Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett JP
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community WA
Australia Day Service
26 January 2025

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Good Evening

I am delighted to be here today with my wife Patricia, Deputy Mayor Chontelle Stone, Councillor Phoebe Corke and Councillor Tarun Dewan and our neighbouring Councillor Fedele Camarda, City of Fremantle to join with you in celebrating Australia Day.

I acknowledge the Whadjup people of the Nyungar Nation the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we have gathered today, and I pay my respect to their Elders past and present and I extend that respect to First Nation people with us today.

I acknowledge:

- Imam Syed Wadood Janud; Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Perth;
- Mr Anjum Qaisrani, President, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Perth;
- Mr Sam Lim MP, Federal Member for Tangney;
- The Honourable Klara Andric, MLC, Member for South Metropolitan Region;
- Distinguished guests;
- Ladies and gentlemen and the boys who have joined us today.

The Australia Day Council states that Australia Day is the day to **reflect** on what it means to be Australian, to **celebrate** contemporary Australia and to acknowledge our history.

As we know Australia has a very complex history and efforts to reconcile our past continue as we share opportunities to build a stronger and more resilient future that we can all acknowledge going forward.

The City of Cockburn has had a Reconciliation Action Plan since 2011.

As part of our Reconciliation Action Plan we focus on respect for the local Nyungar people and for an understanding of the culture and history of the broader First Nations people.

Earlier today I formally welcomed almost 100 new citizens from 31 different countries to our City as they took their pledge.

And across Australia today, more than 14,600 people from over 150 countries have been invited to become citizens, at one of 280 ceremonies being held across the country.

My family first arrived in Botany Bay, New South Wales in 1817 not long after the First Fleets arrival in 1788.

They were involved with the early exploration of New South Wales - over the Blue Mountains and into the hinterland and on several occasions their lives were saved by the Aboriginal trackers who led them to water and food sources.

By all accounts they got on very well with the Aboriginal community and I think that has travelled down the generations – as I have an enduring relationship with Aboriginal people.

Back in September 2009 a full page appeared in The West Australian newspaper that caught my attention.

It was titled; "Raindrop' and I think it has significance even today in the wider context of the strength of unity.

It reads:

A single drop of rain may seem like a simple thing.

But you must remember – it never comes alone. It has Friends.

And when they come tumbling out of the sky in their millions, they have the power to change the world.

They fill the dams that light our homes, nourish the plants that feed us, and lift the great rivers that carry our ships.

In small things, too, they make miracles.

Flowers stand straighter to greet them, a hot afternoon softens its glare, and before they leave for other tasks, they may paint a rainbow or two for our pleasure.

How can something so small achieve such great things?

It is possible.

There is power in each of us to achieve things beyond our imaging.

A power that is at its best and brightest when many become one.

Our greatest strength is in each other. May the unity we share continue to be the spirit of what makes us truly special.

We have come here today in unity, to join in the conversation and reflect on our shared histories, contributions and achievements as a progressive society that continues to mature, learn from the past and importantly support each other.

On behalf of the City, I thank the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community WA for bringing us together on Australia Day and for their significant and on-going contribution to our community.

Your dedication to promoting peace, interfaith dialogue, and service to humanity are highly valued and appreciated.

Thank you.