

NAIDOC Week Flag Raising Event

Monday 9 July 2018 @ 8:30-9:30am

Remarks by Australian High Commissioner Bruce Davis

Acknowledgements

Secretary for Department for Community Development and Religion
Anna Solomon,

Chief Executive Officer Indigenous Community Volunteers
Stephanie Harvey,

Chair of the Council of the National Volunteer Service Council
Bernard Maladina and

Acting Executive Director National Volunteer Service
Molly Willie

Each year in NAIDOC Week Australians pay tribute to, and demonstrate our pride in, the rich diversity of our nation. It is a week in which we take pause to acknowledge the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their contributions to the development of our country.

NAIDOC week is celebrated not only across Australia, but also at our High Commissions and Embassies around the globe. We do this because Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage is a source of pride. And to promote understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as an important part of our collective identity and nationhood.

Working more closely with Australia's First Peoples and strengthening linkages between Indigenous Australian and Papua New Guinean communities and organisations is something I am personally committed to. As Jacqui noted, there are strong historical linkages between Australian and Papua New Guinean First Peoples, and social, cultural and economic links continue today across the Torres Strait.

And so, in the spirit of strengthening those connections, I am proud to announce the forthcoming partnership arrangement between Papua New Guinea's National Volunteer Service and the Australian non-profit community development organisation, Indigenous Community Volunteers.

I note that in keeping with this year's NAIDOC Week theme – Because Of Her We Can – the idea for this partnership evolved out of discussions between Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Papua New Guinean women who participated in our NAIDOC Week celebrations last year.

And I am especially pleased to welcome Stephanie Harvey, one of the participants in last year's program, back to Port Moresby. I am also pleased to announce, we will be combining with Enga during this year's Engan Show in August with an Australian Indigenous Art exhibition.

The NAIDOC theme – Because Of Her We Can – is an important one because it places a spotlight on the roles Indigenous Australian women play and the contributions they make every day, at all levels of society.

For at least 65,000 years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have carried and communicated the dreaming stories, languages and knowledge, keeping culture alive and enriching and embellishing the Australian national story.

Side by side with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, they have fought and continue to fight for social justice and recognition of their distinct, unique and diverse cultures.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are represented in all walks of life, as doctors, lawyers, architects, defence personnel, journalists, accountants, public servants, academics, actors, musicians – and indeed Chief Executive Officers – providing positive and inspiring role models for their families and communities.

Australia is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to tell their stories, take up opportunities and have a strong voice on issues which affect them.

And I am delighted to note that next week, as part of our NAIDOC Week Speaker Series, Emily Wurramara, an Indigenous Australian musician originally from Groote Island, will visit Port Moresby to participate in our extended NAIDOC celebrations. We are supporting Emily and local musician, Mereani Masani, to establish an artistic collaboration and create work with a strong gender equality message, echoing this year's NAIDOC theme.

Before I close, I want to acknowledge another important event this week. On Thursday 12 July, Papua New Guinea will celebrate National Volunteers Day. It is therefore fitting that we are celebrating today the creation of a partnership between the National Volunteer Service and Indigenous Community Volunteers.

And so, to our guests from both these organisations, I wish you well in your workshop, as you flesh out the details of what I hope will be a very successful and enduring partnership.

I wish you all a very happy NAIDOC Week.