

## Thousands march to Old Parliament House for Tent Embassy anniversary



*Protesters in Canberra march through the city for the 50th anniversary of the Tent Embassy*

By Cameron Gooley  
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Thousands of people have marched through the streets of the national capital on Australia Day protesting Indigenous human rights issues as part of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy's 50th anniversary.

The peaceful protesters marched from Canberra's city centre to the lawns of Old Parliament House, with many chanting demands for Indigenous land rights.

"What do we want? Land rights! When do we want it? Now!" they chanted, as they walked through the city's roads.

As the crowds rallied at Garema Place, in Canberra's CBD, organisers also protested against Indigenous deaths in custody and colonialism. Many also spoke about their hopes for the younger generations to continue their fight.

As the crowd arrived at the lawns of Old Parliament House a group of children ran ahead, leading marchers on the final leg to the Tent Embassy.

Many others who didn't march had already arrived at the Tent Embassy as it welcomed the public for a series of cultural activities and exhibitions for the milestone anniversary.

Torres Strait Islander man Danny Blanket said he was visiting the site to pay his respect to those who had spent their lives fighting for issues like land rights.



*Torres Strait Islander man Danny Blanket came to the Tent Embassy for its 50th anniversary events.*

"I'm here mostly to acknowledge the ongoing struggle of Indigenous people, especially Aboriginal people being on their country today," he said.

"I think its important Indigenous people come together and reflect and remember the struggles of our forebears, but also renew that struggle for ongoing rights, especially land rights and sovereignty."

He said he was heartened seeing so many children at the event.

"50 years is a long time, but it'll be going on in the future because of these young people here today," he said.



*The protesters marched from the city centre to the lawns of Old Parliament House.*

The Tent Embassy was first founded on January 26th 1972 by four Aboriginal men who were outraged by comments made by then prime minister William McMahon. The embassy was torn down by police twice before the ACT Supreme Court declared its removal illegal, and it remained at the site until 1975.

After years of moving around the city the embassy moved back to the Old Parliament House lawns for its 20th anniversary in 1992.

The embassy has been the centre of controversy the last few months, culminating in a police eviction of “original sovereign” protesters that was welcomed by traditional owners.