

Australia Day 2025 Reflection and Discernment Guide

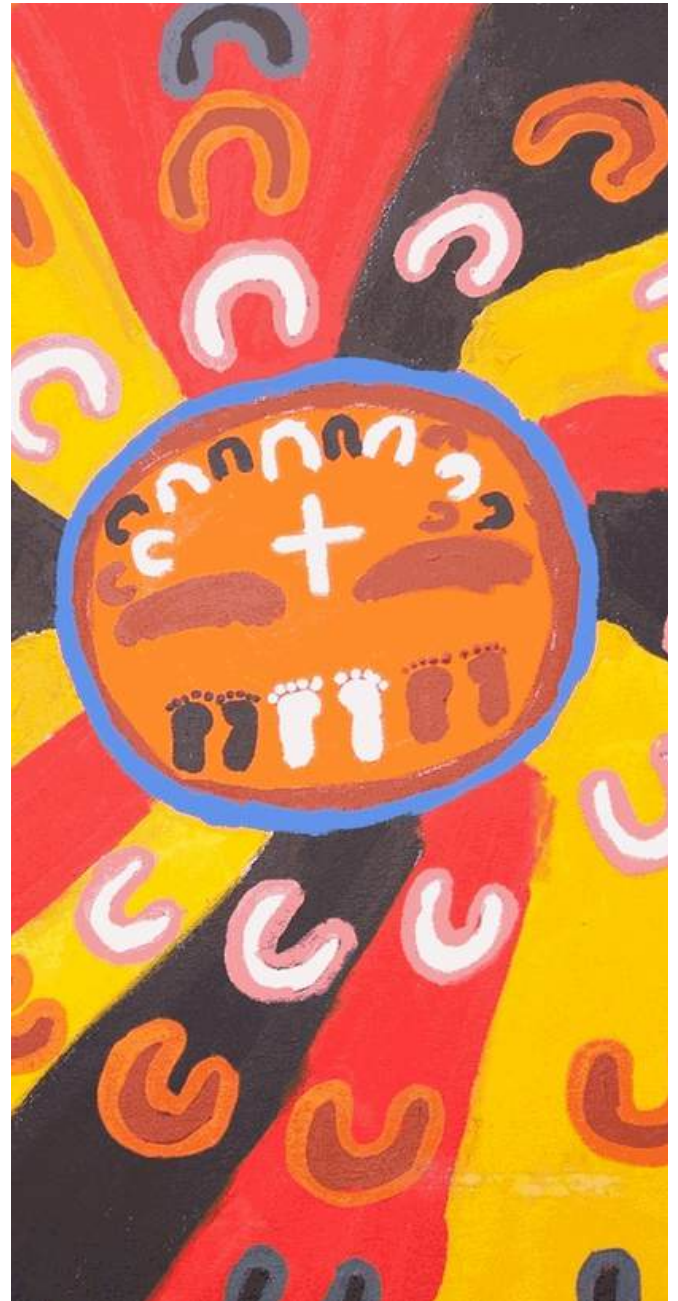


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Introduction



Australia Day is a time of reflection, celebration, and for many, deep contemplation about what it means to be Australian. It is an opportunity to embrace the diversity and richness of our Nation's heritage while acknowledging the journey towards reconciliation and unity. As people of faith, we are called to seek justice, promote understanding, and walk humbly with one another. This Guide invites you to explore the complexities of this day, consider its significance through a lens of faith, and reflect on how we can contribute to a future where all Australians feel included, respected, and valued. May our reflections inspire meaningful action and a commitment to reconciliation.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document may contain links to resources that may include the words, voices or images of those that have passed.

2025 NATSICC Australia Day Statement



Every year, as January 26 approaches, Australians across the Country consider the day in different ways. For some, it is a time to celebrate our Nation's achievements, or the opportunity to enjoy a day off and gather with family and friends. NATSICC acknowledges and respects that many Australians hold a deep connection to this day and the pride they feel in our Country.

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, however, January 26 is a day of mixed emotions—one that brings sadness, reflection, and a sense of unresolved history. Is it because we do not want to celebrate our connection with this Country? No. Is it because we seek division? Absolutely not. Rather, it is because January 26 marks a moment in history that profoundly changed the lives of Australia's First Peoples. As a Nation, we are yet to fully confront the realities of what colonisation meant in 1788 and how its legacy continues to impact the world's oldest living culture today.

NATSICC's desire has always been not to diminish anyone's experience of this day, but to invite all Catholics – indeed, all Australians - to walk together with open hearts and minds, fostering a deeper understanding of our shared history and collective future. We believe that genuine unity can only be achieved when all Australians feel included in our National celebrations.

It is for this reason that we have **long advocated for another date**—one that brings all Australians together in a spirit of unity and recognition. **The anniversary of the 1967 Referendum, 27 May, stands as a powerful symbol of National consensus, when over 90% of Australians voted YES to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the population count.** This moment in history represents a time when Australians came together with hope for a better future and made a practical step to begin that journey.

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2025 NATSICC Australia Day Statement



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We are acutely aware that simply changing the day we celebrate Australia Day will not address the many and varied challenges—including disparities in life expectancy, socio-economic disadvantage, and other long-standing issues—that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. That is something that all of us must address, individually and collectively as a society.

Nevertheless, a willingness to change the date would signify a sense of shared National pride and empathy—‘If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it’ (1 Corinthians 12:26)—signalling to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples that the broader Community is prepared to stand with us, fostering deeper reconciliation, acceptance, and empowerment for shaping our own futures.

This year, Australia Day falls on a Sunday—our Holy Day—a time when we come together in faith to reflect, give thanks, and seek guidance from God. As we gather in our churches and homes, let us take this opportunity to reflect more deeply on what it means to celebrate our nation in a way that includes and respects all Australians, leading to meaningful actions that extend beyond the day itself.

The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers and to seek justice. In Micah (6:8) we are called to walk humbly with our God. In this spirit, we encourage you to use the newly created Australia Day Reflection & Discernment Guide to explore the complexities of this day, to listen with open hearts, and to discern how we, as a Nation, can continue the journey of reconciliation. **May our faith inspire us to build a future where reconciliation and unity allow all Australians to celebrate together with pride, respect and hope.**

How to use this guide



This Reflection Guide is designed to help individuals, families, and parish groups explore the significance of Australia Day through the lens of faith, justice, and reconciliation. Whether used in a personal quiet time, a parish gathering, or a community discussion, the Guide invites you to reflect deeply, pray earnestly, and take meaningful action.

Suggested Steps for Use:

Begin with Prayer:

- Start your reflection by reading the Opening Prayer and An Australian Canticle of Praise to centre your heart and mind.

Read the NATSICC 2025 Australia Day Statement:

- Reflect on the key themes and messages, allowing them to inform your thoughts and discussions.

Engage with the Reflection Sections:

- Move through each section at your own pace, considering the scripture passages, reflection questions, and suggested Resources.

Discussion and Sharing (Optional):

- If using in a group setting, allow time for open and respectful discussion on each topic.

Commit to Action:

- Use the Suggested Actions section to identify ways you can contribute to reconciliation in your daily life.

Conclude with Prayer:

- Finish by praying together, asking for God's guidance as you continue the journey of reconciliation.



The resources included in this guide are provided for reflection and educational purposes. They do not necessarily reflect the views of NATSICC, nor does their inclusion imply endorsement. Readers are encouraged to engage with the materials thoughtfully and in the spirit of respectful dialogue.

Opening Prayer and Canticle of Praise



Begin with prayer asking God to guide your heart and mind in reflecting on Australia Day.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, guide our thoughts and reflections as we seek to understand the significance of this day for all Australians.

Open our hearts to truth, justice, and reconciliation.

Inspire us to work together in unity and hope.

Amen.

An Australian Canticle of Praise (Inspired by Psalm 24)

This land is God's,
and all that is in it,

The red earth and rainforests
the oceans and mountains.

All that dwells on this island continent
belongs to God.

Loving God, you are the Creator of all that is
and we praise you

For creatures unique to this great south
land- fish and birds, animals and plants,
flowers and trees in their diverse kinds,

For the ancient peoples of this land
who maintained its sacredness for centuries
For convicts and settlers who bore the
hardships of wrestling with a harsh
environment

For migrants down through the years
who have provided a diversity of culture
that enriches an already bounteous land.

For those who seek to enter our Country
in search of freedom, safety and new hope.

For all of these, Creator God
we praise and thank you this day/week."

1. Reflecting on Australia Day



Read the NATSICC 2025 Australia Day Statement to gain insight into the perspectives and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Reflect on its key messages and consider:

- What does this day mean to me?
- How might it feel for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples?
- How can I approach it with compassion, understanding, and a spirit of togetherness?

Many Australians are proud of their Country and understandably want to celebrate on Australia Day. It is a time to acknowledge the achievements and diversity of our Nation. However, it is also important to reflect on the impact this day has on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and to seek a path that embraces all Australians in a spirit of unity and respect.

Bible Reflection:

"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."

Ephesians 2:14

Resources

[First Nations people reflect on Australia Day \(ABC\)](#)

[Aussie Kids reflect on Australia Day \(australiaday.org.au\)](#)

[Respectful First Nations Engagement on Australia Day \(australiaday.org.au\)](#)

University of South Australia survey results revealing growing support for changing the date of Australia Day. [Read More](#)

2. Understanding and Learning



Explore the historical context and positive future possibilities of Australia Day using the NATSICC 2025 Statement and additional Resources.

Consider:

- What are the different perspectives on this day?
- How does my faith guide my understanding of truth, justice, and collaboration?
- Am I living justly and walking humbly in my relationships with First Australians?

Bible Reflection:

"To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Micah 6:8

Resources

[The Story of Australia Day](#) (NITV)

[What does 26 January mean to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples?](#) (RecTas)

Australia Day (Audiobook):
Stan Grant's reflections on the cultural and historical significance of Australia Day.
[Listen on Audible](#)

[Rethinking Australia Day](#)

3. Taking Action



Think about practical ways to respond meaningfully to your reflection using suggestions from the NATSICC 2025 Statement.

- How can I contribute to reconciliation efforts?
- What small steps can I take in my family, church, or community to promote unity and collaboration?
- Could I attend a Mass at my local Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministry on Australia Day?
- Complete the NATSICC Cross Cultural Online Training (<https://www.natsicc.org.au/cross-cultural-training.html>)

Bible Reflection:

"God... reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."

2 Corinthians 5:18

Resources

[10 Ways to be a genuine ally to First Nations Communities](#) (Amnesty International)

[Find Aboriginal Australia Day events on in each State and Territory](#) (australiaday.org.au)

Bystander Action Toolkit:
Guide from the Australian Human Rights Commission on addressing and intervening in racism.
[Download Toolkit](#)

4. Imaging a better future



Envision an Australia Day that better honours unity, respect, and a shared journey of reconciliation.

Ask yourself:

- What would a more inclusive and hopeful celebration look like?
- How can I support positive change and walk together with First Nations Peoples?
- How can I be a voice for justice and unity, and celebrate the richness of our diverse cultures?

Bible Reflection:

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.”

Isaiah 1:17

Activity

Consider exploring other dates that might serve as a more inclusive National celebration without the heavy historical connotations of January 26. Some possible alternatives could include May 27 (anniversary of the 1967 Referendum) or NAIDOC Week.

What dates could honour all Australians and celebrate the gifts of our Great Southern Land?