

A National Hoax

There is something absurd about celebrating Australia Day on January 26th. It's even crazier in this important year when there is intense national debate about Treaties, Sovereignty and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want to be recognized.

We pretend as a nation to care what our First People say and want, but since 1938 when Pearl Gibbs, Jack Patton, William Cooper and Bill Ferguson led the first Day of Mourning by Aboriginal people, it has been perfectly clear that most cannot and will not joyfully celebrate a day of dispossession.

The whole thing is a tragic hoax that began when Sydney wanted to assert its superiority over the rest of the country by commemorating the day the English fleet sailed through the Heads. I am surprised Queenslanders fell for it.

Most of the country showed common sense for years by ignoring January 26th and it was not until 1994 that the whole country joined in this phony national holiday.

To choreograph a shallow display of unity and nationalism, somehow expecting the First People of this land to ignore the history and the enormous injustice, shows we have not yet matured. We need to set a lot of things right and be serious about unity.

Most of the First Peoples have long said that they want something better, a recognition of the land and its people, a history that is at least two thousand generations old, not the few hundred years since the English Fleet.

Joyfully celebrating on the day of dispossession carries enormous offence not only to Indigenous people but to anyone with a knowledge of law and history.

The Mabo decision by the High Court of Australia exposed the great British lie of terra nullius by stating the legally obvious fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been 'held' by this land since the dawn of modern humanity.

June 3rd this year will mark the 25th anniversary of the greatness of Eddie Mabo's belief in justice.

As a Nation we have not yet brought ourselves to officially recognise that anniversary as a national holiday.

Why isn't Mabo Day supported and funded by Federal and State Governments, businesses and individuals like the extravagance of January 26th?

A fitting Australia Day will be the day we declare ourselves a Republic and that day will come sooner than some people think.

On that Australia Day we will be united with a new Constitution that recognises legally the

Rights and history of the First Peoples. We then have a just foundation for a greater sense of nationhood as all those excluded in the deliberations of 1900-1901 including First Peoples, women and all of the multi-cultural elements of today would be fairly represented.

Until we are ready for that, I would immediately remove the insult of the phony nationalism of January 26th.

We could fashion a celebration of this land and all its people on the last day of each year. That celebration would culminate in the almost universal celebration of New Year's Eve and we would begin each New Year with a spirit of genuine harmony.



The Mabo family, Bonita and Gail shown here, want your support for the 25th anniversary of the Mabo decision, June 3rd 2017.