

Truth Telling



January 26 is not a day of celebration for Aboriginal people because ...

It's the day the British raised their flag, invading a land that had been inhabited for over 65,000 years by Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people have never ceded their sovereignty but their rights were denied and cultural practices forbidden.

When their land was taken Aboriginal people could no longer sustain themselves by hunting and gathering. When they defended their land, retaliation was brutal leading to death, dispossession and the institutionalisation of children.

Red cedar was cleared by loggers without permission.

The remains of some ancestors, like the warrior Arrawarra, were stolen from graves and sent to museums in Britain.

Up until the 1960s, Aboriginal families could have their children removed for teaching them about language, lore or culture.

They were confined to reserves or missions including at Orient Point, Wreck Bay and Kangaroo Valley, denying them access to traditional lands, hunting grounds and sacred sites.

Until the 1960s, Aboriginal women could not have their babies at Nowra Hospital but had to go to Berry Hospital. Before colonisation there were sacred birthing places where women would birth their children.

Until 1988, many Aboriginal children were forcibly taken and sent to the Bomaderry Children's Home.

Despite all that has happened since 26 January 1788, Aboriginal communities and culture in the Shoalhaven are still strong.



Dharawal and **Dhurga**, the two Aboriginal languages of the Shoalhaven, are taught in local schools and TAFE by local language holders

Mount Coolangatta's name in the Dharawal language is **Cullunghutti**. In the Dhurga language, Jervis Bay is **Currumbin**, and **Walawaani** means "hello".

Shoalhaven and south coast Aboriginal communities still practice their culture including **bunaan** ceremonies (corroborees) held in special places.

Aboriginal people lived in a way that was not harmful to the environment. They were care takers of the land and lived off food resources from the ocean and the bushlands.

A Welcome to Country can only be given by a person who is a traditional owner. **An Acknowledgement of Country** is given by a visitor.

Constellations of stars in our skies have Indigenous names. For example, **Birribanj** (Dhurga word for emu) is a dark area surrounded by light in the shape of an emu. Aboriginal people's knowledge of the stars aligns with today's astronomers

Shoalhaven Walking Together Alliance Inc

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