

NEVILLE BONNER

Neville Thomas Bonner is an elder of the Jagera people. He was born on the 28th of March 1992 on Ukerebagh Island on Tweed River, New South Wales. His parents are named Henry Kenneth Bonner and Julia Rebecca Bonner although he never knew his father so he was closest to his mum. Then his mother fell sick and died in 1969. When he was born he was not recognised as a Australian like other First Nations but he will eventually become Australia's first Indigenous and Torres Strait islander representative in federal politics.

In his early years Neville Bonner lived in New South Wales but then he moved to Queensland. He moved to attend a school at the age of thirteen. He had one year of formal education and worked as a labourer on various properties. He also lived for a time on a palm island and became involved with community affairs. He was appointed supervisor of approximately 300 people.

Bonner remained committed to the advancement of First Nations people. In 1967 he joined the Liberal Party. Within 5 years he was elected member of the Australian federal parliament and he was the first Indigenous person to join any parliament. He was a respected commentator on Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander issues. In 1979 he was named Australian of the Year.

After resigning in 1983 Neville Bonner worked with a number of organisations to improve the welfare of First Nations peoples and in 1984 he was appointed Officer of the Order of Australia. In 1993 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Griffith University.

Neville Bonner sadly died in 1999 and in 2004 the Queensland federal electorate of Bonner was created in his honour. Neville Bonner was a really nice guy and he is remembered for being the first Indigenous person in any parliament and trying to change the rights of Indigenous people.