



NAIDOC WEEK
50 YEARS DEADLY
5-12 JULY 2026



MEDIA RELEASE

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NAIDOC launches 2026 theme “50 Years of Deadly”, marks major milestone

The National NAIDOC Committee has today unveiled its 2026 national theme, **50 Years of Deadly**, marking five decades of NAIDOC Week, a week dedicated to amplifying and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

For fifty years, NAIDOC themes have spoken to survival, resistance, culture and pride. They have honoured Elders and leaders, celebrated creativity, and challenged the nation to listen, reckon and act. Each theme has marked a moment in time, capturing where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were, and where the country needs to pay attention.

50 Years of Deadly is both a reflection and a declaration. It acknowledges the strength it has taken to reach this milestone, not by chance, but because generations of people refused to be silenced. It recognises the organisers, artists, activists and communities who carried NAIDOC forward year after year, ensuring it remained grounded in culture and community.

NAIDOC has always been more than a single week. It is a platform for truth-telling, a celebration of identity, and a statement of continuity. Today, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are leading change across every field. From health and education to media, business and the arts — telling their own stories, in their own way, on their own terms.

NAIDOC Co-Chair Steven Satour said the 2026 theme marks both a milestone and a moment of responsibility.

“For fifty years, NAIDOC themes have marked the moments when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices shaped the national conversation,” Mr Satour said.

“50 Years of Deadly recognises the leadership and cultural authority that carried this movement forward and affirms that NAIDOC’s next chapter will be shaped by community leadership, long-term vision, and a stronger, more sustainable future.”

NAIDOC Co-Chair Aunty Professor Lynette Riley said the theme honours the collective



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effort behind the movement.

“NAIDOC has always belonged to mob,” Aunty Lyn Riley said.

“This theme honours the people who stood firm, who kept organising, creating and leading, and who ensured culture and community remained at the centre of everything NAIDOC stands for.”

Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon. Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, said:

“This year’s NAIDOC Week theme, 50 Years of Deadly, celebrates a powerful milestone in the history of NAIDOC. It reflects the pride, strength and resilience of First Nations people and it points to a bright future ahead.

“I encourage all Australians to get involved with NAIDOC Week this year. Whether you attend or host a local event, or nominate someone deserving for a NAIDOC Award, it’s a meaningful way to celebrate and recognise the positive contributions First Nations people have made to their communities and our country.

“The official NAIDOC Week poster is an important and prestigious part of NAIDOC Week. The 2026 National NAIDOC poster competition gives First Nations artists a national platform to share their culture, creativity and storytelling.”

Principal Media Partnership

NITV and SBS will join National NAIDOC Week as Principal Media Partner for a three-year term from 2026 to 2028, supporting the ongoing visibility and impact of NAIDOC across the country. This partnership reflects a longstanding relationship between NAIDOC, NITV and SBS in championing First Nations storytelling and community leadership.

Tanya Denning-Orman, a proud Birri and Guugu Yimidhirr woman and Director, First Nations at SBS, said:

“NAIDOC is led by mob and is a powerful expression of culture, truth-telling and community. As we mark 50 Years of Deadly, we honour the Elders, leaders and communities who carried this movement forward and helped shape its future.

“For NITV and SBS, this partnership is grounded in our shared commitment to elevate First Nations voices and perspectives. It is at the heart of what we do, and we’re proud to stand alongside NAIDOC as principal media partner, supporting the next chapter of a movement led by our communities, and ensuring the significance of this moment is shared nationwide.”



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As part of the national launch, NAIDOC has also opened nominations for the 2026 NAIDOC Awards and the National NAIDOC Poster Competition, inviting communities, artists, schools and organisations across the country to participate in the milestone year.

50 Years of Deadly is a marker of what has been built and of the momentum still growing. It is a reminder that NAIDOC belongs to community, that culture leads, and that the work continues.

For more information and to access official assets, visit naidoc.org.au

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Media Kit link:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/aivjcd4bg1wsgclymd94w/AG0FIncmfzzw-T2kXs_EWNM?rlkey=kbgc94kolarl7wixyqs858u5s&st=fe09ddrk&dl=0

A full media kit is available and includes:

- Official media release
- Theme fact sheet and key messages
- Approved spokesperson quotes
- High-resolution images and logos
- 50 Year Symbol artwork (colour and mono)
- Hero video and imagery

About NAIDOC

National NAIDOC Week, held during the first week of July each year, is an opportunity for Australians to come together to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth.

The NAIDOC Committee encourages schools, workplaces and the public to get involved with NAIDOC Week events during 5-12 July to celebrate the history culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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National NAIDOC Awards

Nominations are now open for the National NAIDOC Awards, which celebrate the outstanding contributions and excellence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across 10 award categories. Nominations close on **Sunday 8 March 2026 at 11:59pm (AEDT)**. You can submit your nomination by reading the selection criteria and filling out the nomination form on the [2026 National NAIDOC Awards Nominations](#) page.

National NAIDOC Poster Competition

The National NAIDOC poster competition is now open. Individuals or groups, aged 18 and over can submit their artwork reflecting the 2026 National NAIDOC Week theme – *50 Years of Deadly*. The Poster Competition closes on **Sunday 1 March 2026 at 11:59pm (AEDT)**. For more information and [terms and conditions of entry](#), please visit the [National NAIDOC Poster Competition](#) page.