



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

Mr Brian S Ashen
President
Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils
PO Box 6479
FOOTSCRAY WEST VIC 3012

Dear Mr Ashen

Thank you for your letter of 25 March 2008 to the Prime Minister requesting a message for use at Vesak celebrations in May 2008 and in your organisation's *Australian Buddhist* journal.

The Prime Minister is pleased to provide the enclosed message and sends you his best wishes.

Please note that the Prime Minister's message should not be used for any other purpose or altered in any way without his approval.

Yours sincerely

Amelia Johnston
Departmental Liaison Officer



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