

Statement on Indulgence

PRIME MINISTER: Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement on indulgence about the importance of celebrating our national day, Australia Day.

Mr Speaker, we celebrate on Australia Day the most successful multicultural society in the world.

We celebrate a nation that begins –

SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat for a second. The Member for Isaacs is warned. This is not Question Time. I have not called for questions without notice. Indulgence is granted by the Speaker and I have granted it. I have not called for questions without notice. The Prime Minister on indulgence.

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. On Australia Day, we celebrate this most remarkable nation of 24 million Australians, that has the oldest human civilisation in the world, of our First Australians, 65,000 years old, and our ceremonies and our celebrations on Australia Day begin with an acknowledgement to country or welcome to country and conclude with the newest Australians.

Every one of those Australians, our First Australians, and the youngest baby in the newest citizen's arms, are all part of our great multicultural nation.

We have so much to celebrate. So much of which to be proud, in a world riven by discord and violence.

We are united in our Australian values. We celebrate those on Australia Day.

We recognise that the history of European settlement in Australia has been complex and tragic for Indigenous Australians.

We recognise the complexities and the challenges of our history. But on Australia Day, we recognise the greatness of our achievement as Australians.

We recognise the remarkable nation we have become.

We recognise and honour our first Australians and our newest migrant citizens.

We bring all that together in a day that is uniquely and proudly Australian and that is why, Mr Speaker, my Government and every government before me, in this House, has urged Australians to celebrate Australia Day. To get behind it, to be proud of it, to be committed to it.

That is why Mr Speaker, the decision recently of the Yarra Council is utterly out of step with Australian values. They are seeking to take a day which unites Australia and turn it into one which divides us.

To change the date of Australia Day would be to turn our back on Australian values, on the great achievement of 24 million Australians here in the greatest, most successful multicultural society in the world.