

Karamanlis Sends Letter to Obama

Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis has sent a letter to the new US President Barack Obama, congratulating on assuming his duties. In his letter, the PM stresses amongst others his satisfaction over Mr Obama's commitment to combat the simmering global financial crisis in cooperation with the international community.

Besides, he points out that Mr Obama's significant speech yesterday had an appeal beyond the US and emanated the principles of understanding, cooperation, solidarity and the power of example, values that both leaders share. Mr Karamanlis expressed his expectation to cooperate with Mr Obama, looking to meet the new US president in the near future. During his first day as president, Mr Obama promised a new era of accountability and



transparency, saying there would be a "clean break from business as usual". His first announcement was

a pay freeze on senior White House staff. He said American families were tightening their belts, and so should Washington, adding that details would not be kept secret and made known instead. As President he would hold himself too to a "new standard of openness", he said. "Information will not be held just because I say so. "Transparency and the rule of law will be the touchstones of this Presidency."

Meanwhile Reuter has reported that there is a non-signed draft which proposes revision of the state under which Guantanamo detainees are kept and the special military committees that are trying them. Mr Obama may order the Guantanamo prison to close, when the draft plan of the relevant decree is signed.

Australia Day, also known as Anniversary Day, Foundation Day and Invasion Day, is the official national day of Australia. Celebrated annually on 26 January, the day commemorates the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, marking the start of British colonisation of Australia. Australia Day is an official public holiday in every state and territory of Australia, and is marked by the Order of Australia and Australian of the Year awards, along with an address from the Prime Minister.



Australia Day

Records of the celebration of Australia Day date back to 1808, with Governor Lachlan Macquarie having held the first official celebration of Australia Day in 1818. In 2004, an estimated 7.5 million people attended Australia Day celebrations and functions across the country.

History

On 13 May 1787, a fleet of 11 ships, which came to be known as the First Fleet, was sent by the British Admiralty from England to Australia. Under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip, the fleet sought to establish a penal colony at Botany Bay on the coast of New South Wales, which had been explored by Captain James Cook in 1770. The settlement was seen as necessary because of the loss of the colonies in North America. Captain Phillip found

Botany Bay unsuitable and with two boats proceeded a short distance northwards to Port Jackson, which he declared "the finest harbour in the world". The site decided upon for the first settlement was at a location where there was a stream of potable water and some level land, unlike much of the steep and rugged foreshore. By 26 January 1788, the fleet was at anchor in Sydney Cove, the male convicts were unshipped and the flag was raised in the name of King George III.



In 1808, the day was celebrated as the "First Landing" or "Foundation Day", as the colony had survived for twenty years, despite the initial hardships, deprivation and starvation suffered by the First Fleet settlers.[1][2] The celebrations began at sundown on 25 January, and lasted into the night, the chief toast of the occasion being Major George Johnston. Johnston had the honour of being the first officer ashore from the First Fleet, having been carried from the landing boat on the back of convict James Ruse.[2] Despite suffering the ill-effects of a fall from his gig on the way home to Annandale, Johnston led the officers of the New South Wales Corps in arresting Governor William Bligh on the following day, 26 January 1808, in what became known as the "Rum Rebellion".

On 26 January in 1818, the 30th anniversary, Governor Lachlan Macquarie held a 30-gun salute at Dawes Point and

gave government workers a holiday[3] – a tradition that was soon followed by banks and other public offices. In 1888, all colonial capitals except Adelaide celebrated 'Anniversary Day'. In 1910, South Australia adopted Australia Day,[2] followed by Victoria in 1931.

By 1935, all states of Australia were celebrating 26 January as Australia Day (although it was still known as Anniversary Day in New South Wales).

The 150th anniversary of British settlement in Australia in 1938 was widely celebrated.

Preparations began in 1936 with the formation of a Celebrations Council.

In that year, New South Wales was the only state to abandon the traditional long weekend, and the annual Anniversary Day public holiday was held on the actual anniversary day – Wednesday 26 January.

The Commonwealth and state governments agreed to unify the celebrations on 26 January as 'Australia Day' in 1946, although the public holiday was instead taken on the Monday closest to the actual anniversary.