

HOT TOPIC: AUSTRALIA DAY – LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

National day should be inclusive

PEOPLE say Aborigines should get over the invasion of our lands and killing of our people. How can we when it is rubbed in our faces every year on January 26? A national day is meant to be inclusive, not one that celebrates the coming of the white race. The violent British invasion of Aboriginal lands is a historical fact, but should we celebrate that as our national day? Out of the 365 days of the year that could be chosen as a day for all to celebrate, is January 26 the most appropriate? Former Liberal leader Ian McFarlane thought not. He suggested we change the date. Choosing a new date requires public debate, much of which has been positive.

Michael Mansell

Launceston

Not too proud

IT was interesting to see two aspects of the Australia Day debate on Saturday (Mercury, January 20). Simon Bevilacqua's well researched "An Uncomfortable Truth" lays out why Australians need to change the date we celebrate our nation's settlement and 200-plus years of white development. Conversely, Paul Murray advocates we need to understand the past but not focus on the negative — look to the future with hope. For me, the simple question is this. Do we really need to celebrate on the very anniversary of an event that changed irrevocably the lives of the original inhabitants of this land?

I am sure most of those who landed in Sydney Cove on January 26, 1788, weren't too happy about their situation either and were certainly not conquering heroes. It's true we cannot change the past but we can learn from it. It is only a date. Changing it will not affect us in any way. But it would give some credence to the Sorry statement. By changing the date for celebrating our country's greatness we would be showing the world we can acknowledge the past and as a nation we are not too proud to do something about it.

Ann McGinniss

Port Arthur

Birthday for good or bad

AMID the Australia Day hoo-ha one fact is indisputable, January 26 or thereabouts marks the birth of what Australia is today. As with a baby, though it becomes a Mother Teresa or an Ivan Milat, its birthday is cast in stone. The original inhabitants lived in harmony with their environment for many thousands of years but have contributed little if anything to the Australia we know today. There may be faults, but

in the main it is a country of which we can be proud, and one we can consider ourselves lucky in which to live. For those with an undying hatred of anything we have inherited from our English heritage perhaps we should offer May 8, 1897, the birth of what became the Australian Football League. You can't offend anyone with that, especially us diehard supporters of one of the original eight teams.

Peter Troy

Kingston

What makes us, us

THE debate rages again about the day that is Australia Day. Some Aussies feel this date does not engender the Aussie spirit because of what that day represents to some. I have a solution. The Commonwealth of Australia constitution Act was passed in British Parliament on July 9, 1900. If ever a day or date had special significance to this country, surely this must be the day. We became us on that day. Simple, Australia Day, July 9.

David Horne

Dynnyrne

Change the name

IT seems much of the division arising from Australia Day may be averted by changing its name to reflect the character of our current population. Most of us have no pride in the convict transport system but we do value the merits of improving the conditions of Aboriginal communities and the encouragement of citizenship for immigrants and refugees. The sharing of Australia today is a much worthier cause for celebration than the convict settlement of long ago. A recognition of that sharing would do much to unite the nation.

J.L. Berry

Howrah

Treaty day

AUSTRALIA is the only Commonwealth country without a treaty with its indigenous people. New Zealand has the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 where over 500 Maori chiefs and representatives of the British Crown signed what is been seen as the document that founded New Zealand. It is celebrated on February 6 without the rancour January 26 creates. A treaty between Aboriginal people and non-indigenous Australia could be commemorated as a Founders' Day on a date other than January 26 and when the weather is still conducive to a barbecue and a holiday.

Ed Sianski

West Moonah

QUICK VIEWS

Last Monday of January

I AGREE with Colin Corney (Mercury, January 18). What used to be a much looked forward to and loved public holiday on the last Monday in January where people celebrated this special day is the logical solution and worked so well until 1995. There is so much merit in reverting back and as Colin states, "simple solutions are usually the best".

Chris Davey

Lindisfarne

Celebrate our being

AS a good friend and teacher once said "there are no 'ifs' in history". But if the dreaded white man had not landed on these shores, many of us would not be. So let us all celebrate our being, together in the spirit of reconciliation.

Helen Kerrsmith

Eaglehawk Neck

Doing God's work

THERE are many Christian Aborigines doing God's work, thanks to Australia Day.

Vernon Ling

New Norfolk

26th, always

WE will fly the Australian flag on January 26 as long as we shall live.

Keith and Jane Hewlett

Geilston Bay