

## Staying Cool when the Debate is Hot

The lead up to January 26<sup>th</sup> has seen intensifying public debate over changing the date of 'Australia Day'. Some commentary has been hurtful and divisive resulting in many people feeling distressed and angry. The APS and AIPA have gathered some tips for navigating this period whilst looking after your wellbeing.



- 1 Tune-in**  
Tune into your feelings such as anger and distress. Acknowledge these emotions both to yourself and others. Talk about how you are feeling with someone you trust.
- 2 Take a break**  
If you feel distressed by the public debate and social media posts consider limiting your feeds to stem the flow of divisive posts or log off social media. Use the break to take a walk or use other strategies to calm your body and mind (breathing exercises, yoga or stretching).
- 3 Look after yourself**  
You may be left feeling tense, drained or fatigued. This is an important time to take care of yourself by eating well, staying hydrated, exercising, and practising good sleep habits. Set time aside for things you enjoy and help you feel well.
- 4 Channel your energy**  
Put your energy into positive actions. If you feel passionately about an issue get informed and get involved. Listen to and read the commentary and experiences of Indigenous Australians and other experts in related areas. Speak with Indigenous colleagues and friends. Consider volunteering; this will help you meet like-minded people and you may feel a sense of satisfaction knowing that you are contributing to a cause.
- 5 Support each other**  
If you see cyber harassment, bullying or racism, don't ignore it, report it and offer your support.
- 6 Connect with others**  
Connect with your family and friends, this grounds us as community members,
- 7 Connect with your community**  
Strong social and emotional wellbeing maintains our wellbeing through connections to body, mind and emotions, spirituality, land, community, families and culture.
- 8 It's okay not to talk**  
If you don't feel comfortable talking about an issue it's okay not to.

### Resources

Self-care: <https://au.reachout.com/articles/6-strategies-for-self-care>  
Cyber safety and respectful debate: <http://removehatefromthedebate.com/>  
It Stops with Me: <https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/what-can-you-do/speak/cyber-racism>  
Cyberbullying and harassment: [www.humanrights.gov.au/cyberbullying-what-it-and-how-get-help-violence-harassment-and-bullying-fact-sheet](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/cyberbullying-what-it-and-how-get-help-violence-harassment-and-bullying-fact-sheet)