

# 26 JANUARY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Greater Geelong Council has endorsed changes to the way we will mark 26 January in 2024 and beyond.**

## **Have we cancelled 26 January?**

No, we will support 26 January however there will be greater inclusion of First Nations culture and history into the way 26 January is commemorated in Greater Geelong.

## **Will the City still refer to 26 January as Australia Day?**

No, we will cease referring to 26 January as Australia Day. The day will simply be referred to as 26 January in all future communications.

## **Will Citizenship ceremonies still occur?**

Yes, citizenship ceremonies will still occur but be moved to another day within three days of 26 January. First Nations Peoples elements will be incorporated into the ceremonies, and they will continue to include an Acknowledgment of Country. This is in line with directions from the Australian Government.

## **Will the City still support community events on 26 January?**

Yes. We will work with organisers of 26 January events to recognise First Nations Peoples and include First Nations cultural activities in the events.

## **Was there consultation around this decision?**

Yes, there was a six-month consultation period with First Nations People and the broader community. The level of consultation undertaken on this issue is unprecedented for our organisation.

## **How many community members contributed to the survey?**

There were 952 survey responses, of which 447 were from First Nations People (equivalent to 12.5 percent of the local First Nations community) and 510 were from the broader community. All responses (100 per cent) from First Nations Peoples expressed a wish for a change in the way the day is commemorated. Across the broader community, 68 per cent of survey respondents said change was needed, with 32 per cent opposing change.

## **What are other ways in which the City will mark 26 January?**

We will support First Nations Peoples acknowledgement and cultural events across Geelong, including:

- A mid-morning Acknowledgement, Recognition and Truth-Telling Ceremony in Johnstone Park billabong
- A Flag Raising Ceremony of the Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at City Hall
- An official opening for cultural celebrations and events
- Continued work with organisers of events on 26 January to recognise First Nations Peoples and include First Nations cultural activities.