



Senator the Hon Zed Seselja
Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs

MESSAGE FROM ASSISTANT MINISTER SESELJA

United Nations Day of Vesak

I wish all Australian Buddhists the best as you celebrate the United Nations Day of Vesak.

Vesak Day, when Buddhists all over the world commemorate the birth, enlightenment and the passing away of Gautama Buddha, is an important event on our national calendar.

Australia is made up of people from many different backgrounds and we freely come together to celebrate our cultures and faiths.

I am proud that in this country we respect and embrace the rights of all Australians to celebrate, practise and maintain their cultural and faith traditions within the law and free from discrimination. As such, this year's theme; 'Living in Harmony' sits very comfortably in Australia.

Freedom of religion is a fundamental aspect of who we are as Australians. It's an essential component of our liberal democracy.

For many of us, religious faith is an important part of daily life — not only in the spiritual guidance it offers — but also in the community support it brings.

The Australian Government supports a productive, harmonious and diverse society for all Australians and values all of our faith communities.

I commend the Buddhist Federation of Australia and the Organising Committee for putting together the UN Vesak Celebration 2017 festival.

I wish all those attending the festival the very best for this auspicious occasion.

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