

TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRE

PRESS STATEMENT

THE DIVISIVE NATURE OF AUSTRALIA DAY

"So long as the anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet is used as the date for national celebrations, Australia Day will forever remain a racist blot on Australia's political landscape", Legal Director Michael Mansell said today.

Mr Mansell said, "There can never be reconciliation between whites and Aborigines so long as the anniversary of the coming of white people is the basis for celebrating Australia Day. A fair and just society cannot be built on celebrating gains by one race at the expense of another.

There should be a competition to select a new national day- one that avoids controversy and is inclusive.

If the Prime Minister is disinterested then the States' Labor Premiers should take the lead.

The unanswered question is whether January 26th is suitable as a day for celebration or a day of shame.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre is erecting signs outside each of its offices (Hobart, Burnie, Launceston) to focus attention on the real meaning of Australia Day.

The Launceston office sign will be in place after 4.30pm today, on the outside wall of the premises at 182 Charles St. The sign is shown in attachment.

Michael Mansell and a group of Tasmanian Aborigines have left today for Canberra to participate in the Invasion Day Corroboree for Sovereignty at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

Jay McDonald will be available to speak to local media at the TAC Launceston office tomorrow morning.

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25th January 2006

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