
Oral Presentation Transcript- Australia Day Debate is Tokenistic

You wake up on the 29th of January, on the Australia Day long weekend. You normally get the privilege of sleeping in one last time before you set your alarm to 6AM for school-days. But wait, you don't have it now, neither for catching up with sleep nor your holiday homework procrastination. Welcome to 2018A, the year our national day was erased from existence and the suffering endured by First Australians continue to go unchecked because some maniacs doing 88 messed with our timeline. Before you ask why would **anyone** axe our beloved national holiday, these advocates for Australia Day's removal have in mind a noble and admirable goal of achieving socio-ethnic equality in Australia. Personally, I believe that #ChangetheDate is underestimating the value of Australian's goodwill and we as a nation are missing the point on what we **really** need to do to improve the well-being of our First Nation. It's a good enough celebration of our progressive way of life, and we would accomplish nothing in closing the infamous Gap by continuing such a superficial and divisive debate.

We all remember Australia Day as a day of celebration, as a day of laid back chitchat and other casual interactions that precede the hectic start to the school year. It's not a problem if we change the date out of respect for the First Australians, by all means, we should. Yet I can't quite see the need for fanfare on such a scale about Australia Day's historical colonial association, about its proposed removal. Now you may have been lead to perceive Australia Day as a display of imperialistic chauvinism by the social justice warriors scouring the internet, but contrary to their beliefs, we aren't actually celebrating "Dispossession Day" on the 26th of January, in fact, we're coming to terms with our colonial history as an evolved and mature society. While it's undeniable that they are well-meaning in their endeavour to bring social equality to the indigenous population, these keyboard warriors don't seem to recognise the many right things Australia has done which are associated with our national day, even the first apology for the stolen generation was made on Australia Day 2007. The numerous dates cited by these radicals such as the 1st of January, 9th of May and 27th of May also clearly fail their goal in being more respectful to Indigenous Australians. How are these days **any** more special in terms of recognising the numerous atrocities committed or the achievements of native Australians? In reality, anything but respectful debate would ensue from this brawl over Australia Day.

You may think it's harmless enough to thoroughly explore Australia Day's meaning and implications before we make decisions on keeping, changing or removing the date, but continuing the pointless debate will further polarise our society, perhaps irreversibly. No matter what the final verdict, many Australians will feel offended because the date isn't right. Many bigots may claim if someone's offended by an opinion, it's their own problem. It's not. If someone's offended, it's a sign of the society's intolerance and incompetence, an open minded and tolerant society like ours should strive to keep all debates open and respectful. The last thing we need is a divided Australia on the grounds of such a ridiculous conflict, at least back in the 60's America was so divided because one side was determined to curb something as serious as the spread of authoritarianism! There's a reason that politics is considered a taboo subject in everyday conversation, precisely, its potential to hurt and upset different groups of people. That's why politics should stay well away from the Australia Day debate. The longer the debate drags on, it's more likely to turn political. At the end of the day, we should note that it's just a date, changing it won't alleviate the confronting reality of the Gap that should **really** concern us.

We can clearly see how being so anaphylatic towards Australia Day is not a genuine attempt at closing The Gap for our First Nation. Instead, I believe it's only symbolic gesture devised by some

to appease their own guilt, who failed to implement **any** tangible initiatives to improve Indigenous Australians' de facto status as second-class citizens for the entirety of our nation's existence. While it's absolutely imperative that we preserve the cultural heritage of our natives and educate our youth about the bloodshed of colonialism, we should keep in mind that sympathy doesn't cure the problem. There are numerous alarming problems plaguing our indigenous population, one of which is an actual plague of a HIV-like virus called HTLV-1 that has infected 40% of the indigenous population at Alice Springs, the highest infection rate around the world for that disease. We know that education is the key to solving virtually all problems troubling low-income populations such as the indigenous community. However, with a year 12 completion rate of 62% compared to 86% for the general population, poverty would continue to entrap Indigenous Australians if the government doesn't put providing accessible education on high priority. Incarceration rates for Indigenous Australians are also 15 times that of the general Australian population, almost certainly derived from their inability to make sensible decisions due to The Gap. They didn't fail. Our government failed them. If it can spend all that money on alternative celebrations, why can't it spend it on improving the lives of indigenous people rather than sparking such a futile keyboard war?

So what should we do to put an end to this trifle? We should prioritise while simultaneously fostering the existing respectful attitude towards our First Nation's horrifying past. It's still a good idea to celebrate our country's transition from a predatory colony to a progressive and tolerant democracy, but changing the date should take the back seat to tackling the numerous health and educational problems infesting indigenous communities around Australia. Go ahead and change the date to be respectful and leave it at that, just don't spawn a huge internet war out of it. Let's put our focus on combating the hardships faced by Indigenous Australians and forget about the impulsive obsession to create fracture within our nation. Of course, we would also rightfully reclaim that bonus school-free Monday morning from those radical whackjobs.

Bibliography

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Statement of Intention Practice

My oral presentation invites young Australians of my own age to cease the Australia Day debate, sparked by some who see it as a commemoration of violent colonialism, in favour of implementing “tangible” social change for Indigenous Australians. It is up to Australian politicians to make decisions on changing Australia Day and the media to involve all Australians in the debate, but I envisioned young adult Australians as target audience because I want to empower them to make their own opinions regarding Australia Day's current meanings, the debate's corruption from politics and practical actions to take against The Gap independent of politicians and the media.

To open the presentation, I logically highlighted that Australia Day is no longer disrespectful towards indigenous Australians in a contemporary context. Starting off the speech with an embracing message would strengthen my image as a tolerant orator inviting “respectful debate”. The numerous dates as well as indigenous recognition associated with the current Australia Day, quoted from reputable sources such as the CNN and ABC, increase my ethos and hence make my defence of January 26th seem free of personal bias when mentioning Australia's reconciliation as a sign of a “mature society”

Sustaining an analytical yet gradually more scathing tone, I proceed to caution my fellow young adults of the dangers of a divided society due to arguments such as the Australia Day debate. Providing a solemn reminder of the USA's polarisation during the Vietnam War, I aim to create fear within young Australians that the country they would inherit one day will be “intolerant” and “incompetent” so that I could later dispel this fear by offering a choice to banish unwanted politics out of the debate. This appeals to common Australian values such as the taboo of politics in conversations and further reinforces my neutrality on changing the date.

To conclude my speech, I confrontationally questioned the existing injustices experienced by Indigenous Australians. I provided evidence that the Australia Day debate is ultimately not “genuine” in solving indigenous problems with statistics regarding The Gap, appealing to both logos and pathos. Although I included inclusive language to throughout my speech, I changed the pace of my speech with two meaningful phrases about how The Gap, and the debate by association, “fails” in a direct engagement with my audience aiming to shock and guilt trip my audience into thinking about what can the Australian society do to improve the unfortunate indigenous people's situation.

In an attempt to appear unbiased in all of my arguments, I diplomatically explored the vantage points of people who wish to continue the Australia Day debate. By commending them as “well-meaning” while intermittently demeaning them with a pejorative “keyboard warriors”, I seek to appear to be largely respectful to their opinions while assertive of my own. I share their beliefs on the need for education against “bloodshed” of “imperialistic chauvinism”, but by undermining some of the fallacies present in argument based upon “historical colonial association(s)” with solid historical evidence, I would make myself seem factual and hence more capable of putting forth rational solutions.

My speech was informal in nature with many contractions and popular culture references to effectively engage an audience comprised of Australians of my own age. Due to their status as my

target audience, young Australians would likely to respond positively after hearing about Australia Day's past, present and pessimistic future if they do not voice their opinions on helping indigenous communities with reforms that are more intrinsic as opposed to tokenistic. Organisation is something I could improve upon for future oral presentations, as I changed my topic midway through writing the script and hence had less time to rehearse the full script.