

**Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP**

**Ahmadiyya Muslim Community**

**239 Barrington Street, Bibra Lake**

**Australia Day Celebrations**

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Good evening ladies and gentlemen

I acknowledge the Wadjuk People of the Nyungar Nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and I pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

I acknowledge:

- Imam Kamran Tahir, Imam Perth Western Australia;
- Rashid Waqas, WA President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association;
- Councillor Philip Eva JP and his wife Michele;
- Councillor Lara Kirkwood;
- My wife Patricia;
- Other distinguished guests;
- Ladies and gentlemen.

Australia is one of the youngest nations in the world in one respect; however it has a rich and diverse culture that relates to its first nation people – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People that goes back over 60,000 years.

During this time the Aboriginal & Torres Islander People looked after Mother Earth knowing that they were custodians of the land and that those who followed in their footsteps would need to do the same.

Theirs was a nomadic lifestyle moving with the seasons – no permanent structures built – no monuments for the world to see.

Upon arrival of the first ‘white’ people things changed rapidly and within a few short years many Aboriginal & Torres Islander People were confined to reservations.

In the 230 plus years since the arrival of the ‘white’ man our continent has become polluted, rivers destroyed, areas overrun with salt due to the wholesale clearing of trees and vegetation, species made extinct and the list goes on.

As climate change begins to bring about widely varying weather patterns across the world are our world leaders listening, are they listening?

The strength of any nation is built around its people and their capacity to work together to create mutual benefits that flow throughout their community.

The challenges facing every nation on Earth are formidable and at the same time we have millions of people displaced from their homelands – often quoted as the biggest migration of people at any time in history due to war, oppression and the effects of climate change.

As a nation Australia needs to demonstrate its leadership and stand alongside other nations to address these issues.

To stand back and do nothing is unacceptable – to talk and not act is unacceptable – governments across the globe are seeing a surging burst of people moving onto the streets – these people are of all ages – they hold their country's flags high and know that there is a better world out there – a chance to share in the best life has to offer – to create opportunities for their children and those that will follow in their footsteps.

So as we come together to celebrate Australia Day and hold our flags high; we know that the sacrifices of war, famine and insecurity have influenced our nation and made it what it is today.

I thank the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community for hosting tonight's event – one that brings our community together and augers well for the future of our community and the nation itself.

Thank you.