Fremantle council should be congratulated for alternative Australia Day

Susie O’Brien, Herald Sun
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BRAVO Fremantle Council for having the courage to hold an alternative Australia Day.
In the eyes of many indigenous Australians, January 26 is Invasion Day — a day of brutality and bloodshed, not a day to celebrate.
So I think it makes good sense to pick another date as our national day.
I don’t think it’s up to the Federal Government to rule that they cannot hold citizenship ceremonies on the new date of January 28.
For most white Australians, January 26 is the same as any other summer holiday; a bonus day of respite and relaxation.

But for many indigenous Australians, it’s not a day of celebration.
This is why we should follow the lead of New Zealand and create a new day that reflects not just British history, but indigenous history as well.

For many indigenous Australians, January 26 is not a day of celebration.

A new date would reflect British and indigenous history.

It’s a case of doing the right thing after many years of abuse, dispossess, neglect and discrimination.
TV presenter Stan Grant is absolutely right that the “Australian Dream” so many of us celebrate is built on racism and bigotry.
“I love a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains, of rugged mountain
ranges," he told a conference last October.
"It reminds me that my people were killed on those plains. We were shot on those plains, diseases ravaged us on those plains."
I don’t want to suggest that anyone who dares to kick back and have a good time on Australia Day should be ashamed. Most people work hard enough to justify a day off.
But we need to recognise the growing realisation that Australia Day is tainted. It can never be a day of celebration for everyone equally because of its association for many indigenous people. This is why it needs to be rethought, without judgment or blame.
Let’s hope other councils and states follow Fremantle’s lead.