

## Australia Day 26 January 2016

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, friends of Australia. Thank you for joining us today on our national day.

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Australia Day is an opportunity to **celebrate** our unique island country and to think about what it means to be Australian.

We recall that the first Australians, the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**, who arrived nearly 60,000 years ago, are custodians of the world's oldest continuous culture. I am proud to say that I am a descendant of these people. Through my father, I am a member of the Gangalu clan of central Queensland. We are just one of over 300 Indigenous groups spread across Australia – each possessing a unique language, culture and connection to the land.

We reflect today on the **independence** Australia gained in 1900, our **vibrant democratic institutions**, and our **egalitarian society**. We remember the **sacrifices** generations of Australians have made to advance international peace and security, and our contributions to human rights, good governance and global development. For many Australians though, today is just a public holiday, a time to spend with family and friends at the beach, at a backyard BBQ, at a music festival or at the local mosque.

Thousands of people will be attending **citizenship** ceremonies across the country, where they will pledge allegiance to Australia and its people. They will join one of the most harmonious **multicultural** societies in the

world. Every year we bring in 200,000 new migrants and this year 25,000 refugees will be resettled in Australia. We see our diversity as one of our great strengths. In fact, a recent survey found that over 90 per cent of Australians see migration as a positive for our society.

We understand that our **prosperity** is linked to economic opportunities beyond our borders. For this reason, we have signed free trade agreements with China, Japan, Korea and recently helped conclude the Trans Pacific Partnership. Our next goal is an FTA with the EU. Our openness and years of economic reform have helped sustain a dynamic economy, which is now the 12<sup>th</sup> largest and has just clocked over 25 years of growth. So, for members of the business community here today, now is the time to invest in Australia.

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I am delighted to say that **Australian-Danish relations** have never been stronger. Our relationship is underpinned by shared values, common interests and genuine affection.

We have a long history of **fighting side by side** in order to protect the values we hold dear. During the Second World War, Australian airmen were involved in dangerous missions in and around Denmark, including delivering aid and equipment to the Danish resistance. Today, we are both helping to build peace and stability in Afghanistan and Iraq.

On the business front, over **100 Danish companies** are operating in Australia across a range of sectors from pharmaceuticals and med-tech to

clean technology and agribusiness. We're holding a seminar this week with Danish Industry for companies wanting to do business in Australia.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has placed **innovation and science** at the forefront of the government's agenda. It is entirely fitting then that the Australian National University Vice Chancellor and Nobel Prize winning astrophysicist, Professor Brian Schmidt will be in Copenhagen on Friday to receive the 2015 Niels Bohr Medal of Honour. The medal is awarded to outstanding researchers working in the spirit of the pioneering Danish physicist, Niels Bohr. The award also highlights long-standing connections between Danish and Australian universities, foundations and companies, which have generated exciting research outcomes in so many fields.

Every year growing numbers of **students and young people** travel from Denmark and Australia to visit each other's country. We have with us today a group of young Australian design, architecture and engineering students who are currently undertaking an educational placement at the firm, 3XN, as part of the Sydney Opera House's MADE exchange program. These and other exchanges help forge new friendships and potential future partnerships between the next generation of Danes and Australians.

I would like to conclude by mentioning one last special connection. The world famous restaurant, **Noma**, usually housed next door, opened in Sydney today for a ten week residency. This wonderful project, developed in partnership with Tourism Australia, will bring together Danish and Australian culinary excellence.

A key objective of the residency is **knowledge sharing**. Rene Redzepi has been travelling across Australia and working with a number of chefs and Indigenous people to explore our remarkable native ingredients and bush foods. Many of the foods he has sampled have never made it to a restaurant table – until now! I'm sure he and his team will conjure up some magical creations and come back changed by the experience. So don't be surprised if barbecued kangaroo, emu eggs and flat white coffees starts appearing on menus across Copenhagen.

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With this, I would like to thank you for celebrating with us today. I thank all the sponsors for your support.

I invite you to raise your glass to Australia and Denmark.