

Not a Date To Celebrate: If not Jan 26, then when?

Clothing The Gaps

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMZjUkxkhKA> – 19 December 2025



Phil Jenkyn OAM and Laura Thompson – a Podcast filmed and placed on YouTube

Episode description

January 26 is a date that continues to divide Australia. For some it is “Australia Day”. For many First Peoples, it is Invasion Day, Survival Day, or a Day of Mourning.

In this episode of Community Conversations, host Sarah Sherry (Clothing The Gaps) is joined by Laura Thompson (Gunditjmara woman, CEO and co-founder of Clothing The Gaps) and Phil Jenkyn (OAM, barrister and community activist, co-convener of the Australia Long Weekend idea) to unpack why January 26 is not a date to celebrate, how community pressure is shifting public perception, and a new proposal that aims to create a more inclusive national moment.

Together they explore symbolism and policy, cultural safety, truth-telling, and a practical alternative: an Australia Long Weekend set on the second last Monday in January, designed to keep a summer long weekend while quarantining January 26 as a day for mourning and reflection.

Key takeaways:

- January 26 carries deep hurt for First Nations people, and the day often brings heightened racism and division.
- Symbolism matters: changing an administrative date can be a meaningful first step toward larger justice and truth-telling.

- The Australia Long Weekend proposal aims to keep a summer celebration without anchoring it to colonisation.
- Momentum is growing because the issue now impacts many Australians, including new citizens who feel uncomfortable with January 26 ceremonies.
- Change requires respectful dialogue, accuracy, and shared responsibility from community, media, business, and government.

Links and resources:

- Change.org petition (placeholder): <https://www.change.org/p/australia-da...>
- Australia Long Weekend website (placeholder):
<https://www.australialongweekend.com.au/>
- Clothing The Gaps campaign page (placeholder):
<https://www.clothingthegaps.com.au/pa...>
- Learn more about January 26 and its history (placeholder):
<https://www.clothingthegaps.com.au/bl...>

Chapters

00:00 – “If we can’t listen to First Nations voices, how can we make meaningful change?”

00:10 – “Lassoed by history”: why the date no longer fits

00:35 – Welcome + Acknowledgement of Country

01:10 – Why January 26 divides the nation (Australia Day / Invasion Day / Survival Day / Day of Mourning)

02:04 – Guest introductions: Laura Thompson and Phil Jenkyn

02:49 – Laura’s lived experience: marching, Survival Day, community and unity

04:15 – Phil’s early relationship with January 26 and learning Australia’s true history

06:27 – When Phil began marching and why allyship matters

08:21 – How this collaboration began

08:44 – “Not A Date To Celebrate”: tees, truth-telling, and petition momentum

10:36 – The “if not Jan 26, then when?” question and the Australia Long Weekend email

11:33 – Why Phil reached out to Clothing The Gaps

15:33 – Petition update and why January 26 feels disrespectful as a national celebration

17:36 – Public perception shift: why this conversation is now mainstream

18:16 – Why nations don’t celebrate the start of colonisation

20:12 – Laura’s first reaction to the Australia Long Weekend idea

22:49 – What the Australia Long Weekend is, and how the date is calculated

26:44 – Why a mid-January long weekend “sweet spot” matters

29:13 – Does changing the date actually solve anything? Symbolism vs structural change

31:09 – A unifying pitch: “you won’t lose your Australia Day, you’ll gain three days”

35:20 – What changing the date could free up January 26 to become

37:38 – Imagining the long weekend: ceremonies, culture, reflection, rest, and community

41:05 – From division to unity: what a shared national weekend could look like

43:09 – A message to government, media, and employers: “Why not?”

44:20 – Practical allyship: support the idea, spread it respectfully, be accurate

45:54 – Closing reflections: justice, fairness, hope, and agency

49:24 – Final thanks + call to keep conversations going

January 26, Australia Day, Invasion Day, Survival Day, Day of Mourning, change the date, Not A Date To Celebrate, Clothing The Gaps, Laura Thompson, Phil Jenkyn, Australia Long Weekend, second last Monday in January, First Nations voices, truth-telling, reconciliation, cultural safety, allyship, national identity, Aboriginal flag, Free the Flag, community activism, unity, Closing the Gap, Sarah Sherry, Australian public holiday debate.

Clothing The Gaps Community Conversations Podcast



Australia Day: If not Jan 26, then when?

Community Conversations by Clothing The Gaps



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