

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett JP
Bangladesh Australian Association of Western Australia
International Mother Language Day
Saturday, 14 February 2026

Good Evening

I am delighted to be here with my wife Patricia in celebration of International Mother Language Day and thank the Bangladesh Australian Association of Western Australia for their kind invitation to be here tonight.

I acknowledge the Whadjup Nyungar people the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting, and I pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to First Nation people who may be with us tonight.

I acknowledge:

BAAWA (Bangladeshi Community) in collaboration with **Bhutanese** community, **Chinese** community, **Indian** community, **Indonesian** community and **Nepalese** community.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls

The importance of passing down culture, heritage, language and other aspects of our past has never been more important in an increasingly complex and diverse world.

The theme of the 2026 International Mother Language Day, “Youth Voices on Multilingual Education” sends its own message.

The theme highlight’s the critical role of young people in defending and revitalising languages, using technology to prompt linguistic diversity and the necessity of incorporating mother tongues in education for inclusion and development.

Key aspects of the observance include:

- Youth led innovation
- Multilingual education
- Sustainability & inclusion

Globally 40 per cent of the population does not have access to an education in a language they speak or understand.

However, progress is being made in multilingual education with a growing understanding of its importance, particularly in early schooling.

I know a number of cultures, where the importance of learning language has been recognised and steps taken to ensure children are able to learn the 'Mother' language.

This is of importance with many new migrants seeing a gap in communication once they have left their place of birth, arrived in Australia, had children, and then realising the difficulty of how their children will communicate with family members from their place of birth.

This is particularly important when children are trying to communicate with their grandparents 'back home'.

It can be a huge problem even though we have access to an improving communication technology.

We all know that the earlier children are exposed to language the easier it is for them to pick it up

Multilingual education based on mother-tongue facilitates access to and inclusion in learning for population groups that speak non-dominant languages, languages of minority groups and indigenous languages.

When languages fade, so does the world's rich tapestry of cultural diversity.

Opportunities, traditions, memory, unique modes of thinking and expression — valuable resources for ensuring a better future — are also lost.

International Mother Language Day is observed every year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism and I am pleased to be here to respect and acknowledge its importance in our community.

Thank you.