

NAVIGATING 26TH JANUARY - FAQs

General Questions About the Date

Q: Why do some people call it "Invasion Day" or "Survival Day" instead of "Australia Day"?

A: January 26th marks the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, which began the colonisation of Australia. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, this date represents the beginning of dispossession, discrimination, and loss of culture. "Invasion Day" acknowledges this history, while "Survival Day" celebrates the survival and resilience of First Nations peoples and cultures despite colonisation.

Q: Why is there debate about changing the date?

A: The debate centres on finding a date that can be celebrated by all Australians. Many people, including First Nations and non-First Nations Australians, believe that January 26th is not appropriate for a national celebration as it marks the beginning of colonisation and the subsequent devastating impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Leave and Work Arrangements

Q: Do I have to take the public holiday on January 26th?

A: [For organisations with flexible leave]: You have the option to work on January 26th and take the public holiday on another day. Please discuss this with your manager to arrange the details.

A: [For organisations without flexible leave]: The office will be closed on the gazetted public holiday. If you have specific concerns, please speak with your manager or HR.

Q: Will I be paid penalty rates if I choose to work on January 26th?

A: [Organisation to insert specific policy regarding penalty rates and public holiday work]

Workplace Events and Communication

Q: Is our workplace holding any events on or around January 26th?

A: [Organisation to insert specific details about any events or alternative arrangements]

Q: How should I talk about January 26th with my colleagues?

A: Acknowledge that people have different views about this date. Listen respectfully to others' perspectives, especially those of First Nations colleagues who may be personally impacted. If unsure, use inclusive language such as "26th January" rather than assuming everyone refers to it as "Australia Day."

Q: What if I accidentally say something insensitive?

A: If you realise you've said something that might have caused offence:

- Acknowledge the mistake
- Apologise sincerely
- Listen to feedback
- Learn from the experience
- Seek guidance from HR or cultural advisors if needed

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Support and Resources

Q: What support is available if I'm finding this time difficult?

A: Support options include:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP): *[Insert contact details]*
- First Nations Employee Network: *[Insert contact details]*
- HR Support: *[Insert contact details]*
- Cultural Support Services: *[Insert specific services]*

Q: Where can I learn more about the history and significance of this date?

A: Resources are available through:

- Our internal learning platform: *[Insert details]*
- Local Aboriginal Cultural Centers
- First Nations Media outlets
- *[Organisation to add specific recommended resources]*

Participation and Allyship

Q: How can I be supportive of First Nations colleagues during this time?

A: You can:

- Respect their privacy and choices about how they spend the day
- Listen if they choose to share their perspectives
- Avoid asking them to explain or justify their feelings
- Be mindful of celebratory language or activities that might be insensitive
- Educate yourself about the history and significance of the date

Q: Are there ways to get involved in community events?

A: Yes, many communities hold events such as:

- Dawn services
- Survival Day gatherings
- Cultural festivals
- Educational workshops *[Organisation to add local event details]*

Business Operations

Q: Will our external communications change during this period?

A: *[Organisation to insert policy about external communications, social media, and customer-facing activities]*

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Q: How should I handle client/customer queries about our approach to January 26th?

A: *[Organisation to insert guidance for customer-facing staff]*

Additional Support

Q: What if I have a question that isn't covered here?

A: Please contact:

- Your direct manager
- HR team: *[Contact details]*
- First Nations Employee Network: *[Contact details]*
- Cultural Safety Officer: *[Contact details]*

Making Suggestions

Q: How can I provide feedback or suggestions about our workplace approach to January 26th?

A: We welcome feedback through:

- Your manager
- HR department
- Employee feedback channels
- Staff surveys
- *[Organisation to add specific feedback mechanisms]*

Note to Organisations Using This FAQ:

- Customise answers based on your specific policies and procedures
- Review regularly with First Nations staff and cultural advisors
- Update as needed based on employee feedback
- Ensure all contact details and resources are current
- Consider translating into other languages as needed
- Distribute well in advance of January 26th

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