

Mr John Baker, Chief Executive Officer and Councilors
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
90 Besgrove Street, Rosebud
Victoria 3939

6th August 2022

SOUTHERN WOMEN'S ACTION NETWORK



Dear Mayor and Councilors,

‘We need holidays that bring us together’

(Marcus Stewart, First People’s Assembly of Victoria, 2022)

In the current climate of reconciliation, Australia Day is increasingly divisive by date and by name. Melbourne City Council’s recent announcement to review the Australia Day date, activities and attitudes, both inspires and echoes a rising tide of positive change across the nation.

Southern Women’s Action Network (SWAN), based on the Mornington Peninsula and comprising over 220 members, strongly reiterate our support for changing the Australia Day date and to the provision of alternative options for Australia Day activities.

January 26 is the hallmark date of British colonisation and its ongoing harmful and devastating repercussions for First Nations People. SWAN is happy to engage in any Council-led initiatives to bring about change and foster genuine reconciliation. Timely action would be a date change and creation of “holidays that bring us together”¹.

SWAN recognises that the date change requires Federal Government authority. Our request is for MPSC to take a leadership role through meaningful steps to:

- Review the Australia Day date and activities.
- Augment a unifying voice for healing. And for
- Timely and appropriate coming together in an inclusive celebration of our nation.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Melissa Kelly

Facilitator, SWAN

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¹ Marcus Stewart in *The Age Newspaper*, J. Latimor & J. Topfield, ‘City of Melbourne reviews Australia Day activities’ 23/7/2022