

STATES OF JERSEY



A NATIONAL DAY FOR JERSEY (P.6/2025): COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 14th March 2025
by the Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

Background

A National Day for Jersey [[P.6/2025](#)] was lodged *au greffe* on 3rd February 2025 with the date for debate being 18th March 2025. P.6/2025 is seeking the States Assembly's decision, in principle, for Liberation Day to be adopted as Jersey's official National Day.

The Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel (hereafter referred to as "the Panel") received a briefing from the Minister for International Development and Government of Jersey Officers on 16th January 2025 which included explanation of the consultation process and the "Jersey Anthem" workstream. The Panel has also questioned the Minister for International Development (hereafter referred to as "the Minister") during Quarterly Hearings. The Panel has agreed to form these comments as a means to aid the consideration of the proposed National Day for Jersey.

In October 2019, the Chief Minister established the Island Identity Policy Development Board which is chaired by Deputy Carolyn Labey. This project aimed to gather an understanding as to how Islanders valued Jersey, what they felt made the Island special as well as seeking ways to improve and promote the Island at an international level. The designation of a National Day for Jersey is one of the recommendations included in the Island Identity Policy Development Board's [Interim Findings Report](#).

The Panel sent a [letter](#) to the Minister following its public hearing with her to raise some further lines of questioning with regards to the National Day and Jersey Anthem. The Panel queried the reasoning behind the Minister lodging this proposition through her role as Minister for International Development rather than as Assistant Minister for External Relations. It was noted that this is due to the Minister for International Development holding responsibility for the Island Identity Project.¹

The Proposal

P.6/2025 seeks the States Assembly's decision, in principle, for Liberation Day to be adopted as Jersey's official National Day. The Panel has been informed that the introduction of a National Day was seen as a way to enhance civic engagement, whilst commemorating Jersey's history. Liberation Day, held on the 9th May every year, was proposed as the most suitable date for a National Day, given its existing public holiday status and significance to the Island.

The Panel is aware that alternative days were prompted and a list was set out in [Appendix 1 of the Island Identity Report](#) detailing alternative dates which could be considered as a National Day for Jersey. When questioned by the Panel in a public hearing as to the possibility for an additional date to be suggested, with the example of the Corn Riots (28th September – 29th September), the Minister informed the Panel that she felt it would be possible for Jersey to have more than one national day as many other countries do.²

¹ [Letter - Minister for International Development to Economic and International Affairs re Follow up Quarterly Hearing questions - 4 March 2025](#)

² [Transcript-Quarterly-Public-Hearing-with-the-Minister-for-International-Development-27-February-2025.pdf](#)

At the hearing with the Minister, the Panel queried the formulation of the survey as the survey questions asked Islanders if they agreed that Liberation Day should be Jersey’s National Day, rather than having been formulated to ask if Islanders agreed to the need for a National Day. The Panel was informed that the survey was constructed in this way as the Island Identity Report made the case that Jersey should have a National Day and the choice was made to be direct in the survey by proposing a date rather than launch an open survey.³

The Panel notes that alternatives could be suggested and that the survey received a good response with 2,400 Islanders responding. However, the Panel would note that the respondents to the survey were self-selecting and that although a breakdown has been provided for students responding via paper, no further demographic analysis based on age or nationality has been possible. It can also be argued that the binary choice of yes or no to Liberation Day was limiting. For example, questions on whether a national day should be established and choose of any alternative days may have been beneficial to include.

The Panel acknowledges that the creation of a National Day for Jersey would reinforce Jersey’s identity, however, highlights that it would be important for consideration to be given to ensuring that all ethnicities and cultures feel represented. The Minister informed the Panel that the National Day would be created with the idea being that individuals living on the Island should embrace Jersey’s identity whilst still being able to maintain their own heritage and identity.

During the hearing with the Minister, the Panel raised concerns that if Liberation Day is repurposed as Jersey’s National Day the historical significance of this day might be lost. The Panel was informed that 9th May of every year would still be named as Liberation Day but it would be known and referred to on the Island and internationally as Jersey’s National Day. Within the proposition’s accompanying report, it is stated that “*Anecdotal information indicates that many Islanders already consider Liberation Day to be Jersey’s National Day*”.⁴ The Panel notes the intention that by Liberation Day being repurposed as Jersey’s National Day the historical significance of the day is reinforced and formalised for future generations.

In the response received from the Minister to the Panel’s follow-up questions, the Panel notes with interest that 49% of survey respondents were under 18:

	Yes	No	Unsure
All responses including schools (total 2,466)	2,007 (82%)	203 (8%)	256 (10%)
Paper responses from school students (Total:1,207)	991 (82%)	156 (13%)	60 (5%)

Liberation Day, 9 May, should be adopted as Jersey's national day

The Panel notes that there is an active plan through the creation of a National Day to boost tourism and recognition of Jersey on an international scale. Furthermore, the Panel notes that Government has committed a portion of the 1% allocated to arts, culture and

³ [Transcript-Quarterly-Public-Hearing-with-the-Minister-for-International-Development-27-February-2025.pdf](#)

⁴ [A National Day and Anthem for Jersey – Consultation Report February 2025](#)

heritage to the Liberation 80 celebrations and so if Liberation Day is adopted as Jersey's National Day this funding will support the celebrations.⁵ The Panel asked the Minister how she planned to leverage the establishment of a National Day to boost tourism and international recognition of Jersey, and was informed that:⁶

“If the proposition for a National Day is adopted, we will use this opportunity to enhance Jersey’s international profile and attract more visitors by working closely with government departments, relevant stakeholders, and leveraging the government’s social media channels to raise awareness of the decision in the lead-up to the Liberation 80 celebrations. To maximize the impact, we will be working with Visit Jersey to ensure that their marketing of the Liberation 80 celebrations reflects the significance recognised by the States Assembly decision and is in a format which will be familiar and attractive to visitor audiences.”

Jersey Anthem

The Panel notes that a proposition has not been brought forward for a formal Jersey Anthem to be established following inconclusive results from the survey, with only 50% of respondents supporting the idea of Beautiful Jersey being declared the Island's anthem. The Panel is aware of a previous endeavours at identifying an official Jersey Anthem that took place in 2007, with Senator Frank Walker, the then Chief Minister, launching an open competition with the support of Deputy Labey, then Assistant Minister with responsibility for Culture and Senator Vibert the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.⁷ In April 2008, after final judging of the competition “Island Home” was announced as the winning song, however, with a lack of consensus on the idea, the States Assembly has not since ratified “Island Home” as the Island's Official Anthem.

The Panel was informed during its hearing with the Minister, that the Council of Ministers was not supportive of the Minister proceeding with Beautiful Jersey as Jersey's Anthem due to the inconclusive results, however, there was recognition that there was need for an anthem.⁸ The Panel highlights the need for inclusivity to be considered when Jersey's anthem is selected.

The Panel notes that the Council of Ministers has chosen to provide interim guidance to sports clubs and other bodies that might seek a local anthem as to what should be played during official events. The Panel queried in its hearing with the Minister, the fact that Beautiful Jersey is not taught in all schools and was advised that if it were established as Jersey's Anthem it should be taught in all schools.⁹

⁵ [Letter - Minister for International Development to Economic and International Affairs re Follow up Quarterly Hearing questions - 4 March 2025](#)

⁶ [Letter - Minister for International Development to Economic and International Affairs re Follow up Quarterly Hearing questions - 4 March 2025](#)

⁷ [30.01.07 Statement of the Chief Minister re An anthem for Jersey](#)

⁸ [Transcript-Quarterly-Public-Hearing-with-the-Minister-for-International-Development-27-February-2025.pdf](#)

⁹ [Transcript-Quarterly-Public-Hearing-with-the-Minister-for-International-Development-27-February-2025.pdf](#)

Amongst school age students 58% of responded in favour of Beautiful Jersey being Jersey’s Official Anthem compared to the overall 50% ‘yes’ response when analysing all responses received (see table below):¹⁰

	Yes	No	Unsure
All responses including schools (total 2,466)	1,237 (50%)	870 (35%)	359 (15%)
Paper responses from school students (Total: 1,207)	701 (58%)	301 (25%)	205 (17%)

Beautiful Jersey should be formally adopted as Jersey's anthem

The Panel has been informed that there is no timeline for the formal selection of a Jersey anthem, and will scrutinise any future work that comes forward in this regard.

Conclusion

The Panel has provided these considerations in order to aid in the debate of P.6/2025 and thanks the Minister for her time. The Panel has concerns on the methodology used for the survey and would ask members to exercise caution if they are using the survey results exclusively to make a decision on this proposition. Ultimately this is a political decision for members to make and the Panel is neutral on the merits of what is being proposed.

The Panel has noted the amendment made by the Chair, Deputy Tadier, having drafted these comments separately and agreed them unanimously.

¹⁰ [Letter - Minister for International Development to Economic and International Affairs re Follow up Quarterly Hearing questions - 4 March 2025](#)