

# ‘Australia Day’ or ‘Invasion Day?’

## A semantic debate at the heart of an identity crisis

Student Name: Hugo Kennedy  
Supervisor Name: Amia Srinivasan  
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Every 26 of January on their national day, Australians head to the beach, play cricket, eat lamb chops and sausages on the 'barbie', but also drink a lot of beer. 'Australia day', previously called 'Foundation day', 'Anniversary Day', or 'First Landing Day', was celebrated differently and not with the same enthusiasm in every state and territory as it is today. It initially began as a celebration organised by the early settlers, which were for the majority British citizens employed by the Empire and then increasingly gained appeal overtime. It grew into a recognised public celebration by the 1930's. Nonetheless, It was only in 1994 that 'Australia Day' officially became a public holiday all over Australia and that celebrations, rituals and ceremonies were homogenised. Officially, according to the Australia Day National Council 'the 26 January is the day to reflect on what it means to be Australian, to celebrate contemporary Australia and to acknowledge our history.'

The date of the 26 January marks the anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet of British ships at Port Jackson in 1788, subsequently leading to the foundation of Sydney and the proclamation of British sovereignty over the Eastern seaboard of Australia. What the British had described as 'Terra Nullius', a territory belonging to nobody, came under the possession of the British Empire after they officially claimed it with their first property and sovereignty act upon their first week of arrival. It consequently placed Aboriginal people, who constitute the oldest civilisation in the world and had lived on Australian territory for 80.000 years, under British rule. The terms 'Aboriginal' and 'Indigenous' refer to the first inhabitants of Australia and is defined by Australian law as 'a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he [or she] lives'. Today, the division between White Australians and Aboriginals is still high and marked by considerable disparities in employment, health, incarceration in the world.

Australia is the only former colonial country in the world which celebrates the beginning of a colonisation process instead of an Independence Day or the unification of a country (Reynolds, 1986). Hence today, the celebrations, which officially aim to present Australia's modern society and diversity, mark a key date at the heart of debates regarding the national narrative, which can be defined as the "story that writes the history of a nation within other stories" (Jameson, 1963). From the perspective of Aboriginal people, Australia Day could be seen as the date on which their land was taken away by the 'White Man' and marks the beginning of 200 years of injustices, inequalities, segregation. Over the

last ten years, an increasing number of political groups sympathetic to their cause claim that the 26 January should be referred to as 'Invasion Day'. In parallel, the rise of an exclusionary nationalism, which conceives Australian culture in a shallow and racist way, has staunchly defended 'Australia day' under its current form.

Therefore, this essay aims at investigating the nature of this complex identity issue that crystallises tensions between the two quarrelling conceptions over what makes the *Australian nation*. The 'Invasion Day' debate does not merely assess the date on which the national celebrations occur. It is rooted in a more intricate analysis of the features and the meaning of Australian identity. It also questions self-perception, inter-racial perceptions and the legacy of colonialism. This research extended essay combines primary sources (newspaper articles and discussion panels) with academic literature on Australian nationalism and History, as well as more theoretical literature on the concept of race, nation, social justice and political narratives.

In the first instance, this essay will show that the 'Invasion Day' movement highlights a meaningful and historic division between White Australians and Aboriginals which has left visible scars and is still perpetuated. It will also look into the rising 'White' exclusionary nationalism (deeply anchored in a preexisting colonial settler nationalism inherited from the British Empire). In the second instance, it will however show that the 'Invasion Day' activist groups sometimes do not democratically represent the Aboriginal groups they speak for and that their calls can be dividing Australian society instead of uniting it. In the last instance, this essay will look at the implications and perspectives for Australians to find a common past to build a new 'imagined community', that is at the heart of the 'Australia Day' debate.

In the first instance, the appellation 'Invasion Day' highlights the fact that the Australian National Day marks the 'invasion' of Aboriginals by Europeans and the persisting racial separation intrinsic to Australian national identity, which is reflected in the Australian Constitution.

Firstly, it aims to remind of the origins of the Australian nation and the dispossession of the land by Europeans. From the Aboriginal perspective, the national celebrations mark the British rule over Australia (Kwan, 2007). While other nation's national days generally mark a historical event that symbolises the founding of the nation, an independence or unification, or a date which best exemplifies the nation, the 26 January marks the biggest expropriation of territory in modern history by another country. The 'Invasion Day' movement highlights the fact that the remembrance of invasion and loss of territory, that implies the suffering of Aboriginal populations, clashes with the purpose of the National Day to celebrate all aspects of the Australian nation. Furthermore, the movement aims to point at what Deryck Schreuder and Stuart Ward (2008) describe as the persistence of a British Empire mindset which underpins a racist 'Settler-Nationalism' deeply anchored in Australian identity.

Henry Reynolds (1989, 1996, 2000) argues that the official act of declaration in Australia is not only illegal, but 'truly the biggest unconstitutional act and theft in the jurisprudence of the British Empire'. Paradoxically, Britain had a strong legal culture of property protection and the prisoners that were sent to as prisoners to Australia often were expelled from Britain as punishment for theft. He argues against those defending the idea that the British colonisation of Australia was a reflection of the 'mindset and practices' of that period. He shows that political newspapers and thinkers in the XVIIIth century such as Jeremy Bentham, had already voiced their disapproval. Moreover, before the arrival of the First Fleet, scientists and explorers, which had previously navigated around the Eastern part of Australia, had officially recognised the Aboriginals as the rightful owners of the land. Furthermore, Reynolds, in his 'History Wars', is one of the first authors to loudly speak out the cultural and ethnic genocide of Aboriginals and the amplitudes of the abhorrences committed by the British.

Second, it can be argued that the racial separation between White Australians and Aboriginals is intrinsic to the Australian Constitution and national identity, and is translated by persisting disparities within Australian society. Charles Mills' 'Racial Contract' (1997) argues that the Social Contract necessarily includes a racial hierarchy. This can be applied to Australia, whose Constitution does not only fail to recognise Aboriginals as the first inhabitants of Australia, but also clearly contains a hierarchy between White Australians and Aboriginals. Section 25 acknowledges

that a state can remove the voting rights of Australian citizens due to race. Until 1967, Section 21 stated that Australian laws applied to 'the people of any race, other than the Aboriginal race in any state, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws'. Even if the wording 'Aboriginal' was removed by a 1967 referendum, the distinction between 'people of any race' and races 'for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws' has remained and the highest legal norm thus protects racial discrimination.

This inherent racial disparity is reflected by the vast inequalities between White Australians and Aboriginals who remain in an abnormal precarious situation. For example, the unemployment rate of Aboriginals is 20%, which is four times the national rate (5%); only 22% of Indigenous adults have a higher education against 48% overall and only 39% of Indigenous students finish their Senior High school education against 75% overall. The life expectancy is 10 years below the national average (82 years). Furthermore, they account for 28% of Australian prison populations, while they only account for 2.3% of the population. Finally, the illicit drug use by Aboriginal people is twice as high as the one of the general population.

Moreover, the 'Invasion Day' movement and its discourse is an unprecedented opportunity to bring public attention to the injustices and crimes which have been committed and are still perpetuated towards Aboriginal people. The racial separation described above is inscribed in Australian mindsets and is perpetuated over generations. Striley and Lawson (2014) have demonstrated rigorously that Aboriginals were literally 'silenced' and constantly placed in a position of inferiority and symbolic powerlessness in regular conversations and communicative actions of Australians. More precisely, as they evaluated the manner in which Aboriginals were mentioned and the value they were prescribed, the study concluded that Australians rationalised a racial hierarchy.

Furthermore, the modern forms of celebration of 'Australia day' reflect a vision of Australian nationalism that is increasingly White-supremacist and excludes Indigenous Australians, and led to today's 'Invasion Day' controversy. During the past years, the narrative of Australian national identity has increasingly evolved towards an exclusionary, racist White supremacist vision (Fozdar, Spittles, Hartley, 2015) that opposes White Australians with a White Anglo-background and amongst others, Indigenous Australians. Orr (2010: 510) describes how historically, Australian nationalism used to be 'laconic and undemonstrative' that limited flag use to official occasions. However, the way Australia

Day celebrations have evolved to reflect a vision of Australia that excludes Aboriginals from the national community (Burke, 2010). This is revealed by a recent strong attachment to the flag that can be a provocative and symbolic weapon used against ethnic groups failing to assimilate. Demonstrations of this exclusionary nationalism comprise aggressive celebration acts, such as in 2009, when dark-skinned Australians were forced to 'kiss the flag' and were threatened by 'verbal and physical abuse' (McAllister, 2012: 114) if they were non-compliant. The politician Pauline Hanson even used the flag as the symbol of her anti-immigration One Nation party. MacIntyre and Clark (2003) explain how this type of nationalism is linked to the Australians' complex relationship with diversity and national identity. Therefore, the Invasion Day activists 'condemn this resurgent, aggressive nationalism' (Sarrar, 2017) and point out the fact that there is no knowledge or recognition of Aboriginal Australians and their past in this type of nationalism and the current Australia day celebrations. They defend the idea that traditions should create a coherent link between the past, the present and the future to maintain societal order. In order to do so, they intend to rectify the Aboriginals' recognition in Australian society by changing the appellation of the National celebration. Furthermore, the 'Australia Day' celebrations lack political substance, combined to poor knowledge of history, strongly contributes to stimulate national-populism. (Skinner, 2016) 'Australia Day' celebrations fail to reflect what the Australian nation values and what its citizens have in common. Instead they reflect a negation of any history through hedonist celebration. The superficial character of the celebrations is illustrated by the fact that according to surveys, approximately 60% of Australians are unaware of what happened on the 26 January. This can be explained by the fact that the way the National Day is celebrated was to a great extent artificially fabricated by P.R campaigns that inscribed themselves in the line of conservative politicians aiming to strengthen the national sentiment in an increasingly multicultural country with no common identity. (Fozdar, F Spittles, B and Hartley, L. 2015) However, the nationalism they promoted was not well founded on the history of all Australians but on the sole 'pride of being Australian'. As a consequence, this insubstantial nationalism, incarnated by 'boganness' (Clark, 2006), was increasingly used by the popular class, and has evolved to the exclusionary nationalism described above. In confrontations with the 'Invasion Day movement', defenders of the traditional 'Australia Day' have labelled 'Invasion Day' protesters as 'indoctrinated radical leftists' and 'politically correct'.

These elements show that the current celebrations and the appellation 'Australia Day' are representative of the division of Australian society. In addition, they suggest a racial hierarchy between White Australians and Aboriginals. Lastly, the way the shallow foundations upon which Australia Day is celebrated has nourished an exclusionary, populist nationalism. Changing the appellation of the National Day would raise awareness about the need to recognise Aboriginal people and their history to let them exist within the national narrative. This would contribute to the creation of a more inclusive Australian national identity.

In the second instance, we will look at what calling the national day 'Invasion Day' signifies in the political debate, what it infers as a speech-act type discourse, and what message is communicated by activists who support this paradigm. The arguments presented by the advocates of the 'Invasion Day' appellation are also subject to criticism. Even though they point out fundamental problems with regards to Australia's identity, it can be argued that they can not democratically represent the Indigenous groups they claim to defend. Rather, since Aboriginals lack political representation, they constitute a more radical voice which provides one alternative to the dominant narrative. This voice, by filling the gap, crafts an narrative which exists in opposition to Australian identity. The question switches from the debate on the date Australians should celebrate to the question of belonging to Australia thereby amplifying existing historical tensions.

Firstly, 'The Invasion Day' phrasing is more than just a description. It is a political discourse which seeks to communicate an idea. More precisely, it is a linguistic speech act which conveys a meaning far greater than the mere fact of describing an invasion. Along with its phrasing, it is accompanied by various coherent political acts such as speeches, statements and protests. It holds an underlying meaning which is governed by a specific paradigm. It provides a coherent narrative linking the past to the present. It critically analyses the 'Australia Day' narrative by highlighting and proposing a different point of view of historic events. It also, like any discourse, chooses to put certain events or ideas in a different hierarchy. Therefore, it is important to distinguish Aboriginal Australians

as a group and the political discourse of 'Invasion Day' which deals with Aboriginal Australians, Australian identity, race and power relationships within Australia in a historic prism. The 'Invasion Day' activists movements are supported by both Aboriginals and other Australians sympathetic to the cause but it is not a representative organ of Aboriginal Australians as people generally assume in the debate. Hence, it is a political movement guided by a certain philosophy.

Moreover, while they claim to represent Indigenous groups, some activists have spoken without consulting or involving Indigenous leaders. In several cases, it seems decisions regarding the offensive nature of Australia day celebrations have been taken without consulting local Aboriginal elders. For instance, the town council of Fremantle, a major port city in Western Australia, took the controversial decision not to celebrate 'Australia day' on the grounds that it was 'offensive and culturally insensitive'. Nevertheless, it was later discovered that the group of local Elders of the Nyoongar nation, had never even been contacted or asked about this decision. Another account, is one of the Indigenous affairs minister who claimed 'he was never asked for a date change' in his work with communities (Foster, 2017). A large number of claims illustrate there can not be an official position of aborigines on the matter since there is no official census or representative body. More importantly, instead of taking into account Aboriginal people's sensitivity, the decision to refuse to celebrate 'Australia day' is a decision guided by a political view.

Secondly, this problem can be explained by the problematic fact that, as described above, Aboriginal Australians lack proper political representation and historically have never been recognised in the constitution (Windschuttle, 2002). Their poor participation in the democratic process combined with the historical oppression, ongoing inequalities and injustice but also the government's failure to provide any effective and substantial public solutions over the years, are elements which have built up more radical approaches (Goonyandi, 2013). Indeed, even if the latter appears difficult to demonstrate, one can look at the evolution of the Indigenous activism in order to understand the different approach 'Invasion Day' activists take. Aboriginal Australian activism traces its existence back to the 1938 'National Day of Mourning' organised by the Aboriginal Progressive Association,

held on the sesquicentenary of the British Empire's arrival. In its official declaration, it sought to remind Australians of the injustices and 'callous treatment of Aboriginal people by the White man'. It also appealed 'to the Australian Nation of today to make new laws for the education and care of aborigines' and asked for a 'new policy which will raise OUR PEOPLE to FULL citizen STATUS and equality within the community'. This declaration and the march on that marks a key moment in Australian History..

It can be argued that the Aboriginal Progressive Association, in its founding document, distinguishes between the concept of the 'White man', arguably to refer to the colonisation by the British Empire and today's 'Australian Nation'. Also, it has certain requests which are made not in rejection of Australia but in an attempt to be included and equal to other Australians. This counter-discourse aimed to obtain rights and recognition for Aboriginal people. Prominent Aboriginal activists of that generation such as Sir Douglas Nicholls, first and only Aboriginal Governor of South Australia and Knight, did not hold political views in opposition to the Australian nation because they fought the consequences of colonialism and didn't perceive the Australian Nation inherently as 'the colonialist'. (Windschuttle, 2002) The 'Morning Day' discourse and its word choice, recognises the suffering of Aboriginal people but does not see the Australian Nation as the invading enemy. The 'Invasion Day' word choice, however, is different and more active. It implies the presence of an unwanted invader and a resistance. (Manifest of the Warriors for the Aboriginal Resistance, 2014)

Further, the counter discourse has evolved and critics believe the modern discourse seeks to divide. Even though the 'Invasion Day' movement is also able to remind of Australia's neglected black History by effectively gaining public attention with more violent and controversial protests, it insists on distinguishing two different groups with distinct roles in the narrative, reminding of a pre-established racial divide and exerting a moral judgment on them: the aggressor / invader and the victim / invaded. The 'Invasion Day' protests, speeches and online activity has affirmed overall a strong rejection of Australia based on moral and political grounds. By confusing and interpreting the Australian Nation with the British Empire and colonialism, which to a certain extent still has neocolonial attributes, most notably, power relations have been maintained. Today, the 'Invasion Day' activists manifest their desire to separate and, potentially destroy the Australian Nation-State. The destruction may occur on intellectual and moral grounds but could also potentially escalate. There is various evidence of the

formulated claims, yet the extent to which they are a concrete political objective or simply a manifestation of anger is unknown. However, the Manifesto of one of the leading Aboriginal activists organisation seems to demonstrate clearly certain intentions and political positions such as : 'Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance fights to destroy the colonial Australian state and restore tribal sovereignty', ' WAR's core Philosophy: [...] Aboriginal Nationalism is founded in two core principles resistance and reconstruction. [...] When it comes to Aboriginal affairs, the government is aligned with those of the corporate world. Their Philosophy of colonialism finds its foundations in greed and racism'. Other controversial speeches on 'Invasion Day' have included statements such as 'Fuck Australia, let it burn to the grounds' or 'Beware White man and black traitor', and have been accompanied by burning flags. This essay does not attempt to evaluate the truth of their claims, even when various thinkers agree with the analysis they offer (Reynolds, 2001 & Tout, 2017) but it can, looking at the evidence, notice a clear decision to engage in a will to self-identify in separation to the Australian Nation and maneuver its own political agenda as the demands for 'sovereignty' suggest. Other key activist groups have also confirmed this desire to separate. For Instance, the Aboriginal Provisional Government (APG) founded in the 1990's or the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in the 1970's, have both specifically asked for sovereignty, an independent state within Australia and have even created symbolic 'Aboriginal passports'. Lastly, the 'Invasion Day' narrative simplifies, vilifies and generalises the identity of White Australians. In the same way the dominant definition of Australian identity fails to recognise Aboriginal Australians' history. The 'Invasion Day narrative', doesn't look at various central elements in Australian history such as first world war, where both White and Aboriginal Australians fought, convict history, immigration from a variety of culturally rich countries, women's rights (South Australian women were amongst the first to vote), Sovereignty and the creation of a federal parliament and government of Australia, economic success, etc. Consequently, the two opposed discourses are evidently in conflict and foster division. (Skinner, 2016).

These elements show that the 'Invasion Day' movement does not only fail to democratically represent Aboriginals, but has evolved from seeking equal rights and the betterment of living conditions of Aboriginals towards a fierce anti-Australian counternarrative.

In the third instance, I look at the implications and perspectives for Australians to find a common past to construct a new 'imagined community', that is at the heart of the 'Australia Day' debate (Putnis, 2009). The semantic debate goes further than just questioning the appellation 'Australia Day' and questions the very foundations of Australian identity, culture and history. It touches a sore spot at the heart of the construction of Australian identity itself. In order to fully grasp these implications of the semantic debate, it is necessary to challenge the Western philosophical and analytical framework by looking into the importance of history on the understanding of one body as a nation, before questioning the semantic and the knowledge on which the demands are established.

Firstly, it can be argued that the 'Invasion Day activists' apply a Western philosophical and analytical framework to understand Australian history and hence fail to produce a solid idea of the nation that includes all parts of Australian population. Curthoys (2000) observes that 'in Australia, there have been for a long time two distinct, yet connected public and intellectual debates concerning the significance of descent, belonging and culture. One revolves around the cleavage between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and especially the status of Indigenous claims deriving from a history of colonisation'. Furthermore, Said (1978) describes the manner in which Western countries managed to establish their knowledge to the detriment of Indigenous knowledge. His analysis can be applied to the Australian case and help explain the division between Indigenous and non-Indigenous. By challenging the differences between the East and the West, colonisers casted the world into two parts and 'the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience'. Consequently, the conflicting vision of the history of both groups is a challenge that feeds the 'Australia Day' debate.

In addition to that, Anderson's conception of the nation and the implications of British imperialism give us an understanding of the way colonialism and imperialism shaped these two conflicting narratives. In his work *Imagined Communities* (1983), Anderson questions the concept of the nation-state and denies the spontaneousness of its formation through a constructivist approach. The relevance of his insight to the Australian case appears evident when he refers to the role of the British Empire in the creation of the nation. Indeed, the conflicting visions and self-perceptions of the Australian nation are strongly caused by the British imperialism. This is what Anderson points at when

he describes the inherent contradiction of the English nationalism as there was an 'inner incompatibility of Empire and nation' (93). This is reflected by the semantic of Aboriginals people and activists who tend to consider Australia as the extension of the British Empire. In fact, in one of his speeches, the prominent 'Invasion Day' activist Robbie Thorp states that '[the 26 January] is a great day for all the new citizens but it is also a day of great pain, in particular for all of us, the first Australians'. Australia is being casted between the 'first Australians' and the 'new citizens', who are considered by Aboriginals as the physical embodiment of the British colonialism and imperialism. Hence it can be argued that is not the history of Australia that makes the Australia day debate persist, but the way history has been experienced and narrated amongst the two main population groups. As a result, the semantic around that debate is per essence divergent as both sides have 'experienced' their history differently.

Secondly, we need to consider the claims that lie behind the 'Australia day' debate and evaluate its consequences for the future of the Australian nation and identity. The discord between 'Invasion Day' and 'Australia day' conceals an upcoming national crisis (Stephenson, 2003) that lies behind this semantic disagreement and that is conveyed by the emergence of a new knowledge. The concept of knowledge is central to understand the resonance of the debate. As this disagreement symbolises the end of a consensus amongst the population, it is also the cement on which the emergence of a new knowledge is being built. As stated by Akena (2012), knowledge that we could define as the practical or theoretical understanding of a subject, is a concept that is permanently in fluctuation, descriptive and incomplete. Consequently, knowledge is an indicator of the project that a community intends to meet (Manheim, 1936) and needs to be studied within the scope from which it has been conceived. Regarding the Australia day debate, the knowledge brought by the defenders of the 'Invasion Day' naming goes against the idea of an Australian nation. In the Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance manifesto (WAR), activists demand for the 'decolonisation of Australia' which begins with the '[destruction] of the colonial Australian state and the [restoration of the] tribal sovereignty'. In addition to that, they want to 'fight for Aboriginal unity and the liberation of the Aboriginal nation'. Since knowledge is created to serve a purpose, the claims made by some Aboriginals activists runs counter to the durability and the legitimacy of the Australian nation, that aims

to encompass all the members of the country. Therefore, it shifts the debate from a will for recognition for what happened in the past to a will for emancipation in the future. The debate is not questioning what is being celebrated on January the 26th but is instead the bond on which is based a new struggle: the destruction of the Australian nation.

Finally, it can be argued that the 'Invasion Day' rhetoric is contradictory because the debate in which the activists situate themselves is inherently marked by Western concepts of nation and identity. These notions that they use to formulate their claims and to define themselves, fit in a Western dimension, which has been inscribed in the Aboriginals' narrative during the colonisation process. Hence, they paradoxically apply Western analytical and theoretical frameworks to formulate their will for a return to their former Indigenous nature. By casting, dividing and defining themselves as the contrasting image of the 'White Australians', they are simply using a Western manner of defining a society that was expounded by Said. For instance, one of their requests is the reappropriation of the means of production. However, this concept did not exist before their colonisation and has emerged with the capitalist, essentially Western society. On top of that, the concept of property is inexistent within the tradition Aboriginal knowledge framework. Consequently, the quest for a return to the former Indigenous identity is a distortion of what Indigenous knowledge actually was.

These elements show that in addition to expressing the will of a part of the population for the destruction of the Australian nation, the Australia day debate hides strong and serious issues, which reside in the need of a group to emancipate itself from the Western ascendancy and to rediscover and embrace their former nature. Nevertheless, this aim seems impossible to achieve since these populations take part in a Western theoretical framework, which prevents them from the reconciliation with what they consider as their essence (Macdonald, 2015 and Putnis, 2009).

To conclude, the semantic debate on 'Australia day' or 'Invasion Day' reveals the difficulty to define a common Australian identity. Not only does it represent the confrontation of two opposite conceptions of the history of the Australian nation, but it has led to a complex situation where both sides increasingly identify themselves in opposition or at the expense of another. The 'Invasion Day'

appellation is effective at pinpointing where Australia's identity and history problems are located. It bluntly reminds of the arrival of the British and the dire consequences of colonisation on Aboriginal Australians. The demands of the 'Invasion Day' activists go further than just changing the name of the National Day, as they are a greater call for justice from all the wrongdoings committed to Aboriginal people after the 26 January 1788. Even if the movement does not always democratically represent the Aboriginals it speaks for the movement, it crystallises deeper problems with regards to race, history, and current poverty and inequalities. However, in order to do so, the appellation 'Invasion Day' establishes an absolute link between celebrating the Australian nation and Australian identity with the immoral, wrongful, and illegal actions committed in Australia primarily by the British Empire. It therefore seeks to define and influence the way 'Australians' celebrating 'Australia day' perceive themselves and sometimes contributes to dividing Australian citizens more than reuniting them. Solving the debate would require to find common values on which the Australian nation could be based on, a common historical narrative and mutual recognition of the others' perspectives. As Reynolds puts it, instead of changing the appellation of the National Day, celebrating it on another date would allow to mark an event that stands for the unity of all Australians. For instance, the 7 May 1901 that marks the creation of the first federal parliament of Australia, that followed its Independence from the British Empire on 1 January 1901 and that stands for the sovereignty of all Australian people, would be a good choice.

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