



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday 14 January 2019

**RECONCILIATION VICTORIA CALLS FOR CONTINUING AND RESPECTFUL DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE SUITABILITY OF JANUARY 26 AS AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL DAY**

Reconciliation Victoria encourages a continuing and respectful national conversation about the suitability of celebrating our national day on the 26th January. This conversation would help us reflect on who we are as a nation, what we stand for, and what date in our history best reflects those values and attributes.

Reconciliation Victoria acknowledges that, as with any community, there is a diversity of views within Aboriginal communities. Some view the day as an opportunity to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' survival as the longest continuing culture on earth within the story of the modern Australian nation.

However, **there is a strong view within Aboriginal communities and the reconciliation movement that January 26 represents the beginning of an unlawful invasion with devastating impacts still felt by Aboriginal communities.** Right across the country, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders can testify to the impacts of colonisation. They continue to experience marked deficits in health, education, employment, justice and child-removal outcomes.

**It is time for Australians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to re-examine this country's true history and work together to create a new identity** – one informed by truth and understanding and that acknowledges the richness that Aboriginal culture and knowledge contribute to this country.

Reconciliation Victoria congratulates those Victorian councils that have already changed how they mark January 26 - Yarra, Darebin and Moreland, - and **encourage the other 76 councils to reflect on the appropriateness of 26 January as our national day.**

Reconciliation Victoria encourages Victorians to mark 26<sup>th</sup> January respectfully; to join in the conversation and to attend local events such as Balit Narrun (Share the Spirit) and Belgrave Survival Day - for event information and media commentary on the day visit our website [www.reconciliationvic.org.au](http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au)

Reconciliation Victoria also supports Amnesty International's petition to the Federal Government supporting community consultation about a new date for Australia Day and encourages Victorians to sign the [online petition](#).

Quotes attributable to Reconciliation Victoria CEO Diana David:

*"We encourage Victorians to reconsider how we celebrate Australia Day. It's useful to remember that Australia Day as we know it today, has only existed as a national holiday since 1994. Moving the day is not such a radical step or break with tradition."*

*"The job of local governments is to listen to their communities and represent their views. We commend Yarra City Council, Darebin City Council, Moreland City Council and others who are doing this."*

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