Conclusion
Newspaper reportage of Australia Day offers much to the student of national identity. The columns of capital city newspapers in the selected years on or about January 26 give an insight into the way Australians viewed and celebrated their national day. The newspaper coverage also offers clues to the way Australians viewed themselves; how they defined their nationality.

The discussion of national identity and invented tradition in Chapter One highlighted the complexity of the concept. Just as an individual's personal identity is an intricate web of varied perceptions and experiences, a national identity is an ever-elusive phenomenon which is undergoing a perpetual process of construction and interpretation. Eric Hobsbawm's study of invented tradition provided a theoretical framework for the later case study chapters. Most useful was his assertion that a tradition such as a national day may well be manipulated by the powerful, but other factors came into play before it was able to strike a chord of "genuine popular resonance".

The study of national identity in the Australian context in Chapter Two served to highlight the complexities of the concept. The consideration of the influences of kinship and radical nationalism along with the manifestation of hedonism showed that national identity in Australia this century has been a concept marked by intricacies and subtle shifts.

Chapter Three looked at national days in a comparative context, focussing particularly on the celebration of Empire Day and Anzac Day. Empire Day could be deemed to have failed because it was a construction which lost its resonance as Australia grew away from Empire and the imperial tradition. Anzac Day could be seen as the site of two competing constructions - the imperial and the radical nationalist - with the struggle and its exclusivist mode
of commemoration diminishing its chances of developing into a national day of "genuine popular resonance".

The use of single representative years from each decade since the 1920s helped the case studies function as a chronicle of the evolution of Australia Day this century. Each case study year provides a window into its decade for the study of the Australia Day reportage. This allows for comment on notable trends and shifts in the way Australians have viewed their national day and, with it, their nationality.

Notable in the coverage of Australia Day in 1922 and 1932 was the predominance of British kinship ties and hedonistic pursuits over any evidence of a radical nationalist tradition. The overall impression of the coverage of Australia Day in 1922 and 1932 was the vacant significance of the day on the national calendar. Different states had their own rituals and traditions that they played out on the public holiday - most of which were centred around one or more sporting events. But the focus of the day was on the pastimes rather than upon the meaning of the national day itself. Hedonism was proving an adequate substitute for serious reflection upon Australian nationality.

The 1942 and 1955 coverage provided evidence of important turning points in the way Australians demonstrated their national identity. The coverage marked the demise of the imperial connection and the first major signs of an expression of the radical nationalist tradition on the national day. Hedonism proved to be more than just a national characteristic - it became a national *issue*. It was debated in the context of the war effort in 1942 and in the context of the meaning of the national day in 1955. The significance of the day was being debated and it was being commercially exploited through
advertising supplements. By 1955 there were signs that the day was being linked with migration and new forms of kinship.

These influences were to grow in significance in the 1960s and 1970s coverage. Australia Day was starting to develop its own identity. The concern in 1969 and 1976 with immigration and Australia's place in the region represented a strengthening of the multicultural dimension of Australia Day born in the 1950s. On the face of it, including migrants in the national day celebrations ran the risk of diminishing a uniform patriotic focus. But in fact the celebration of arrival added to the meaning of the day through the rituals and ceremonies of migrants adopting their new homeland on the day. At the same time they could celebrate their dual national identities by wearing the national dress and performing the traditional dances of their countries of origin. By January 27, 1976 Australia Day was coming closer than ever before to meeting Hobsbawm's requirement of striking a chord of "genuine popular resonance". There was a hollow ring developing to the complaints of editors and public figures that Australians were apathetic or hedonistic about their national day. Some subtle identifiable shifts had occurred which were helping the national day "resonate". They included the multicultural celebration of the day and the associated rituals, the exorcism of the convict birth stain through genealogy and re-enactment, the celebration of things Australian, the acceptance of hedonism as a national trait and the growing distance from Mother England. Australia Day did not yet mean all things to all Australians, but it was starting to mean enough things to enough Australians to begin to "resonate" in the national consciousness.

By 1989 a subtle maturity had developed in the celebration and reportage of the national day. It is said that in identifying and defining a problem we
have gone half the way to solving it. Critics of Australia Day in 1989 articulated the perceived problems of the day. Politicians claimed they had acted to solve them. It was clear that a variety of rituals were being associated with the day, taking in a wide cross-section of Australian society. Newspaper editors and their readers seemed to have accepted that the day was celebrated in a variety of ways, demonstrating differing perceptions of what it means to be an Australian. Australia Day was showing the potential for satisfying Hobsbawm’s criterion of a national day striking a chord of "genuine popular resonance". The resonant chord was being struck through diversity. At any time on the national day, Australians might be showing evidence of any of the manifestations of national identity. They might be celebrating the day by going on a picnic, donning an Akubra at a music festival, lazing on the beach, becoming an Australian citizen, dancing in another country’s national dress, dressing in colonial costume, collecting an Australia Day stamp, waving a flag or singing the national anthem (with a little help from a supplied copy of the words). Any such behaviour could be evidence of an expression of national identity. Australia Day had begun to resonate.

This thesis has proposed that national identity is the key to interpretation of Australia Day and its role in the national calendar. The main conundrum of Australia Day for most this century has been its vacant significance or its lack of "genuine popular resonance". Throughout the century newspaper editors and public figures have lamented Australians’ hedonistic or apathetic attitude to their national day. Theories of national identity in Australia provide explanations for this attitude and serve to explain why Australia Day has, in
recent years, begun to show signs of resonance. One such explanation for Australia Day's apparent lack of national significance is that the national day was born into a generation of Australians who still felt strong kinship ties to Britain. Some were ardent supporters of the Empire, but most simply felt allegiance to the British people because of shared history, language and social and political systems. It is argued that even those inspired by the radical nationalist tradition of the 1890s were still conscious of their British heritage and, particularly, their white Anglo-Saxon racial group. Any hopes of Australia Day resonating as a national day were dissipated by Australians' dual allegiances in this period. Australians found it difficult to celebrate Australia Day when they still held a nascent notion of themselves as Australians. Other related factors served to diminish the national day's significance during its first three decades of celebration. These included the variety of names given to the national day, the shifting date of its public holiday, the state-based administration of the celebrations and the underdeveloped transport and communication systems throughout the nation.

However, post-war waves of immigration changed the fabric of Australian society and presented a challenge to a national day premised upon the celebration of British settlement in Australia. British kinship ties became less significant. By the 1980s a variety of kinship ties were being celebrated on the national day, facilitated by the invention of traditions and rituals which embraced Australia's diverse ethnic communities. Migrants from throughout the world took part in Australia Day celebrations, while editorialists and politicians noted the ethnic contribution. Citizenship ceremonies became traditionally associated with the national day, developing more general themes
of migration, arrival and rebirth which sat neatly with the historical origins of
the day without celebrating the link with Britain.

The reportage of the 1989 celebrations provided indications that the day
was adapting to changes in late twentieth century Australian society. The
successful push by the New South Wales Premier, Nick Greiner, for a uniform
national holiday on January 26 each year presented a threat to the long
weekend hedonism which had been the basis of much of the criticism of
Australia Day this century. In 1990 Queensland joined New South Wales, the
Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory in gazetting Friday,
January 26 as the Australia Day holiday, putting pressure on the other States
to follow suit. Newspaper coverage of the 1989 celebrations indicates that the
hedonistic element may be supplanted by the invention, or reconstruction, of
other aspects of the bush legend as Australians go about inventing traditions
through the reconstruction of the past. Bush dances to the music of bush bands
in 19th century costume, bush cooking and re-enactments of historical events
all indicate that Australians have become aware that they have a national
history to celebrate. Parading alongside the bush men and women might well
be Greek, Estonian or Vietnamese migrants performing their traditional
dances in their national costumes in the spirit of one of the Bicentennial
slogans "Living Together". The day has begun to strike a chord of "genuine
popular resonance" through its diversity. Celebrants have invented their own
rituals which support their own varied definitions of "Australian".

Yet Australia Day's newly acquired resonance comes as the very concept
of nation is being questioned. Stephen Castles et al. argue that the nation-
state, let alone the national day, is an anachronism and not a viable option for
the 21st century,
We do not need a new ideology of nationhood. We need to transcend the nation, as an increasingly obsolete relic of early industrialism. Our aim must be community without nation.¹

Andrew Milner encapsulates the increasing complexity of the situation, arguing that new transnational imaginary communities attest to a continuing failure on the part of nationalism to assimilate and so eliminate difference.

No matter how we characterize the novelty of the contemporary condition, whether as post-industrialism or post-modernity or as the information society, all such formulations are agreed on the increasingly cosmopolitan nature of our cultures and ... on the increasingly multinational nature of our economies.²

Thus, the very reason for the newly developed resonance of Australia Day - its celebration by a variety of Australians for a variety of reasons - could well be merely a transitional sign of the demise of nation.

In *Inventing Australia*, Richard White writes that we will never arrive at the "real" Australia. He continues:

From the attempts of others to get there, we can learn much about the travellers and the journey itself, but nothing about the destination. There is none.³

We can look at Australia Day and its reportage in a similar way. Whatever traditions Australians choose to invent or perpetuate on their national day, newspaper reports of their actions and their opinions provide a valuable insight into the nature of that elusive notion - national identity.

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