Invasion Day Melbourne rally draws tens of thousands of protesters

James Wong and Jessica Carrascalao Heard
January 26 2017

A woman taking part in the Invasion Day Melbourne rally. Photo: Darrian Traynor

Tens of thousands of people gathered in Melbourne's CBD for an 'Invasion Day' rally on Thursday.

The crowd at Federation Square - estimated by some to be up to 50,000 people - is believed to have eclipsed the number of people who attended the earlier Australia Day march along Swanston Street.

Protesters gathered at Parliament House on Spring Street about 11am, just as the Australia Day parade was beginning nearby.

The tune of Waltzing Matilda could be heard drifting from the bagpipes on Swanston Street as 'Invasion Day' protesters gave speeches in front of Parliament House.

The protesters then marched down Bourke Street, along Swanston Street, and reached Flinders Street Station, just after the Australia Day parade came to an end.

The march paused at the intersection of Bourke and Exhibition streets for a sit in circle, blocking traffic.

At midday, the eerie boom of the 21-gun salute at the Shrine of Remembrance echoed over the Invasion Day Melbourne crowd's chants of "always was, always will be Aboriginal land".

The rally filled Federation Square and spilled onto Flinders and Swanston streets, across to Flinders Street Station.

The Invasion Day Melbourne rally. Photo: Twitter/@sallyrugg

Invasion Day Melbourne rally

Once at Flinders Street, the protesters again formed a circle.

Those near enough sat on the road at the intersection, with the rest of the marching crowd stretching back up Swanston Street.

The crowd on Swanston Street for the Australia Day parade. Photo: Jesse Marlow

The Invasion Day Melbourne march was one of many being held in capital cities and towns across Australia.

Nova Peris OAM