



Kim Booth MP  
Greens Leader  
Member for Bass

Parliament House, Hobart  
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Friday, 23 January 2015

The Hon. Will Hodgman MP  
Premier, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs  
Level 11, 15 Murray St  
Hobart Tas 7000.

Dear Premier,

On behalf of the Tasmanian Greens MPs I congratulate you for your Australia Day commitment to revisit the issue of land hand-backs to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

I'm sure you would concur that the journey towards genuine reconciliation with the Aboriginal community requires a range of issues to be addressed, and it is the responsibility of leaders across all spheres of public life to seek to do so.

There are two specific areas where the Greens believe Tasmania has a significant and positive role to play.

#### **Shift Australia Day date**

The current date of Australia Day celebrations is clearly deeply offensive and distressing to Aboriginal people.

We recognise this issue falls beyond state jurisdiction but Tasmania could place it on the national agenda if you as Premier, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, formally took a proposal to identify an alternative date to the Prime Minister and Federal Minister.

#### **State Treaty**

On behalf of the Greens, I am writing to you to formally request you, in your capacity as Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, to investigate and consult with elders of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community the best mechanism by which genuine and good-faith negotiations can be undertaken to deliver a formal Treaty between the State of Tasmania and our First Peoples.

Unlike shifting the date of Australia day, it is our understanding that lack of Commonwealth action does not preclude the State of Tasmania taking the initiative and negotiate with Tasmanian Aboriginals a formal Treaty.

I also note recent public statements by Senior Australian of the Year, Fred Chaney, in which he stated his support for treaties with Aboriginal people, and specifically his emphasis that the current focus on constitutional recognition 'in no way' prevents treaty negotiations.

In fact, in light of reservations expressed by some Aboriginal representatives that constitutional change does not guarantee tangible change, a formal treaty would value-add any moves to provide state and/or federal constitutional recognition of Tasmanian Aboriginal nations.



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There is a wealth of research from jurisdictions such as New Zealand, Canada and the United States which have treaties with their First Peoples, which provide evidence demonstrating how formal treaties can provide significant psychological well-being, improved life expectancy rates, as well as health, education and economic benefits for those communities.

Tasmania could lead the nation by undertaking a formal Treaty recognising Tasmanian Aboriginal sovereignty.

A Treaty would provide redress for past wrongs, establish mutually recognised goals and responsibilities, and foster genuine reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Tasmanians.

I would be happy to discuss with you and representatives of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, how to best progress these matters. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

**Kim Booth MP**  
**Greens Leader and spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs**