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## **Hip-hop duo bring racial fun, fury to Laneway festival**

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Last January, when asked for his thoughts on Australia Day, Indigenous hip-hop artist Adam Briggs was unequivocal: "I pull the blinds and I shut everything down," he said.

A lot has changed in the past year. Just two months ago, Briggs, with producer Adam "Trials" Rankine as A.B. Original, released their debut album *Reclaim Australia*, a vehement up-yours to racism and white supremacists.

The album peaked at No. 2 on the iTunes charts in Australia and there's been a groundswell to get the song into the Triple J Hottest 100 to protest the timing of the countdown on January 26.

When Danny Rogers, one of the organisers of St Jerome's Laneway Festival, called to offer A.B. Original the role of festival MCs as well as a slot on the bill, Briggs knew it was time to throw open the blinds.

"I feel like as artists we have this position where we can afford to try a different approach from our usual reclusiveness," he says.

"It might be a bit of a missed opportunity to not bring this album to the forefront of one of the last touring festivals of Australia."

Rogers agreed. "There's probably never been a more appropriate opportunity for them to have the conversation.

"I thought the album was really strong, first and foremost, and obviously the message in the music is very clear and we just wanted to support that and give them a platform."

Rogers doesn't know what Briggs and Trials have in store for Laneway, which opens in Brisbane on Thursday. The pair will join an Invasion Day march in Brisbane before heading to the festival.

If their MCing is anything like their work on *Reclaim Australia* - think lyrics like, "you watching tele for *The Bachelor* but you wouldn't read a book about a f\_\_kload of massacres? (what?!)" - we can expect opinions that are as funny as they are furious.

"One thing that carries throughout every Indigenous community is humour and laughter, it's a backbone of Indigenous communities," says Briggs. "We might take ourselves lightly, but we don't take the issues lightly."

"We'll definitely be bringing a reasonably large dose of reality to the crowd," says Trials.

The new, controversial lamb advertisement, intended as a celebration of Australia's diversity, is a step in the right direction says Trials, but the duo bristle at the ad's depiction of Indigenous Australians welcoming white settlers with open arms.

"We've got a little way to go before we can poke fun at our dispossession."