THIS IS A MUST READ BY ALL

AUSTRALIANS

Captain Cook did not arrive in Australia on the 26th of January.

The Landing of Captain Cook in Sydney happened on the 28th of April 1770 – not on the 26th of January 1770. The First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay on the 18th of January. The 26th was chosen as Australia Day for a different reason; however, Captain Cook’s landing was included in Australia Day celebrations as a reminder of a significant historical event.

Since the extravagant bicentenary celebrations of 1988, when Sydney-siders decided Captain Cook’s landing should become the focus of the Australia Day commemoration, the importance of this date for all Australians has begun to fade.

Now, a generation later, it’s all but lost.

This is because our politicians and educators have not been doing a good job promoting the day. Our politicians have not been advertising the real reason for Australia Day, and our educators have not been teaching our children the importance of the 26th of January to all Australians.

The media, as usual, is happy to twist the truth for the sake of controversy.

In recent years, the media has helped fan the flames of discontent among the Aboriginal community. Many are now so offended by what they see as a celebration of the beginning of the darkest days of Aboriginal history, they want the date changed.

Various local Councils are seeking to remove themselves from Australia Day celebrations, even refusing to participate in citizenship ceremonies, and calls are going out to have Australia Day on a different day.

The big question is, why has the Government allowed this misconception to continue?

Captain Cook didn’t land on the 26th of January. So changing the date of any celebration of Captain Cook’s landing would not have any impact on Australia Day, but maybe it would clear the way for the truth about Australia Day.

The reality is, the Aborigines in this country suffered terribly under the hands of British colonialism. This is as much Australia’s history as the landing of the first fleet, and both should be remembered, equally. Both should be taught, side by side, in our schools.

Australians of today abhor what was done under British governance to the Aborigines. We abhor what was done under British governance to the Irish and many other cultures around the world. So, after the horrors of WWII we decided to fix it.

We became our own people.

On the 26th of January 1949, the Australian nationality came into existence when the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948 was enacted. That was the day we were first called Australians and allowed to travel with Passports as Australians.

Under the Nationality Act 1920 (Cth), all Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders born after January 1, 1921 gained the status of British subjects. In 1949, therefore, they automatically became Australian citizens under the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948.

Before that special date, all people living in Australia, including Aborigines born after 1921, were called ‘British Subjects’ and forced to travel on British Passports and fight in British wars.

We all became Australians on the same day!

This is why we celebrate Australia Day on the 26th of January!

This was the day Australians became free to make our own decisions about which wars we would fight and how our citizens would be treated. It was the day Aborigines were declared Australians.

Until this date, Aborigines were not protected by law. For the first time since Cook’s landing, this new Act gave Aboriginal Australians by inference and precedent the full protection of Australian law.

Because of this Act, the government became free to help Aborigines, and since that day much has been done to assist Aboriginal Australians, including saying ‘sorry’ for the previous atrocities done before this law came into being.

This was a great day for all Australians!

This is why the 26th of January is the day new Australians receive their citizenship. It is a day which celebrates the implementation of the Nationality and Citizenship Act of 1948 – the Act which gave freedom and protection to the first Australians and gives all Australians, old and new, the right to live under the protection of Australian Law, united as one nation.

Now, isn’t that cause for celebration?

Education is key! There is a great need for education on the real reason we celebrate Australia Day on the 26th of January. This reason needs to be advertised and taught in schools. We all need to remember this one very special day in Australia’s history, when freedom came to all Australians.

What was achieved that day is something for which all Australians can be proud!

We need to remember both the good and the bad in our history, but the emphasis must be the freedom and unity all Australians now have, because of what was done on the 26th of January 1949, to allow all of us to live without fear in a land of peace.

Isn’t it time all Australians were taught the real reason we celebrate Australia Day?

FORWARDED TO YOU BY

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