

Mayor's Speech on Australia Day 2020 – City of Burnside

Good morning and thank you everyone for participating in this important ceremony. I also wish you Happy New Year and welcome you to the Year of the Rat.

Firstly, I acknowledge and show respect to the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains whose heritage, culture and identity come from this land. I too recognise their leaders, past, present and emerging. For indigenous Australians, today there is the inevitable reflection on the many thousands of years they were of this land before European settlement and of the turmoil and displacement experienced thereafter. For many, today is seen as 'Survival Day' or a day of mourning. In honouring their custodianship, we commit to genuine recognition and reconciliation.

The Australia Day Council's campaign this year has focused on the messaging of "We are all part of the story" and three words: Reflect, Respect and Celebrate.

We reflect on the fact that Australia is a land of immigrants. It has been made great by the influx of many people from all over the world. The first ones came across a land bridge from Asia over 60,000 years ago. From the 15th to the 17th centuries, seafarers, merchants and adventurers came from across the seas from Europe and Asia in the quest for new lands, new conquests and new wealth. We know that Indonesians, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, French and English came to different parts of this land, but none settled here.

The First Fleet arrived on January 26th 1788, 18 years after Captain Cook mapped our east coast, and the colonisation of Australia by the British began. Hardship, toil, starvation, cruelty and the oppressive heat tested them all. But we are here today because of them. Some of us can trace our roots back to those early days...whether from convicts or freemen or women. Others came in waves, during the gold rushes, after 2 World Wars and Vietnam, because of agricultural or financial crises, to avoid religious persecution, to escape poverty or just looking for a better life.

Fast forward 232 years and some of those reasons for migration still apply. Difficulties still challenge us today....currently with extensive drought and horrific bushfires.

However, hard work, resilience and optimism have guided generations who came looking for new opportunities. Resilience and sense of community will continue to make us strong.

For those original inhabitants of Australia, change brought much loss, and suffering loss is applicable to many of you who will become Australian citizens today. Leaving behind your countries and your loved ones is difficult, but Australians are 'a welcoming lot'. Loss is part of our history and of our many stories. All of us need to continue to appreciate and understand our past, as we look forward to our future together.

We Respect the many different cultures that have made Australia.

Our history "tells of many people, from far and wide, and those who have been here since the beginning of time."

We need to show respect for difference. We should show respect for the indigenous owners of the land and recognise their beliefs and their connection to, and knowledge of, how they care for the land. We must listen to their stories, and invest in their futures.

We take this opportunity to show respect for the many people from many different places who have built our nation, its industries and its commerce, and who have helped build and shape our unique society. In doing so they have brought great diversity to the social, economic and religious fabric of this nation and together are helping to shape a new, emerging identity.

I grew up after World War 2 and at that time, many stories were never told, because of the cruelty and hardships many endured both at home and abroad. My grandparents were still getting over the effects of The Great War and its legacy of loss. Similarly after the Vietnam War, many stories were not listened to or told, but today we are better listeners. We must listen to the many stories that you, the about-to-be newest Australians, bring with you to this new land. By sharing our stories we learn to understand each other.

Today we **celebrate** Australian achievements in science, medicine, technology, engineering, education, humanities, the arts, sport and other scholarship. Innovation, creativity, imagination, resilience and perseverance are strongly entrenched in our makeup. Our history is full of inventors, adventurers and trailblazers.

But it is the everyday heroes who we also acclaim on this day - the everyday Australians, our friends and neighbours, the volunteers, the charity workers, the supporters and givers who are generous with their

time, their efforts and their money to help others....and who do it humbly, seeking no reward.

We give special thanks today to our 'disaster heroes'. We celebrate the bravery of our firefighters, our service men and women, the medical staff, the wildlife warriors and all who have been, and who will be involved in the rebuilding of lives, livelihoods and habitats over the next many years of the recovery stages after this national disaster. We also thank those overseas who are serving in hostile environments and who are engaged in aid.

At this time, we celebrate the skills and the human spirit that overcomes tragedies that are inflicted upon us through natural disasters, like bushfires, drought and floods, as well as human-made disasters like war, poverty and racial and religious prejudice.

Finally, on this January 26th, Burnside welcomes a new group of Australians, who have come to this 'best place on earth' for many reasons.....for education, for health and well-being, for freedom of speech, a different climate, for safety, security and economic prosperity. Some of you have waited for many years for the opportunity to call yourselves 'Australian'...and it won't be long now!

So, on behalf of the City of Burnside, I congratulate you for choosing this place and encourage you to participate in all that this country and this council has to offer, because "We are all part of the Australian story."