

Women's Work – Transcript

The views expressed are personal and are not indicative of the views of any organisation or department.

Interviewer:

What does Australia Day mean to you?

Kirstie Parker (Writer and long-time community advocate):

Well my personal opinion is that January the 26th is not the day for all Australians to come together and talk about who we are and that's because 26th of January marks something that wasn't the beginning of something grand and wonderful for Aboriginal people. In fact, it was the beginning a lot of sadness and a lot of fear and a lot of terrible treatment. It doesn't speak of the sorts of efforts that are being made now between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to do something about this story and to say if we can be honest with each other, we are bruised on both sides. I understand that but to say this is the true story of Australia and that means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can come to the party and we can only do that if we change the date.

Dr Jenni Caruso (Lecture in History, University of Adelaide):

Well, you know Australia Day has been changed left right and centre over the past what 220 years. They couldn't make up their mind when they wanted to have it anyway, but one thing that sticks in history is January the 26th for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander its immutable, its immovable and that is an historical fact. Based on that historical fact, we need to come the acceptance that that was the day, the time, the moment of the beginning of the

destruction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Pick a day that says something, maybe May the 6th because May the 6th was the date in 1972 when the policy on multiculturalism came into place and when that came into place that put an end to what we know is the White Australia Policy. Those various legislations that underpinned the ideology of the White Australia Policy were then unpacked and overturned. So pick that as a day so all Australians can celebrate, you know whatever background you come from, celebrate a day that is not an indication of trauma. It's not a celebration of trauma, murder, theft, rape and pillage. It's your day, don't ask us when you should have it, you do some thinking about it, why do we all have to do all the work around it?

Kirstie Parker (Writer and long-time community advocate):

I think we have to have a conversation about it and obviously we have got a bunch of options including picking a day that might be something that all Australians can swell behind. They've been suggestions like Wattle Day for example, you know the anniversary of the 1967 referendum when 90% of Australians and majority of people in a majority of states said yes we want to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the census and we want the commonwealth to make laws for them. Or we could come up with something completely new, and that's my preference I think. We should think of something that doesn't have baggage, but something that is a good time of year when people can be out and about, on the streets, in the parks, you know on the beaches celebrating what is good about Australia and one of the good things about Australia hopefully by then is that we can be honest with each other about where we are.

Charlotte Dare Coulthard (Journalist and transgender Activist):

You know I would definitely love it for them to change the date, but what we also need is a treaty before we can change the date. We need a treaty first before anything.

Ellen Trevorrow (Ngarrindjeri cultural basket weaver and artist):

A part of Australia Day, and we call it Invasion Day too, when you look at the newbie barbecue area, you know but the thing is in my time I always supported my husband Tom. I was always alongside him in whichever activity, or you know those days cause we had a lot at Tandanya on the lawns there well, I always sat back and weaved. So I wasn't the speaker, I always loved to sit back and weave and have a yarn, you know the face value. So that's been my life of supporting that, and I've always loved to be you know always bring family and friends with me when we go and go out that day, but the thing is we always got to keep reminding our children about these things.

#AlwaysWays

#ChangeTheDate

#SparkkeChange