



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
PHNOM PENH**

MEDIA RELEASE

RAMADAN MESSAGE FROM KEVIN RUDD

Below is a statement from the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Mr Kevin Rudd MP, extending his warm wishes to Muslims during Ramadan.

I extend my warm wishes to Muslims in Australia and around the world for the holy month of Ramadan.

To over 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide, Ramadan is a special month of fasting and prayer. It is also a sacred time for contemplation and compassion, when Muslims are urged to strengthen their focus on providing charity and helping their fellow men and women. During the course of this month, Muslims will fast, taking no food or water between dawn and sunset, so that they can better understand the lives and experience of those who are less fortunate than themselves.

Today Australia is home to nearly half a million Muslims. The Australian Muslim community is diverse, with members from over 60 different ethnic backgrounds. Muslims make important contributions to modern-day Australia and strengthen Australia's links with Muslim communities around the globe.

The Government is committed to further deepening Australia's already strong bonds with the Muslim world. Addressing a high-level meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Astana, Kazakhstan, in June of this year, I announced the Government's appointment of a Special Envoy to the OIC, Mr Ahmed Fahour. A distinguished Muslim Australian, Mr Fahour, who is the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Australia Post, will work to improve understanding and strengthen people-to-people links.

Ramadan is a reminder that Muslim Australians are making a large and growing contribution to Australian society. As we welcome the beginning of Ramadan this week, I wish all Muslim Australians "Ramadan Mubarak".

KEVIN RUDD

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