



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER JULIA GILLARD

UNITED NATIONS DAY OF VESAK

I am very pleased to provide this message for the United Nations Day of Vesak being held this year in Bangkok, Thailand.

Marking the birth, enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha Gautama, the festival of Vesak has been celebrated for more than two thousand years.

This event is a wonderful opportunity for the Australian Buddhist community to celebrate with their peers from around the world on this important holiday and joyful occasion.

It is a time for reflection and appreciation of our humanity and importantly our diversity. We can all learn and benefit from Buddha's teachings of equality, fraternity, respect and understanding.

The important discussions on social economic growth and environmental conservation during this year's conference will assist participants and their communities in creating harmonious societies and social cohesion.

My warmest regards to everyone attending the 2011 Vesak festival in Bangkok. I hope the occasion is a great success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Julia Gillard'.

The Honourable Julia Gillard MP
Prime Minister of Australia