



FROM THE COAST

Australia Day

Tomorrow's Public Holiday will mean a day off work for many, the end of a long weekend for some, and the official recognition of Australian citizenship of this country for a select few. Australia Day means different things to different people, but whatever your personal commitments and plans for tomorrow, it's an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate everything that's great about our nation.

Anyone who has travelled outside our country knows how lucky we are. We have freedoms and opportunities we have worked hard to have and maintain. Like all nations, we've had our ups and downs, and proud and not-so-proud moments. But overall we have every reason to be proud of our diverse, multicultural society and to celebrate understanding, respect and reconciliation.

There is also much to appreciate in Esperance. In recent times we've seen no better demonstration of the strength and involvement of our community in the recovery from the November bushfires. We may be a comparatively small community but the sheer number of active, volunteer community groups is a testament to how proactive we are. Many of these groups have organised and planned our Australia Day celebrations as they do year after year.

The Rotary Club of Esperance's Family Fun Day will be held at Ralph Bower Adventureland Park providing fun entertainment for all ages. There will be a Bucking Bull, local music, markets, displays of vintage and muscle cars, the Ulysses Motorcycle Club, St John Ambulance and food and drinks all day from a variety of fundraising clubs.

The Australia Day Swim Thru will kick off the day when participants, who've been training for the 2.5km race, will be acknowledged and awarded from 9am at the celebrations. The water should be well and truly clear by the time the national sail training ship Young Endeavour sails by, cannons firing, as they leave Esperance to set sail for Adelaide.

The Premiers Active Citizenship Awards will recognise the achievements of local citizens who have really stood out in their contributions to community and individuals, and they will be awarded at the celebrations.

If you've never attended a Citizenship Ceremony, which are held throughout the year to welcome new Australian Citizens, there will be a very special one held at the Australia Day celebrations to welcome our newest citizens to our country and to Esperance. It is a moving experience to see people take the pledge and appreciate the opportunity to become one of our own. I hope to see you at the Family Fun Day in Esperance tomorrow, but whatever you choose to do, make the most of our wonderful celebration of Australia.