

POLITICS FEDERAL

First Fleet 'good' for Indigenous Australians, Tony Abbott says

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Tony Abbott believes the arrival of the First Fleet was a good thing for Indigenous Australians.

The former prime minister was throwing his support behind keeping the existing date of Australia Day, in a chat with 2GB's Ray Hadley.

"Australia Day is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate all of the things we've achieved," he said.

"What happened on the 26th of January 1788 was on balance, for everyone - Aboriginal people included - a good thing because it brought Western civilisation to this country, it brought Australia into the modern world.



Tony Abbott says the First Fleet brought Australia into the modern world.

Photo: Nick Moir

"All of the things that we know and love about modern Australia are the lineal descendants of the attitudes that came ashore with the First Fleet on that day back in 1788.

"We shouldn't underestimate the contribution that the Aboriginal ethos has made to the wider Australian ethos.

"That easygoing stoicism, that laconic style that so characterises Australians is typical of the spirit that pervades Indigenous Australia."

He also commented on Malcolm Turnbull edging closer to his record of 29 consecutive Newspoll losses, defending the man who knifed him.

"It's not the polls that count, it's the quality of government that counts."

Mr Abbott also said he thinks the Coalition can win the next election if the government looks at policies such as scaling back migration.

He will spend 2018 encouraging colleagues to take the pressure off power and house prices and making sure locals have jobs.

"These are the sorts of things, when it comes to an election, the government would get credit for," he said.

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