

# Senator Sue Boyce

Senator for Queensland

Title : **Australia Day**

Event : **Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony**

Date : **January 26, 2010**

Location : **Grange Bowls Club, Brisbane**

Contact : **Windor Rotary Club**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for your invitation here today to preside at this very important ceremony.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we are gathered on today, the Turrbal clan, and recognise their living culture and the unique contribution they make to the Windsor Grange region.

At the end of today's ceremony an Australian Citizenship Affirmation will be conducted. This is an opportunity for all Australians to affirm their loyalty and commitment to Australia in the same way our new citizens are pledging their commitment today.

I am very pleased to see so many citizenship candidates here today and would like to congratulate every one of you on your decision to become an Australian citizen – a decision not just welcomed by me, but by all Australians.

The thirty citizenship candidates here today are joined by more than eleven thousand nationally who are also becoming Australian citizens today at celebrations just like this one.

Australia Day is an opportunity for all of us to take pride in our citizenship and reflect on the meaning and value of being Australian – whether by birth or by choice.

It is the day when we can reflect on the role we all play in building Australia and shaping our future; when we can consider what unites us as Australians and celebrate our democratic beliefs, rights and liberties.

Australian citizenship represents commitment to Australia and its people, the values we all share and our common future. It also symbolises our sense of belonging to the country where we have been born or where we have decided to make our home.

To the thirty citizenship candidates here today – and to their friends and families – may I say this.

By becoming Australian citizens we who are already citizens are not asking you renounce or forget your former home country, your country of birth.

Australia is a multicultural nation and, except for our indigenous people who came here some forty thousand years ago, we are all immigrants or descended from immigrants. So many of us, irrespective of how long our families have been here and what generation we are, still like to think fondly and with affection of our family's country or origin and that is only human and very understandable.

While you may still have a lot to learn about your new country, there is much you can teach us about your country of birth and your culture.

As a requirement of the Australian Citizenship Act 2007, I will now read the preamble for citizenship ceremonies.

Australian citizenship represents full and formal membership of the community of the Commonwealth of Australia and Australian citizenship is a common bond involving reciprocal rights and obligations, uniting all Australians while respecting their diversity.

Persons on whom Australian citizenship is conferred enjoy these rights and undertake to accept these obligations by pledging loyalty to Australia and its people; and by sharing their democratic beliefs; and by respecting their rights and liberties; and by upholding and obeying the laws of Australia.

It is now time for you to make a Pledge of Commitment. The words of the pledge are written on the pledge cards which have been given to you. You must cite the pledge out loud in order to become an Australian citizen.

Would those people making the pledge number one please stand.

If you wish to make the pledge on a holy book, please hold the book in your hands now.

Please repeat after me:

From this time forward, under God

I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people  
whose democratic beliefs I share  
whose rights and liberties I respect,  
and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

Thank you – please be seated.

Would those people who are making pledge number two please stand.

Please repeat after me:

I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people  
whose democratic beliefs I share  
whose rights and liberties I respect,  
and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

On behalf of all Australians, I offer you my warmest congratulations on becoming Australian citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in congratulating our new Australian citizens.

***ENDS***