

# 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-convenor 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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### The Podcast 18 Dec 2025

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