



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

**Australian Observance of the 2018 UN Day of Vesak**

It gives me great pleasure to send my heartfelt best wishes to the Organising Committee and the Buddhist Community in Australia as celebrations commence for the 2018 UN Day of Vesak in May.

Vesak is an important annual celebration on the Buddhist calendar, commemorating the birth, enlightenment and the final passing into Nirvana of Gautama Buddha.

Nearly half a million Buddhists call Australia home, aspiring to the teachings and principles of compassion, mindfulness and meaningful engagement with all people.

Of course, the Buddhist journey transcends religion, and we can all draw from its lessons to help lead lives with greater peace and humanity. This continues to be one of the great cultural and spiritual gifts of the Buddhist faith in Australia.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Buddhist Federation of Australia on your commitment to nurture the cultural and religious traditions of the Buddhist community in Australia.

Labor greatly values the contribution you have made to our diverse and vibrant multicultural nation and I wish you all the best for a wonderful celebration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bill Shorten'.

Bill Shorten  
Leader of the Opposition