

Minister, Lord Mayor, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. Let me acknowledge the traditional owners of the land at which we are gathered. Good evening and Assalaam Alaikum.

Thank you to Pramesh and the organising committee of the Indian Bazaar to allow me some time to talk to you about Eidfest 2005, to be held here at the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds on the 12th November.

Muslims all over the world are preparing for the beginning of October when our holiest month, Ramadhan will start. This is a time for all Muslims to fast between the hours of sunrise and sunset and is a time for introspection, reverence and prayer. Ramadhan was the month that the Quran was revealed to us and is a very heavy month in terms of prayer and solemnity.

However at the end of Ramadhan we were given the festival of Eid to rejoice and celebrate with our family and friends, and this year we are holding our first ever annual Eidfest which will be a celebration of Muslim cultures from across the world, that we wish to celebrate with our neighbours and community.

Islam is a religion that is a worldwide religion and people believe that it is foreign to Australia. Let me assure you that Islam predates Christianity in this country. There is historical data that tells us that Indonesian fisherman and traders introduced Islam to Northern Australia, across the Torres Strait Islands to the local Aboriginal and Islander population in the 17th century.

Today it is a religion that is made up from people all over the world, so next month whilst Australian Muslims will be getting up at 3 in the morning to have breakfast, we do so knowing that 1 billion Muslims across the globe, in every country in the world, will be doing the same – time differences taken into account.

Please join us on the 12th November to celebrate our Eidfest, and grab the chance to connect with each other, to perhaps familiarise yourself for the first time with Muslims and the religion of Islam and to enjoy the very best that the Muslim community in Brisbane can offer in terms of their culture, their food, their heritage and their businesses.

There is an official invitation being sent to you Minister and Lord Mayor, but I take this public opportunity to invite you to our Eidfest and we look forward to your presence and support of the Muslim community, a very vibrant community contributing to the continued progress of Brisbane and Queensland.

To the general public, Muslim and Non-Muslim, please come and enjoy our happy occasion on November 12th and experience arts and crafts, food stalls, cultural items and displays put on by your Muslim brothers and sisters in Brisbane.

I look forward to seeing you all back here on the 12th November and if you work with a Muslim colleague or know of a Muslim brother or sister – remember that fasting month starts in the beginning of October, so don't offer to take them out for lunch.

Pramesh, and the organising committee of the Indian Bazaar, my wholehearted thanks for allowing me this opportunity, and it highlights one of the many things that is great about multicultural Australia. That we as a nation of people can and do work together regardless of colour, creed or race. To my Hindu brother I offer a deep gratitude and my sincerest thanks.