



LORD MAYOR'S OFFICE
TOWN HALL
MACQUARIE STREET
HOBART
TASMANIA

His Worship the Mayor of Northern Midlands
Councillor David Downie
Northern Midlands Council
PO Box 156
LONGFORD TAS 7301

Dear Mayor Downie

I write to seek your support on a motion the City of Hobart is intending to submit to the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) General Meeting on 26 July 2017.

The motion is as follows:

Motion

That LGAT be requested to lobby Tasmania's 29 councils to consider efforts they could take to lobby the federal government to change the date of recognition of Australian Day.

Every year there are ever increasing public rallies by both indigenous and non-indigenous people protesting against the current legislated date for Australia Day because Aboriginal people view it as Invasion Day; rallies held this year in capital cities drew tens of thousands of supporters. There is a growing acknowledgement that 26 January is not a day of celebration for all Australians. The current date has only been in practice since 1994 and before that time it was celebrated on a long weekend in January.

If consideration is given to changing the date that we recognise as Australia Day it provides an opportunity to find a more inclusive date for all Australians to celebrate.

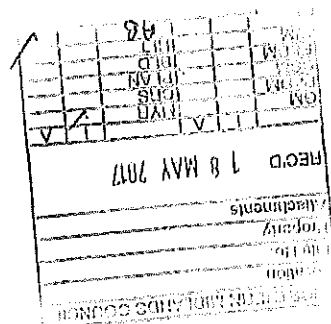
The Council will also be submitting a motion on this topic to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA).

I appreciate your consideration of this matter and would be happy to discuss it with you if you have any questions.

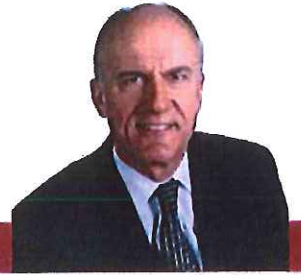
Yours sincerely

Alderman Sue Hickey
LORD MAYOR

Friday 12 May 2017



CITY OF HOBART



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA - THE SENATE

9th June 2017

Deputy Mayor Richard Goss
Northern Midlands Council
PO Box 156
LONGFORD TAS 7301

THE HOBART CITY COUNCIL

REC'D 17 JUN 2017

Mr	✓	A	Mr	✓	A
Mrs			Ms		
Mr			Mr		
Mrs			Ms		
Mr			Mr		
Mrs			Ms		

Senator the Hon
Eric Abetz
Liberal Senator for Tasmania

Dear Deputy Mayor,

Keep Australia Day on the 26th of January

The Hobart City Council has embarked on a divisive and distracting campaign seeking the support of your ratepayers and Council to change Australia Day.

The Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has already dismissed this ill-conceived idea. The Federal Government's position on Australia Day being celebrated on the 26th of January is clear and unambiguous. It has my full support.

Since my public opposition to the proposal by the HCC the feedback for my stand has been overwhelmingly strong.

Mostly, people want Australia Day to remain being recognized on the 26th of January. Many others agree this is not core business for local councils which have genuine issues with which to deal.

For your interest I attach an article by a local government councillor – Councillor Jacinta Price from Alice Springs which is self-explanatory. She sums up the issue exceptionally well which leads to the obvious conclusion that you and your Council should not be distracted by this HCC campaign and your ratepayers should be spared its distraction and division.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Abetz
Liberal Senator for Tasmania

...advancing Tasmania's interests.

HOBART: 136 Davey Street GPO BOX 1675 HOBART TAS 7001. Ph 03 6224 3707 Fax 03 6224 3709 Toll free 1300 132 493

THE AUSTRALIAN



Australia Day date change won't end abuse of Aboriginal people

JACINTA NAMPIJINPA PRICE THE AUSTRALIAN 12:00AM January 28, 2017

I keep hearing that Aboriginal people want to change the date of Australia Day. Well, what about the Aboriginal people who do not want to change the date? Do we not count because our opinions differ? And why aren't these people who protest about changing the date as concerned about the Aboriginal people affected by domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse? Why aren't the marches for murdered Aboriginal women as big as the marches on Australia Day?

Yes, let's learn about our history, but how is changing the date going to do a thing for the Aboriginal women dying at the hands of Aboriginal men, the Aboriginal children who miss out on school, and the Aboriginal children who are living in dysfunctional circumstances? I can bet you London to a brick they are not concerned with a date change. It is the Aboriginal middle class who are concerned about date changes and those pushing the agenda come from privilege in comparison to the Aboriginal people who are the country's most marginalised. But let's all make a huge deal out of this, an even bigger deal out of this than actually saving the lives of Aboriginal people who are living among us now.

I'm pretty sure if we are pressured enough to change the date then there will be something else for the Aboriginal middle-class activists and guilt-ridden whitefellas to be offended about. After all, has saying "sorry" stopped domestic violence and dysfunction? Has saying "sorry" saved an Aboriginal life? I know it did absolutely nothing for me, but most token symbolism does very little for me because in my opinion only hard work, responsibility and real action can make real change.

The future is far more important to me than our past. Our future is where we should be focused so that the most marginalised Aboriginal people of this country, whose first language is usually not English, who do not have access to media, whose lives are affected at alarming rates of family violence, can have the same opportunities as those who claim to feel pain because a country celebrates how lucky we are on a date that marks the arrival of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove.

People want to call it a day of mourning. Well, we Aboriginal people have become professional mourners. We are constantly in a state of mourning it seems. So why do we want to stay in such a state? What do we have to benefit from being in a constant state of mourning? Mourning does not give us freedom: it imprisons us, and I have had enough. I bury my family far too regularly and that is all the mourning I can handle.

I want everyone in this country to have opportunity. I want to pull my people out of the crippling state of mourning and I don't want anyone to feel guilty or bad for feeling joy and celebrating a country we love. The future is ours to make the best of and this will be done only if we do it together.

Jacinta Nampijinpa Price is an Alice Springs councillor. This was her Australia Day Facebook post



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NORTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL					
Location					
File No.					
Community					
Attachments: Copy also to PLH 11/14					
REC'D 10 JUL 2017					
GM		A	MAYH	1/2	A
PLH			CS		
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Dear Mayor Downie

I write to you regarding the City of Hobart's motion that has been submitted to the Local Government Association of Tasmania's General Meeting on 26 July 2017 regarding lobbying the federal government to change the date of recognition of Australia Day.

Whilst I am aware that some Councils have already formed a position on this matter, I think it is still important for all elected members of Tasmania's Councils to be clear on what the City of Hobart's motion is calling for.

It seems that the intent of the motion has been misunderstood by some in our sector and in the community.

The City of Hobart has not voted to actually change Australia day.

The City of Hobart's motion is about asking the Australian Government to commence a conversation with the Australian public.

There is no doubt that a change of date to Australia Day is a matter for the Federal Government, however, councils are the closest sphere of government to their communities and communities have every right to be heard on this issue.

It follows therefore that local government is best placed to be the conduit between the people and the Australian Government to help facilitate this conversation.

At the recent ALGA National General Assembly Senator Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, stated that local government, being the closest tier to the people was a vital partner in reconciliation with our first people. This counters the argument that this discussion does not belong in our sector.

Our motion is talking about one day of the year - one of 365 days and the appropriateness of celebrating Australia Day on a day that is not embraced by all Australians. What harm can be done by having the conversation?

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Councils and other levels of government acknowledge Aboriginal communities at council meetings and gatherings on public land as the 'original owners of this land'. In my personal view, surely, this is pure tokenism if we are not prepared to have a civil and rational discussion on changing the day to one that is more inclusive of our first people.

Australians only began celebrating Australia Day in 1994 when the Keating Government legislated it. Prior to this it was celebrated on a long weekend in January.

The 26th of January is a day which celebrates the arrival of the British government on Terra Nullus (no-man's land).

Before 1901, Australia did not exist as a nation. It was a collection of six British colonies which were partly self-governing, but under the law-making power of the British Parliament.

The colonies were almost six separate countries; for example, each had its own government and laws, its own defence force, issued its own stamps and collected tariffs (taxes) on goods that crossed its borders.

The colonies had even built railways using different gauges, which complicated the transport of goods across the continent. www.peo.gov.au/learning/closer-look/federation-cl.html

The tradition of having Australia Day as a national holiday on 26 January is a recent one. Not until 1935 did all the Australian states and territories use that name to mark that date. Not until 1994 did they begin to celebrate Australia Day consistently as a public holiday on that date.

<https://www.australiaday.org.au/australia-day/history>

The Aldermen of the City of Hobart recognise that changing the date will not improve the living conditions of Aboriginals, it will not improve their health rates, or lower their rate of incarceration or alcohol abuse or domestic violence.

However, we believe it is a genuine effort to move forward in a genuine gesture of goodwill and to stop the ever-increasing protests in our capital cities every year.

Last year, it was estimated that more than 50,000 people protested in Melbourne alone. After celebrating our citizenship ceremony on that day several of our own Aldermen joined a very large protest in Hobart. How many years will we witness these ever-growing debates before we consider changing the date?

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Again, what this motion is asking for is that a conversation be started. We can use our collective power to send a message to the Federal Government that it might be time to reconsider the date of such a significant recognition of being Australian.

There is absolutely no doubt that this is a highly-divisive and emotive topic so I kindly ask all councilors in Tasmania to help lead the way, as the level of government closest to our communities, and to have a hand in asking the Prime Minister to start a rational conversation, as a nation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Hickey', written in a cursive style.

Alderman Sue Hickey
LORD MAYOR

Thursday 6 July 2017