

20 October 2023

The Hon Patrick Gorman MP  
Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and  
Assistant Minister for the Public Service  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Old Parliament House  
King George Terrace  
Parkes ACT 2600

Tel: 02 6120 0600  
ABN: 76 050 300 626

[australiaday.org.au](http://australiaday.org.au)  
[australianoftheyear.org.au](http://australianoftheyear.org.au)

Dear Minister

### **National Australia Day Council Response to Statement of Expectations**

Thank you for your letter dated 12 September 2023, providing your Statement of Expectations (the Statement) for the National Australia Day Council (NADC).

I want to acknowledge the Federal Government for both the support it has provided and the trust it has placed in the NADC's pursuit of its responsibilities.

As noted in your letter, the NADC is responsible for engaging Australians in the celebrations of our nation on 26 January each year, to commend this nation's strengths and achievements, and to contemplate together the nation we want to build for generations of future Australians.

In respect of the expectations articulated in your letter of 12 September 2023 (in bold), I highlight the following by way of responses:

- 1. Australia Day celebrations should engender a sense of belonging to our great nation and its future. The 'reflect, respect, and celebrate' sentiment should be built upon in practical and tangible ways. The NADC should consider developing guidance and tools to grant recipients to promote First Nations engagement on capital city and regional community events and promote engagement on the NADC website.**

Australia Day is a day to reflect upon and respect the fact that we are all shaped by our own experiences, and to celebrate living in a nation where everyone's views, beliefs and contributions are valued.

Our principal activities, the Australian of the Year Awards and the National Citizenship and Flag Raising Ceremony, include significant First Nations elements and help us to come together as a nation to celebrate our diversity, reflect on our past, and respect what makes us unique and the Australia we aspire to be.

The Australia Day Capital City Events and Community Grant programs launched in October 2021 continue to provide avenues for Australians across the nation to participate in Australia Day events and programs.

Local government and community organisations, supported by the NADC state and territory Network, play a vital role in delivering these Australia Day events.

In 2022, the NADC introduced an additional grant element for events that incorporated reflection, respect and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, such as smoking ceremonies, welcomes to country and cultural performances incorporating language, music, storytelling and dance.

This expanded program supports local government and local traditional owner groups to conduct their own Australia Day ceremonies, encouraging their communities to actively reflect, respect and celebrate.

Whilst the vast majority of events funded include some First Nations elements, almost 40% of grant recipients received additional funding in 2022, and 45% in 2023, for significant First Nations recognition.

Grant agreements with state and territory partners will continue to outline the requirements for use of current campaign branding featuring the NADC's core message, 'Reflect, Respect, Celebrate'.

The Community Grants program will continue to be delivered in line with Government funding. Greater funding certainty and multi-year grant funding would enable the development of a more strategic approach to grant delivery and investment in associated resources, including to promote greater levels of First Nations engagement for 2025 and beyond.

## **2. All Australians who wish to join with their community for shared celebrations or reflections on Australia Day should be able to do so.**

As noted in your correspondence, the NADC now provides grant funding to Australia Day event organisers in capital cities and regional communities, with the expectation that these grants will promote accessibility, ensuring that all Australians can participate in the celebrations.

For some time now the NADC has been working towards ensuring that all of the January Program of Events in Canberra are fully accessible, and more recently has also incorporated these requirements into our Capital City Funding and Community Grant programs.

For the first time, 2023 applicants were required to include universal accessibility considerations as part of their application for event funding, and demonstrate that their events are as inclusive as they can be of all Australians, including people living with disability.

## **3. To ensure any Australian of the Year recipient can perform in their award year, the NADC should assist by providing additional financial assistance, as set out in the 2023-24 Budget. This could include, but need not be limited to, administrative support, facilitating professional skills development or assisting in impactful communications.**

The NADC is proud to be the steward of the Australian of the Year (AOTY) Awards, Australia's most prestigious individual awards program.

We have a proven track record of providing speech writing, coaching and media relations support and wellbeing services to state and territory recipients and AOTY national finalists.

More recently this has been broadened to include professional skills development in advocacy support – to help keep recipients engaged with active and effective communication throughout their award year. This requires additional ongoing investment from the NADC, and will continue to be part of our budget considerations.

The NADC will continue to support national Award recipients to tell their stories to more Australians, and work with corporate partners to help share the stories of achievement and the values that underpin the AOTY Awards.

## **4. The NADC should make it a priority to seek out new sponsorship.**

New sponsorship arrangements offer unique opportunities to attract partners who understand that our national day means different things to different people.

As noted in your correspondence, not only should sponsors understand the significance of the day, our partners should also reflect ethics and practices consistent with community expectations.

In February 2023 the NADC Board approved the hiring of a sponsorship consulting agency with a strong record in sponsorship acquisition – in line with the NADC's outsourced business model.

In this new era of potential partnerships, opportunities have been extended beyond the AOTY Awards to include the NADC's Australia Day activity and programs more broadly, focusing on social cohesion, civics and citizenship as well as belonging and engagement.

Against the backdrop of the external operating environment, we continue to advance prospects with a number of like-minded organisations.

As requested in your statement, the NADC will provide a quarterly sponsorship update to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet commencing in January 2024.

**5. All decision-making within the NADC should be informed by the guiding principles of accountability and transparency.**

The NADC's continued focus is to deepen and broaden our engagement with communities around the nation.

The NADC's corporate governance framework is designed to ensure that the NADC achieves its organisational objectives in a transparent, accountable and efficient way, delivering exceptional value for money as the coordinating body for Australia Day celebrations across the nation and for the Australian of the Year Awards.

We work closely with the national Network to set out the purpose, values and priorities we share so that each organisation can excel. The NADC meets regularly with representatives from the Network and the NADC Chair meets annually with the Chairs of the various state and territory councils.

We seek to operate in a manner consistent with the Government's APS Net Zero Emissions by 2030 policy.

**Conclusion**

The NADC is committed to ensuring that Australia Day provides all Australians – regardless of background, geography, ability and diversity – with the opportunity to 'Reflect, Respect and Celebrate'.

On behalf of the Board of the National Australia Day Council, I would like to assure you that this is both a tremendous honour and responsibility for us to be stewards of the celebrations of our national day.

I would again like to acknowledge your support and that of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Federal Government for our vital work.

I look forward to joining you on Australia Day 2024 and to 'Reflect, Respect and Celebrate' our wonderful nation.

Yours sincerely



**John Foreman OAM**  
**Chair**  
**National Australia Day Council**