

## NAIDOC Week: why don't we have a treaty?

This year on Australia Day, people marched in the streets, campaigning for a change to the Australia Day date. January 26 marks the arrival of The First Fleet. It marks colonisation, but it also marks the beginning of a tumultuous relationship between the colonial settlers and the Indigenous Australians.

On January 26 1938, Indigenous Australians held a Day of Mourning protest against the unjust treatment and unreasonable accumulation of native land. While there is much work to do, some progress has been made to strengthen the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

NAIDOC Week is one such example. It is a positive celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history, culture and achievements. The recognition of Indigenous people and their traditions boosts rapport with non-Indigenous Australians.

### How far have we come?

As the Indigenous Studies curriculum developer for Deakin University's Institute of Koorie Education, Terry Mason says that the relationship between Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians has certainly improved. He cites reconciliation as a major driver of the strengthened relations. 'If there was anything positive that came out of reconciliation it was the opportunity for all people to feel comfortable in the same space,' he says.

Mason believes there is an overall positive relationship in the community and says he can see a number of examples of all people working together to bolster relations. For example, he highlights mentoring schemes where business people mentor Indigenous people in some sectors. 'People who've had some success are working within programs that support people to transition into tertiary education and business,' Mason says. In addition, there are union-driven enterprise agreements that provide a range of rights in terms of equal opportunity and career progression for Indigenous workers.

Most recently, tens of thousands of people turned out to march in the [2017 Invasion Day Melbourne Rally](#) – proof that we've come a fair way in improving relations and further proof that there's a groundswell in community support to change the date of Australia Day. 'There's a responsibility of accepting the shared history leaves a legacy,' Mason explains.

But there is still much work to be done, particularly in terms of education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 'The initial learning patterns are established in early childhood. We need initiatives where there's a core unit for pre-service teachers to care for Aboriginal children. We'd find more success down the track,' Mason suggests. He adds that the relationship with the Government is still strained, particularly because of the [\\$534 million cut to Indigenous program funding](#) over five years, which began in 2014.

'There's a responsibility of accepting the shared history leaves a legacy.'

*Terry Mason,  
Curriculum Developer, Indigenous Studies, Deakin University*

### Why don't we have a treaty?

The only Commonwealth national government that has not signed a treaty with its Indigenous people, Australia's Federal Government has failed to follow the examples set by several of its states. This continues to cause issues in the relationship between the Government and Indigenous and Torres Strait Islanders. In the 1980s Prime Minister Bob Hawke promised a treaty, but through the political process it became a 'document of reconciliation', which is not the same. There is a call for a [treaty on claims for Indigenous sovereignty](#). Sovereignty would give Indigenous people more control over their own lives.

According to Mason, treaties are of great importance. 'In 1988 people were marching for land rights – there has always been a push to have one, they're nothing to be afraid of,' he says and highlights countries such as Canada which recognise sovereign rights. 'Treaties gives people the framework to solve disputes. It would be more equitable,' he explains. Discussions about treaties at state and territory government level are occurring in Victoria, South Australia, and the Northern Territory. Western Australia has [started negotiations on a treaty](#), too. Mason is optimistic that a national treaty and further state treaties will be put in place down the track and says it can only be a good thing. 'When you look overseas there has been an increase in the outcomes for Aboriginal people. The benefits have flowed just in recognition,' he concludes.

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**Mr Terry Mason**

Curriculum Developer, Institute  
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## As the older sibling are you more successful?

Older siblings are responsible, overachievers, successful. Younger siblings; free-spirited, outgoing, attention-seeking. And 'only' children? Well, they're perfectionists, self-centered and often mature for their age. These are all common birth order stereotypes we've heard, however is there any truth to them? Does where you sit amongst your siblings really affect your personality and behavior in adulthood?

According to Deakin University relationship expert Associate Professor Gery Karantzas, the issue of birth order and its implications on identity and personality has been a topic of curiosity for more than 100 years and has in particular been hotly debated for the past 20 years.

Assoc. Prof. Karantzas, Director of the Science of Adult Relationships (SoAR) Laboratory within Deakin's School of Psychology, says there was evolutionary evidence to suggest that birth order impacted your development.

'This wasn't because of parenting or family factors,' explains Assoc. Prof. Karantzas.

'Rather the evolutionary processes, whereby each sibling develops slightly different characteristics, as a way of dealing with the possible competition that might exist between siblings, and how they each try to ensure the attention and investment of parents.'

'Where differences are found, the traditional view is that older siblings are more conscientious, responsible and achievement-oriented. The view of younger – or non-first born – siblings is that they are more rebellious, liberal and agreeable.'

However Assoc. Prof. Karantzas points out there is more recent and alternate evidence that suggests differences are weak at best, and family structure and parenting is a factor that may result in some differences between children. That is, any differences were due to the family environment rather than birth order per se.

'Two very important studies in 2015 involving thousands of siblings conducted within family analysis revealed no differences in personality traits across siblings due to birth order,' says Assoc. Prof. Karantzas.

'So there is little merit to the idea that birth order is a factor in personality differences between siblings.'

'What we do know is how birth order affects what you learn from your siblings. For example, our older siblings act as important models in which we learn about how to interact in the world.'

'Very much like our parents and other important people in our family, from them we learn about how it is you can solve problems, how it is that you can regulate your emotions and what are appropriate and inappropriate behaviours to demonstrate in certain situations.'

'So, if we have really good role models, one of them being our oldest sibling, then we're in good shape because we're learning what is appropriate.'

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*Associate Professor Gery Karantzas,  
Deakin University*

### **What happens when sibling relationships are non-existent?**

Assoc. Prof. Karantzas says there is some suggestion that 'only' children are more spoiled and demanding, thus there is a negative stereotype that is at times invoked by wider society.

'The evidence crushes this inaccurate stereotype. There is little evidence to suggest that "only" children develop differently or experience different developmental outcomes

compared to children from families where there are siblings,' says Assoc. Prof. Karantzas.



The notion that only children are 'different' or 'develop differently' to children from families with siblings reflects inaccurate assumptions, he says.

'A recent study on how "only" children fare in romantic relationships in adulthood also finds similar effects. That is, "only" children show no differences in the communication patterns they use in relationships, nor do they show any higher insecurity with one's partners compared to children with siblings.'

'The bottom line is that the developmental differences that people may think exist when comparing "only" children to children with siblings do not exist.'

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**Associate Professor Gery Karantzas**

Director of the Science of Adult Relationships (SoAR) Laboratory, School of Psychology, Deakin University

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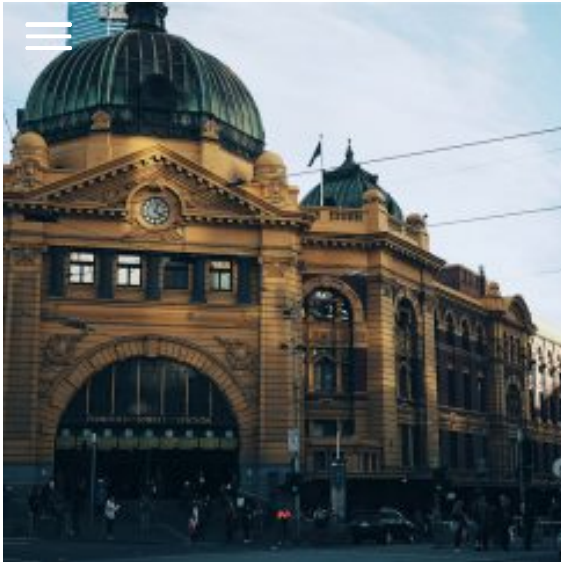


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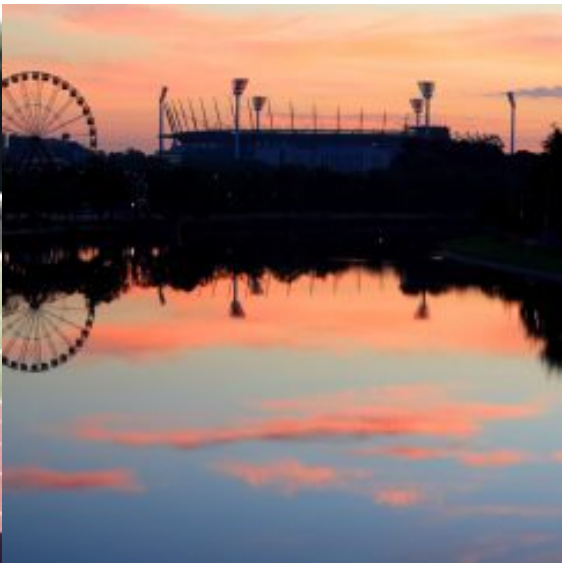
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