AUSTRALIA DAY

Australia Day is a national holiday in Australia that is celebrated each year on January 26. Australia Day means many different things to many different people. Australians choose to celebrate or to acknowledge the day in different ways.

On January 26 1788, the First Fleet of British ships arrived at Sydney Cove in New South Wales, marking the beginning of the colonisation of Australia. In the early 1880s, January 26 was celebrated as 'First Landing' or 'Foundation Day'. In 1946, the Commonwealth and state governments of Australia agreed to unify their celebrations and call it 'Australia Day'. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, January 26 is not a day of celebration but instead a day to commemorate the loss of their lands, families and cultures. In 1938, on the 150th anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet, Aboriginal peoples in Sydney took part in the first 'Day of Mourning'. Australia Day is sometimes called 'Invasion Day' in acknowledgement of this part of Australian history, or 'Survival Day' in celebration of the ongoing history, traditions and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In celebration of Australia's multicultural society, Australia Day is a public holiday, which means that family and friends can spend the day together. Many communities hold events such as parades, barbeques, concerts and awards ceremonies for outstanding service to the country. Citizenship ceremonies are also held, with many migrants choosing to become Australian citizens on this day.

On Australia Day, many people dress up in clothes of green and gold, which are the national colours of Australia. Others choose to wear clothing which displays the Australian, the Aboriginal flag or the Torres Strait Islander flag. Some people fly one or more of these flags outside their houses.

The Australian flag is made up of the Union Jack (a symbol of British heritage), the stars of the Southern Cross (a symbol of the southern hemisphere) and the Commonwealth Star (a symbol of the united states and territories of Australia). The Australian Aboriginal flag was designed by
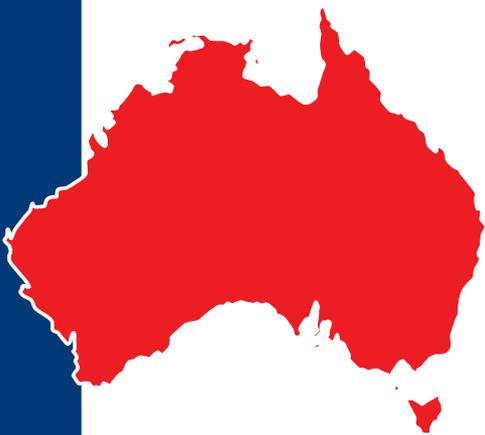
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Harold Thomas and is made up of a black and red background (to symbolise Aboriginal peoples and red earth) and a yellow circle (to symbolise the sun). The Torres Strait Islander flag was designed by Bernard Namok and is made up of a green, blue and black background (to symbolise the land, water, and Torres Strait Islander peoples), a white dhari (a Torres Strait Islander dancer's headdress) and a white star (to symbolise the five major island groups in the Torres Strait).

Many Australians choose to eat their favourite foods on Australia Day. Some of these foods include sausages, meat pies, prawns, lamingtons and pavlova. Australians from different cultural backgrounds often choose to celebrate with their culture's favourite dishes.

Australia Day falls in the middle of summer and is a great opportunity for Australians to enjoy the wonderful weather. Sports such as cricket and tennis are popular; along with trips to the beach or the local swimming pool. Many community festivals celebrate with food, music and dancing in the warm summer sun. In the evening, firework displays can be enjoyed in towns and cities across the country.

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