



MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 6:00AM AEDT, THURSDAY 14 JANUARY 2010

9 OUT OF 10 AUSSIES SAY INDIGENOUS CULTURE & MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY IMPORTANT TO AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

A National Australia Day Council survey* has found 90% of Australians believe it's important to recognise Australia's indigenous people and culture as part of Australia Day celebrations and a similar proportion (89%) say it's important to recognise the cultural diversity of our nation.

While the sentiments are overwhelmingly solid across all ages and demographic backgrounds, they are particularly popular among Australians aged 18 to 34 years, reflecting the changing face of Australian society through immigration and the progress made in reconciliation in the past decades.

94% of those aged 18-34 years said recognising Australia's indigenous people and culture was important in celebrations compared to 88% of those in the 50+ age bracket. Similarly, 95% of the younger generations supported the recognition of cultural diversity compared to 84% of the older generation.

"The survey results reflect the diversity of our nation now, the changing face of Australians and the huge shift in public understanding of indigenous issues and growing appreciation of Aboriginal culture," said Warren Pearson, Chief Executive of the National Australia Day Council

"What Australians are saying is not that we should recognise one thing over another, but that our national celebrations should reflect the many things that make Australia what it is.

"It's wonderful that Australians see themselves as a united people made up of a rich mix of cultures and heritage and they want to celebrate their place in that mix.

"Australia Day means many different things to different people and now we're seeing how much people value the many different influences which make Australia great."

The survey also revealed that Australians continue to see themselves as laid back and easygoing, with 44% of those surveyed using these words or terms such as casual, relaxed and carefree to describe the Australian people.

According to the survey, Australians reflect on our nation's history and future equally at this time of year, with 44% agreeing our past is the most important thing to think about on Australia Day and 41% saying they look towards our future. Only 13% thought it was important to think about the present at this time and 3% were unsure.

Mr Pearson said the findings were a positive result as people put more meaning into Australia Day.

"It shows that we're thinking about where we've come from and how we can make Australia a better place, rather than just enjoying the public holiday," said Mr Pearson.

"Australia Day is the day we come together as a nation to celebrate Australia and being Australian.

“People aren’t just celebrating or marking the occasion, they’re also considering what it really means.”

For more information about Australia Day events around the nation, visit www.australiaday.org.au or contact the Australia Day Committee in your State or Territory.

** Research commissioned by National Australia Day Council and conducted by Newspoll November 2009.*

Ends.

For further media information or interviews with the National Australia Day Council contact:

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Key Australia Day 2010 events:

- Tuesday 19 January, NSW Blue Mountains
6:00am - Blue Mountains Dawn (media only event)
Featuring Jack Thompson, Australian of the Year 2009 Prof Mick Dodson, Young Australian of the Year 2009 Jonty Bush, NADC Chair Adam Gilchrist
- Sunday 24 January, Canberra
6:00pm - 50th Anniversary Australian of the Year Awards gala dinner, Parliament House
- Monday 25 January, Canberra
12:30pm - Opening Australians of the Year Exhibition and unveiling Prof Mick Dodson portrait, National Portrait Gallery
5:30pm - Australian of the Year Awards 2010
7:00pm - Australia Day Live 2010 Concert
- Tuesday 26 January - Australia Day
Australia Day celebrations around the country
10:00am, Canberra - National Citizenship Ceremony at Regatta Point