

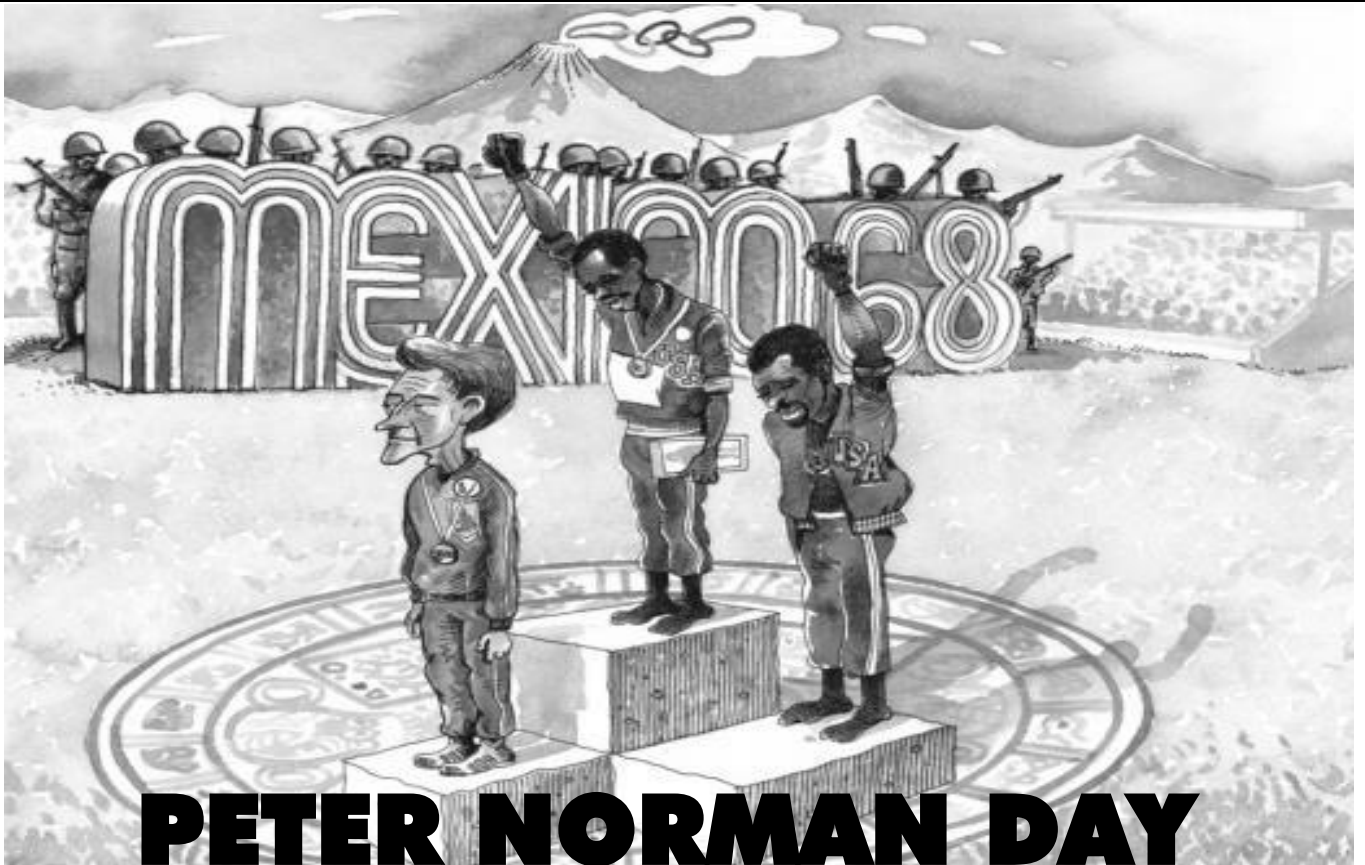
# IT'S ABOUT TIME

It's about time the Australian Parliament, on behalf of the Australian people, issued a posthumous apology to Peter George Norman, the Australian 1968 Mexico Olympics 200 metres silver medallist who paid an extraordinary personal price for supporting universal human rights. Peter, born in 1942, grew up in Coburg, Melbourne. He represented Australia in the 200 metres in the 1968 Mexico Olympics. He won silver in a time of 20.06 seconds. A time that has never been beaten by an Australian athlete.

The gold medallist, Tommie Smith and the bronze medallist John Carlos, Afro Americans caught up in the civil rights movement, asked Norman whether he believed in human rights and whether he believed in God. He answered yes to both questions. The Americans told him they would use the medal presentation to promote their cause, he told them, "I'll stand with you". On the way to the medal ceremony Norman asked the United States rower Paul Hoffman if he could wear the badge he was wearing, a badge that supported the Olympic Project for Human Rights. While Smith and Carlos gave the black power salute, Norman stood on the dais wearing the Olympic Project for Human Rights badge to publicly demonstrate his solidarity with their protest.

Retribution by the Australian Olympic Committee was swift and brutal. Norman was reprimanded for his actions. The media in Australia ostracised him when he came home. The Australian Olympic track team refused to send him to Munich in 1972 despite Norman posting Olympic qualifying times in both the 100 and 200 metres. The 1972 Olympics was the first time since 1896 that Australia had not been represented in the sprints. Salt was rubbed into an open wound in 2000 when the Australian Olympic Committee did not invite him to participate in the celebrations surrounding the Sydney Olympics. He attended as a guest of the United States Track and Field team. Peter Norman died of a heart attack aged 64 on the 3rd October 2006, a disillusioned man.

Both Tommie Smith and John Carlos attended his funeral in Melbourne acting as pall bearers and delivery eulogies to a great Australian who had been ostracised and forgotten by a nation that continues to give lip service to human rights. The US Track and Field Federation, realising the personal cost Peter Norman bore throughout his life because of his brave, dignified and moral stand in the struggle for universal human rights, declared the 9th October (the day of his funeral in 2006) as Peter Norman Day, a day that is celebrated in the United States and ignored in this country. – Lest We Forget.



## **PETER NORMAN DAY (HUMAN RIGHTS DAY)**

This year we will be holding a small gathering to mark Peter Norman Day. Peter Norman, the 1968 Mexico Olympic 200m Silver Medalist supported his two American Olympic medallists when they gave the black power salute at the Mexico Olympics.

The American Track and Field Association has designated 9th October Peter Norman Day to acknowledge his support for human rights.

**JOIN US AT MIDDAY  
WEDNESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER  
at HUMAN RIGHTS SQUARE  
(formerly CITY SQUARE)**

**cnr Little Collins & Swanston St, Melbourne**

**Honour a great Australian who has been  
written out of this country's history books**