

**REMARKS AT THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL WALL OF FRIENDSHIP  
BY THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA, HOBART  
SUNDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2012.**

It is a privilege for me to be with you this morning to unveil two stones, one installed by the Malaysian community in Tasmania and one by the Nepalese community in this State. It is an auspicious occasion because this year is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official opening of the Wall of Friendship. This wall is designed to mark and recognise the achievements and contributions of migrant communities in this State.

Australia is truly a multi-cultural country. The fact is that “since 1945, seven million people have migrated to Australia. Today, one in four of Australia’s 22 million people were born overseas, 44 per cent were born overseas or have a parent who was and four million speak a language other than English. We speak over 260 languages and identify with more than 270 ancestries. Australia is and will remain a multicultural society.”<sup>i</sup>

I said it was a privilege for me to be here this morning and I really meant that because in August 1950, just five years after the end of World War II, I was one of those migrants. Then aged 12 years, I landed in Devonport with my parents and brother to start a new life in a new land after sailing from war-torn England. Like so many other migrants we embraced our new country and did what we could to help it prosper. My father was an architect employed by the Tasmanian government and many of the buildings he designed can be seen today. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia for

services to his State. Although my parents died many years ago I know they would be proud to see me here today helping to recognise the contribution that they, and others like them have made to this country and Tasmania in particular. I am sure that there are many here to-day whose parents are proud of the contribution that they have made to the State.

This contribution is formally recognised by the State Government in its multicultural policy which states that, “The Government recognises that Tasmania is and will remain a culturally diverse society and affirms multiculturalism as the best way to manage this diversity. The Tasmanian Government believes that multiculturalism brings economic and social benefits to the State that enhances and strengthens every aspect of our day-to-day lives.”

The development of this Wall of Friendship symbolises those sentiments and each year they are re-affirmed when communities gather at the Wall to celebrate days of national and international significance by flying the Australian flag and the flags of their countries of origin.

Today we symbolically recognise the Malaysian and Nepalese communities in this State and the contributions that they have made. The first Malaysian Community was formed in the 1970s, known as the Australian Malaysian Singapore Association (AMSA). Although this Association dissolved around 2005 there are in the order of 1,000 members of the Malaysian community now living in Tasmania. Indeed, it is pleasing to note that in the last couple of years there has

been an influx of Malaysians, mainly students, and there are moves to reestablish the Association. In addition to the students there are also significant numbers of Malaysian professionals and business operators now residing in Tasmania, mainly in Hobart and Launceston and the community is currently in the process of setting up an Honorary Malaysian Consulate in Hobart. We welcome their presence and the contribution that they will make to our State.

The Nepalese community is a relatively small one but none-the-less equally welcome in this State. Migration from Nepal started about 12 years ago; students and business people. The Nepalese community began to organise itself informally about 5 years ago and just two months ago we saw the formal registration of the Nepali Society of Tasmania. There are about 100 members of this new organisation, some working professionally and some students. I have no doubt that this fledgling group will grow and all its members will, like all migrant groups, make a positive contribution in their new home.

As I say, today it is a privilege for me to recognise the people from Malaysia and from Nepal who live in Tasmania by unveiling their stones in this Wall of Friendship and as Governor of the State I take this opportunity to say you and your cultures and practices are very welcome here.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-multicultural-australia/multicultural-policy/>, accessed 9 November 2012.