

The return of Uluru to traditional owners

FROM THE BEGINNING	For thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans in Australia, Uluru and Kata Tjuta was Aboriginal land.
EARLY 20TH CENTURY	In the 1920s, non-Aboriginal people set aside the Great Central Desert Aboriginal Reserve (GCDAR), to allow Anangu a limited area in which to live. In 1958 areas of this reserve were partitioned for use as a tourist and wildlife reserve.
MID 20TH CENTURY	<p>With the Australian Aboriginal Land Rights movement of the 1960s, events including the Yolngu Bark Petition (1963), the Freedom Bus Ride (1965) and Gurindji Wave Hill Walk-off (1966) occurred.</p> <p>The National Referendum in 1967 led to the 1973 Woodward Commission and development of the Land Rights Act. Eventually, this led to the handback of Uluru (Ayers Rock–Mount Olga) National Park.</p>
1985	On 26 October 1985, the Uluru–Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Land Trust was granted title to the park by the Governor General of Australia, Sir Ninian Stephen. This has become known as ‘Handback’. A condition of Handback was that the traditional owners lease the land to the Director of National Parks for 99 years, with the lease also obliging the Director to promote Aboriginal administration, management and control of the park.
POST 1985	The official name of the park was changed to Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park in 1993. During the years that Anangu were not in control of their land, traditional owners were unable to care for the land the way their ancestors had taught them, and sacred places were not looked after properly. Since Handback, Anangu have been managing the park with Parks Australia in a process of working together – known as ‘joint management’.
2005	Anangu and Piranpa (white people) together celebrated the 20th Anniversary since the return of the land to traditional owners.
2010	Anangu and Piranpa (white people) together celebrated the 25th Anniversary since the return of the land to traditional owners.