



**THE HON BILL SHORTEN MP  
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS AND  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS  
MEMBER FOR MARIBYRNONG**

**VESAK**

I would like to extend warm wishes to everyone celebrating the festive occasion of Vesak.

Over three days, Buddhist communities in Australia and around the world will celebrate the birth of Gautama Buddha, his Enlightenment and his final 'passing' into Nirvana.

The teachings of Buddhism show us that our differences are a strength, not a weakness, and we can draw from them principles of compassion for all living beings, mindfulness and meaningful engagement with all people.

I would like to thank the Buddhist community for their contribution to the values and ethos of our diverse and vibrant nation. Connecting with each other on a platform of common principles and values enriches our experiences in multicultural Australia and inspires us to attain greatness as a nation through the celebration of different faiths and beliefs.

As our Buddhist community unites in veneration of Buddha and his teachings, may we all be inspired in our pursuit of happiness, peace and equality for all people.

Happy Vesak

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bill Shorten'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Shorten  
Leader of the Opposition