



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

8 April 2014

Press Release

**‘Australia Day in Spring’ returns to Karachi in 2014 with the theme:
*Celebrating Australia’s Indigenous Heritage***

Visiting Karachi today, the Australian High Commissioner H.E. Peter Heyward said he was proud to celebrate Australia’s indigenous culture as part of the third ‘Australia Day in Spring’ event at the Avari Towers Hotel.

“We started these events, which are held annually in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, to celebrate Australia’s relations with Pakistan, and to highlight Australia’s own culture and characteristics as a country,” he said. “Celebrating indigenous culture honours the original inhabitants of our land and introduces their unique culture to Pakistan.”

Mr Heyward said he was delighted to welcome *Western Creation*, who will feature at the 2014 gala events. The group is a winner of United Nations Intercultural Award 2013 and will present aboriginal musical performances including the “didgeridoo”.

Alan Harris, elder of the Noongar tribe and his two sons, Tristan and Azlan, also of the Bibbulmann clan of Western Australia, are one of the most inspiring indigenous groups currently performing. *Western Creation* has performed extensively throughout Australia and internationally. Mr Harris and his sons promote reconciliation and understanding between all people in Australia, into the hearts and minds of their audiences, using dance, music, song and history.

“As a music-lover myself, I am sure Pakistani audiences will be delighted by *Western Creation’s* distinctive style – it is a great privilege to be able to bring Australian Aboriginal music to Pakistan”, Mr Heyward said.

Mr Heyward also welcomed Ms Nicola Watkinson, Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner for South Asia, to the event. Ms Watkinson has held a series of high level business meetings around the event to promote trade and investment ties.

“Karachi will also be the first Australian event to have a live Twitter feed with hash tag #AustralianAidADiS – I urge Twitter followers to tweet their thoughts and we’ll respond.”

The High Commissioner is also now tweeting as @AusHCPak.

Australia Day in Spring 2014 in Karachi will also feature a great exhibition of photographs showing Australian Aid in action - showcasing Australia’s development partnership with Pakistan. The beautifully-presented photographs show the diversity of the Pakistani population and landscape, and the range of areas Australia is proud to have provided assistance to through our development program.

The focus of the program is on improving economic growth through livelihoods, and human capital development, with a particular focus on health, education, and agriculture sectors.

Another highlight is the Australia Awards scholarships to Pakistani students. This year, 83 Pakistani professionals have received the scholarships for tertiary education in Australia.

“I am extremely impressed by the calibre of students coming from Pakistan to Australia – both as recipients of scholarships and independently. It is a testament to both the potential of Pakistan and the high quality of Australia’s education sector. It’s a delight to see so many of them at our event tonight”, said the High Commissioner.

Mr Heyward thanked sponsors BHP Billiton – operator of the Zamzama Gas Field in Sindh and also the largest employer of Indigenous Australians - and Thai Airways. Other sponsor include Netsol Technologies, SMEC, Bank Al-Habib, Pierlite, RMT Enterprises, AEO Pakistan, SlimTEL, Coca Cola and FedEx.

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