



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aboriginal children and young people deserve a nation that reflects dignity, respect, and belonging

The Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance (VACYPA) recognises 26 January as a day that carries deep pain and ongoing trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For many, it marks the beginning of dispossession and the impacts of colonisation that continue to shape the lives of our communities today.

VACYPA supports changing the date of Australia Day. While changing the date alone does not resolve the injustices faced by Aboriginal communities, it is an important step towards addressing the racism, exclusion, and colonial legacy associated with 26 January.

We also recognise that changing the date invites broader national conversations. What does it mean to celebrate Australia? How do we acknowledge truth, history, and survival while building a shared future grounded in respect and justice for all communities?

VACYPA envisions a world where Aboriginal children and young people feel proud of who they are, where they live, and their Country and Culture — and where they are included in the nation without prejudice or discrimination. Any National Day of Recognition must centre truth-telling, acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonisation, and create space for Aboriginal voices and leadership.

26 January offers space for mob and allies to come together to connect, heal, and advocate. It is also a time for reflection — listening to truth-telling and unlearning the dominant narratives of our nation's past. Resources such as the Yoorrook Justice Commission provide opportunities to learn from First Peoples' voices and consider how we each contribute to healing and accountability.

"Even with everything we've been through, we're still here! strong, dignified, and ready to sit down and talk with our fellow Australians. With open minds and open hearts, we can reflect and face with honesty our past and work towards a future that truly includes all of us," Jason Kanoa, VACYPA CEO.

We encourage respectful, open dialogue about changing the date and about what it means to come together as a nation — guided by listening, learning, and the aspirations of Aboriginal children and young people. Aboriginal children and young people deserve a nation that reflects dignity, respect, and belonging.

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VACYPA recognises and acknowledges the traditions and culture of all First Nations peoples across Australia. VACYPA honours Elders, past and present, and extends respect to the children of the community, who are the future custodians of Country.