



Be Proud of Cook's Discovery of Australia

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THE LANDING OF CAPTAIN COOK AT BOTANY BAY 1770

# A U S T R A

Today marks the 250th anniversary of Captain James Cook's landing at Botany Bay.

It was the crowning achievement of an astonishing feat of navigation, and the greatest historically consequential event in a voyage of scientific and geographical discovery. It was the prelude to the birth of our nation.

Today, I'm taking the time to reflect on this achievement. I think all Australians should be proud of what Cook did, and even given the astringent and surreal times we are presently living through, I am unhappy that the event is passing without the fanfare it deserves.

I was a schoolboy in 1988 and Australia marked the bicentenary of the landing of the First Fleet. It was a yearlong and open-hearted celebration of what Australia has become — a youthful, peaceful, democratic, pluralist, secular, lawful, compassionate, innovative and good-humoured country. These are things it is genuinely worth being proud of. I think that the quarter-millennial anniversary of Cook's discovery is almost as important.

Celebrating Cook's landing at Botany Bay does not imply that our nation is without faults. We recognise the deep and abiding connection of Australia's first inhabitants to the land. But recognising significant anniversaries like this are about looking at how far we've come, and it's worth remembering that one of the Australian virtues birthed with our nation is an aspiration to treat all people equally and with dignity. We shouldn't wallow in recrimination, cast accusations, or judge our forebears by the different standards of today. This message, of tolerance and national pride, [is one I have been sharing for many years](#).

If you feel less acquainted than you ought with this important event in our history, then permit me to invite you to [read Joseph Bank's own diary from the days around the landing in April 1770](#). It's more vivid than Cook's account, and is a captivating read.

### Category

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### Tags

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2. Discovery of Australia

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