluded, and proceeded to set the dismantling of the White Australia Policy broadly within that context. Ann Curthoys also acknowledged at the end of her study on the Freedom Ride that here was ‘one of those transitional moments in Australian history when one era fades and another takes its place. More clearly than any other event, the Freedom Ride signified the shift from the Cold War to the “Sixties”.

The study that best begins to approach a connection between matters of race and an ethos that emerges in the 1960s, although his primary intent is to discuss the revitalisation of theatrical political acts, or ‘gimmicks’, is Sean Scalmer’s 2002 book *Dissent Events: Protest, the Media and the Political Gimmick in Australia*. Here Scalmer explores in detail the idea of the Freedom Ride as a link, or in his terms, a ‘translation’ of events in the United States which then acted to inspire Australians to pursue more radical political statements in the public arena. Scalmer, like Curthoys, sees the Freedom Ride as a pivotal expression of political change.

If matters of race are so important to understanding the post World War II world; if decolonisation is such a potent force that Macmillan can refer to black empowerment as a blowing wind, unstoppable and all-embracing; if black freedom in America is so integral to the emergence of what we have come to know as ‘the 60s’; and if recent historiography, most notably works by Taffe, Atwood, Curthoys and Chesterman, can position a black–white discourse as a central theme in post-war Australian history, then what was the nature of Australia’s participation in the global racial awakening of the 1960s and how did Aborigines and their supporters feature in it? Australia’s experience must by definition be unique and cannot simply be extrapolated from what happened elsewhere. However,
unless we look more closely at racial matters in a period of international reorientation, we miss both Australia’s engagement with the ‘wind of change’ and the emergence of an Aboriginal movement with distinct links to events and developments overseas and refined by experiences at home. If those elements are not included in the historical story of the 60s in Australia, then our understanding will remain chronologically and culturally skewed. Scalmer is right to argue that ‘the process of translation was not automatic, evident, or acultural. It relied on specific historical processes,’ some of which include an intellectual and ongoing relationship with events overseas.63 ‘There is more to this, however, more to this story than just the obvious relationship between the Freedom Ride and the American Civil Rights Movement.

In her essay on the anti-war movement, Ann Curthoys shows an awareness of the importance of international relationships to Australia’s 60s story. She admitted initially not giving ‘the question of American influence on the Australian movement…high priority, seeing my topic very much in terms of Australian history and Australian issues and developments,’ but then realised ‘the relationship and comparison is [sic] vital for an understanding of the Australian movement.’ 64 The same is true for most aspects of society and culture during a period of increasing globalisation. It is particularly true of racial matters, however, because the cultural transfer involved is more subtle and complicated than Donald Horne’s description of the 1965 Freedom Ride simply as ‘one of the new 1960s techniques — fresh from America’.65 Rather, the Australian experience of the sixties must be seen as the local expression of a trans-national phenomenon that was strongly characterised by a changing racial discourse.

In the United States, David Chalmers formulated a definition of the 60s that is a useful starting point for examining the Australian context of this trans-national phenomenon. In his study, And the Crooked Places Made Straight, Chalmers suggested we look ‘behind the headline events of the 1960s’ to where:

there was both a replacement of local standards and ways of doing things with more open, national ones; and a search for grass-roots participation and community, a dialectical interaction of changing consciousness and
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institutions, and the explosion of classic social questions into politics and into the streets.66

Chalmers’ definition does not deny the dramatic significance of well-known major events; rather, it offers a reasonable perspective from which to describe and understand what they mean. In Chalmers’ eyes the big event is just the tip of the iceberg. Riots, assassinations, sit-ins, vigils, strikes and the practice of alternative lifestyles were all dramatic manifestations of empowerment. In this study I want to use Chalmers’ list of features as an entry point into the history of the coming of the ‘60s’ to Australia. If Chalmers’ characteristics are discernible in the Australian context, and I believe they are, then three points can be made. First and most simply, this description of the 60s is not just specific to America, demonstrating that the ‘60s’ was a movement that transcended national boundaries, certainly expressive of local differences and circumstances but linked by commonality. Secondly, the presence of these features in the early 1960s, gathering intensity by 1971, demonstrates that the 60s began in Australia, however tentatively or peculiarly, at least contemporaneously with America and Europe.67 The changes were clearly discernible by 1964. The ‘60s’ peaked in America and Europe in 1968, with Australia following some three years afterwards, peaking in 1971–72, reaching a plateau through the Whitlam years to decline with the coming of the Fraser Government in 1975. Thirdly, the presence of these features in the emergence of the Aboriginal movement sets Australian racial history in a much wider context, showing that race politics was an early element in the emergence and formulation of a ‘60s’ sensibility in Australia as elsewhere.

The purpose of this study is to examine the way racial debates, particularly those affecting Aborigines, brought Australia into the 1960s, literally and figuratively. Racial matters forged a complex and testing interrelationship between established authorities and alternative sensibilities, demonstrating the early and possibly elementary engagement with the empowering features David Chalmers has identified as representative of a 60s ethos. By the time the Beatles visited in 1964 and selective conscription was introduced by a government fearful of war with Indonesia and heading to Vietnam, the underlying features that marked
the 1960s in Chalmers’ mind were already evident in Australia as much as elsewhere. Parochial practices were attacked as out of step with national and international standards. A sense of community among Aboriginal people outside of kinship groups was growing exponentially with national organisation and grassroots participation in political action. More tolerant views on race and culture gained support and stood diametrically opposed to the authoritative and historically limiting positions of local, state and federal government, the church, the universities, the family and other powerful institutions in Australian society. Social and cultural issues were politicised, dramatised and vocalised; they could no longer simply be hidden or ignored. The nation was forced to engage with the challenges of the new morality, but that engagement did not come easily, quickly or painlessly. Clearly though, the 'wind of change' had reached Australia. By the mid to late sixties race was a subject fixed on the political agenda, a matter for public discussion, the stuff of popular protest rather than private despair and a focus for a social phenomenon that was no longer coming but had already arrived.