

**MAYOR ROBERT BRIA**  
**AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATION & CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY**  
**Thursday 26 January 2017**  
**St Peters Civic Plaza, St Peters**

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Good morning and welcome to the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters Australia Day Celebration and Citizenship Ceremony.

My name is Robert Bria. I am the Mayor of the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters and it is my very great pleasure to welcome you all here this morning to celebrate our national holiday.

*I would firstly like to acknowledge this land that we meet on today is the traditional land of the Kurna people and that we respect their spiritual connection with their country. We also acknowledge the Kurna People as the custodians of the greater Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still important to the living Kurna people today.*

I am delighted to welcome distinguished guests:

- **Mr Steven Marshall MP**, Member for Dunstan
- **Ms Vickie Chapman MP**, Member for Bragg
- **Kate Ellis MP**, Federal Member for Adelaide

And my fellow Elected Members:

- Carlo Dottore
- Kevin Duke
- John Frogley
- Connie Granozio
- Garry Knoblauch
- Sophia McRae
- Lucy Marcuccitti

- John Minney
- Evonne Moore
- Christel Mex
- Kevin Shepherdson
- Sue Whittington
- Paul Wormald, and their partners.

A warm welcome also to council staff, in particular Council's Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr Carlos Buzzetti.

I would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to the 61 people who this morning will become Australian Citizens and of course, their families and friends who are here to witness this solemn ceremony.

Shortly, today's candidates for Citizenship will stand before to take an Oath of Affirmation of Allegiance to Australia and pledge their commitment to its people, democratic beliefs and laws.

Ladies and gentlemen.

It's hard to believe that nearly four weeks have passed since 2016 gave way to 2017. And yet, here we are on 26 January.

January is the month of a new year; the time for resolutions, the time new beginnings and plans for the year ahead.

January is also the month of cricket, beaches, barbecues and the Tour Down Under. It is the month of heatwaves, bushfires and as we have seen in recent days, thunderstorms.

January is a month of special significance for me personally.

But most importantly, it is the month in which we celebrate our national holiday, Australia Day.

I ask you to pause for a moment and think about the society we live in and who we are as a people.

Today, we honour four Australians who were presented with Australia Day Awards by the Prime Minister in Canberra last night:

- Australian of the Year Emeritus Professor Alan McKay-Sim
- Senior Australian of the Year Sister Ann Gardiner
- Local Hero of the Year Vicki Jellie; and,
- Young Australian of the Year, South Australia's own Pail Vasileff.

We also honour the many Australians, from all walks of life, who were appointed with Australia Day Honours.

I would particularly like to congratulate Dr Phillip Ernest Harding AM, of Kent for his appointment to this year's Australia Day Honours list.

We thank them for their outstanding service to their community.

But we also thank and honour countless other Australians who have not been recognised with Honours today – everyday Australians; our neighbours and friends whose name you will not see in the newspaper but who quietly go about their business, serving their community without fuss or fanfare, seeking neither recognition or reward.

It is on their shoulders that we stand today. It is their legacy of service we inherit. It is the fruits of their labour that we benefit from.

They should serve as an inspiration to all of us about the virtues of volunteering, of service to others and making our country a better place.

It is not by the example of their power but by the power of their example that show us that the goal of a better Australia starts with all of us being better Australians.

As citizens it is up to us to bring hope with there is despair, reconciliation where there is division, healing where there is hurt, and understanding where there is ignorance.

Today is also a day to be thankful for the peaceful and diverse society we live in compared to other parts of the world.

For more than 40,000 years this country has been enriched by the wonderful diversity of cultures that has enriched our society.

First by Aboriginal people during the Dream time, and in the last 230 odd years, by people from all corners of the earth.

Australia's story – it's great unfinished story – is a story of migration.

All of us here are either migrants or descendants of migrants 'who've come across the seas' and 'toiled with hearts and hands'.

That this country is home to people who have settled here from all over the world practising different religions, and so generously willing to share their unique traditions, customs and culture is quite different from the experience of many other countries.

As the song goes, "*We are one, but we are many. And from all the lands on earth we come.*"

Indeed, in only a handful of countries in the world is this possible and fortunately Australia – our home - is one of them.

Today, one in four Australians was born overseas and nearly one in two Australians have at least one parent born overseas.

And, on this day – more than any other in our calendar – most Australians of all faiths and cultural backgrounds come together to celebrate what makes this country so great and the 'destination of choice' for so many migrants.

Since the end of the Second World War nearly 8 million people, 800,000 of whom were refugees and humanitarian entrants, have made their way to Australia – each of them with their own story to tell.

Australia's Migrant History should be a source of inspiration for our candidates for Citizenship that race, ethnicity and cultural background are not barriers to fulfilling your dreams and aspirations.

Here in South Australia, we can claim to have a refugee from Vietnam as our Governor and the son of Greek migrants as our Chief Justice.

Only this week we have seen further evidence of the success of our multicultural community with Gladys Berejiklian, the daughter of Armenian migrants to Australia, becoming the Premier of New South Wales.

This morning, I want to tell a story about a young woman who migrated to Australia many years ago.

This young woman had just turned 21 and was engaged to the love of her life.

Soon after the young woman and her fiancée, who come from the same village, were married. A happy occasion, one would think? Not so.

You see, this young woman's mother and father disapproved of her marriage and refused to go to her wedding. The reason they disapproved? They knew that marrying this man would mean their daughter migrating to Australia and perhaps never seeing her again.

Can you image the heartbreak for this young woman? Can you image the pain?

A young bride whose father refused to be by her side as she walked down the aisle. A young bride who gained a husband but 'lost' her parents on the same day.

The only witnesses on her wedding day were her friend and her brother.

But the pain was not over. Shortly after she was married her husband left for Australia.

For the next two and half years she lived with her in-laws without any contact with her parents until she too made the journey to be re-united with her husband.

Today, that young woman is not so young anymore, but her story which I learnt about 10 years ago, will be etched in my memory forever.

Her story, like so many other migrant stories, is a reminder of the sacrifices that people from all over the world have made and make in coming to Australia.

It says something about how special Australia is, doesn't it?

A country so valued, so full of hope, so full of opportunity that people like this young woman was even willing to accept the horrible fate of being disowned by her own parents to start a new life half a world away.

That young woman is my mother.

The year she arrived in Australia was 1963.

The month was January.

## **Presentation by Australia Day Ambassador, by Ms Mem Fox**

### **Parliamentarian's Presentations:**

- Ms Kate Ellis MP, Federal Member for Adelaide
- Mr Steven Marshall MP, Member for Dunstan
- Ms Vickie Chapman MP, Member for Bragg

### **Presentation of Local Citizen of the Year Award to Mr Victor Baltutis**

*Citation read by Cr John Frogley*

### **Presentation of Local Citizen of the Year Award (Commendation) to Ms Kala**

*Citation read by Cr Sophia MacRae*

### **Presentation of Local Community Event of the Year Award to Hillbilly Hoot (3D Radio).**

*Citation read by Cr Evonne Moore*

We now come to a very important part of today's proceedings – the Citizenship Ceremony.

Can those candidates who will be receiving their Citizenship, move to the allocated chairs to my left, before we commence the Ceremony.

Today is the celebration of a significant milestone for all Australians – the 68<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Australian citizenship.

On this day in 1949, the new Australian citizenship legislation automatically delivered citizenship to the majority of Australia's population.



It introduced a unique national identity for Australians, in addition to their existing British subject status.

One week later, the first Australian citizenship ceremony was held at the Albert Hall in Canberra where seven European men became Australian citizens.

To the candidates for citizenship here today, this ceremony marks the beginning of a new chapter your own life.

Today, we have the honour and privilege of witnessing the solemn ceremony when these citizens will take the final step to formalise their commitment to this country, by swearing or affirming their allegiance, not only to Australia, but also to you, as fellow citizens.

Citizenship is more than just rights and responsibilities, as important as they are. It is more than being able to apply for a position in the Commonwealth Public Service or to apply for an Australian passport.

Citizenship is not a spectator sport, but rather a life-long invitation to participate in the community life of Australia. What's more, it's an invitation with no RSVP.

I am sure that many of you are already making a contribution to your community, but for others there is a place for you in a local sporting or service club.

There is a place for you on the School Board or Governing Council. There is a place for you in the state and federal parliament.

Indeed, it is my sincere hope is that one day I will be sitting out there watching one of you standing in this very spot welcoming candidates for Australian Citizenship.

Before I call upon candidates for Citizenship to take the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance, it is my duty to read to you Schedule 1 of the *Australian Citizenship Ceremony Regulations 2007*.

*Australian Citizenship represents full and formal membership of the community of the Commonwealth of Australia, and Australian citizenship is a common bond, involving reciprocal rights and obligations, uniting all Australians, while respecting their diversity.*

*Persons on whom Australian citizenship is conferred enjoy these rights and undertake to accept these obligations:*

- (a) By pledging loyalty to Australia and its people;*
- (b) By sharing their democratic beliefs;*
- (c) By respecting their rights and liberties; and*
- (d) By upholding and obeying the laws of Australia.*

I would also like to read a message from Hon Peter Dutton MP, Federal Minister for Immigration & Border Protection:

### **Minister's Message**

I would now like to ask those candidates for Citizenship who will be taking the Oath of Allegiance to please stand and repeat after me:

*From this time forward, under God  
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people*

*Whose democratic beliefs I share  
Whose rights and liberties I respect, and  
Whose laws I will uphold and obey.*

Thank you. Would you please be seated.

I would now like to ask those candidates for citizenship who will be taking the Affirmation of Allegiance, to please stand and repeat after me:

*From this time forward  
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people  
Whose democratic beliefs I share  
Whose rights and liberties I respect, and  
Whose laws I will uphold and obey.*

Thank you. Will you please be seated.

As I call your name, please come forward to receive your Certificate of Citizenship and a gift from the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters.

### **Presentation of Citizenship Certificates**

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in congratulating our newest Australian citizens.

As Australian citizens, you now have the right to vote, to stand for public office, and to travel on an Australian passport as ambassadors for Australia.

Your right to participate in the political process enables you to make a greater contribution to the social and economic life of this country.

You are encouraged to seize the opportunity to fully participate in the direction Australia takes through participating in the democratic process. I am sure you will all give much to Australia and to our City and that you will all help to ensure that our nation's freedom and independence is preserved for future generations.

On behalf of the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters, I again congratulate you on becoming Australian Citizens and extend my best wishes to you and your families for a healthy, happy and prosperous future in our City.

Will you now all be upstanding for the National Anthem of Australia to be sung by Mr Lou Pisaniello.

### **National Anthem of Australia**

Ladies and Gentlemen, that concludes today's formalities. Thank you all for being a part of this special Australia Day Celebration.

Before we break, I ask you to please show your appreciate to the wonderful efforts by Council staff to put on today's event.

Please enjoy the rest of the Australia Day long weekend.

Thank you and good morning.

**ENDS**