

**MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Nation must find a more inclusive date for our national day**

National advocacy organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights, ANTaR, today called for a respectful national discussion to find an alternative date for Australia Day.

Tomorrow on 26 January, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and many other Australians will be honouring the resilience of First People in surviving the legacy of invasion, instead of celebrating Australia's national holiday.

ANTaR National Director Andrew Meehan said that the date marking the start of the invasion of First Peoples' lands should not be the date for a national day of celebration.

"For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the date is a reminder of the pain and suffering of their ancestors, the invasion of their lands and enormous loss of life in the Frontier Wars, the massacres, and the intergenerational trauma that comes with that history," Mr Meehan said.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are reminded every day of the contemporary impact this history continues to have on their health and wellbeing."

Mr Meehan said that it should not be beyond the Australian people to find an alternative to the date that has only been consistently celebrated as a national public holiday since 1994.

"The truth is that on 26 January, First Peoples are not only being asked to move on, they are being asked to celebrate the day that the invasion of their lands started," he noted.

He said that if the broader community took a step back and looked at this with clear eyes, it would be recognised that asking this of Australia's First Peoples is an extraordinarily insensitive thing to do.

"At the heart of reconciliation is an acceptance of the history of past injustices to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and developing an understanding of what that means for how we live together today," he said.

"We can find a better, more inclusive and unifying date than 26 January".

ANTaR is dedicated solely to supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and working to educate the wider community, shape public opinion, and speak up for justice, rights and respect for Australia's First Peoples. [www.antar.org.au](http://www.antar.org.au)