Opinion: Stop PC bleating about Australia Day on January 26

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By Mike O'Connor

What does Australia Day mean? Ask a hundred people and you’ll get as many different answers.

IT started in Fremantle when the city council axed its January 26 Australia Day festivities in favour of a “culturally-inclusive alternative” celebration to be held on January 28.
The move was made following discussions with some members of the Aboriginal community who saw Australia Day as celebrating the invasion of their lands.
The “whatever you do, don’t mention Australia Day” virus has now spread to the east coast and infected Meat and Livestock Australia.
This is the industry body that has entertained us over the years with clever, irreverent commercials promoting the wholesale consumption of barbecued lamb on January 26.
No more, for this year’s MLA advert makes no mention of Australia Day.
Rather, according to the advertising agency, it “shines a light on who we are as a nation, and celebrates modern Australia no matter what the date”.
January 26, formerly known as Foundation Day and Anniversary Day, has been celebrated as Australia Day since 1935.
The MLA, then, is quite happy to use January 26 to flog lamb chops but is afraid to mention our national day, Australia Day, in case it offends anyone. It talks of shining a light on who we are as a nation. Are we to take it then that, as a nation, we have arrived at a point where we are afraid to celebrate the arrival of our ancestors 229 years ago? Are we afraid to celebrate the creation of one of the most egalitarian societies on earth from a motley collection of convicts and their ill-disciplined guards?
What does Australia Day mean? Ask a hundred people and you’ll get as many different answers. Some will have but the vaguest knowledge, if any, of its historical antecedents.
Others will regard it as just another day off, one that marks the unofficial end of the Christmas holiday season. For others, it’s a lot more. It’s an acknowledgment that we have evolved as a unique, geographically-isolated species with our own values, sense of humour, quirks and qualities, both good and bad.

Strong men and brave women have made it what it is and while it has its share of domestic critics, very few of them are inclined to go and live somewhere else.
Thirty seven years ago Peter Allen released a song titled I Still Call Australia Home. It may be sentimental but it struck a chord and is still guaranteed to bring a lump to the throat of any expat hearing it in a bar in some faraway land.
We call Australia home because we made it our home. It’s ours and in the past we have been called upon to defend it.
If necessary, we will do so again.
Let’s not pretend that the civilisation that we enjoy didn’t have its beginnings on January 26, 1788. Rather than moan about historical injustices, let’s celebrate the good fortune that finds us in this
country and if you don’t like it, you can always leave.
You might also like to join me in refusing to eat lamb on January 26 in protest at the MLA’s craven refusal to acknowledge Australia Day.