



PRIME MINISTER  
CANBERRA

### MESSAGE: VESAK CELEBRATIONS 2008

It is with pleasure that I provide this message to the Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils for the celebration of Vesak on 20 May 2008.

The Buddhist festival of Vesak marks the birth, enlightenment and passing of the Buddha. With lanterns and lights adorning temples and homes this is an important time for spiritual renewal when Buddhists recommit to the Buddha's teachings.

Australia is home to a diversity of faiths united by tolerance, mutual respect and a commitment to democratic traditions. As an inclusive society we support and respect the rights of citizens to maintain and develop their cultural and religious beliefs.

This year Australia's Buddhist community is encouraged to celebrate Vesak with the theme *Acts of Kindness*. This reflects the commitment of the Australian-Buddhist community to compassion, peace and harmony.

I send my best wishes to the Buddhist community in Australia as it celebrates Vesak in 2008.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Rudd'.

The Honourable Kevin Rudd MP  
Prime Minister of Australia