

**Welcome address as part of the  
Celebrations of the Day of German Unity**

**Prof Michael Rosemann**

**Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany**

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The Brisbane Liedertafel goes back to 1882, which makes it one of the longest lasting German institutions here in Brisbane. We are grateful that you continue this tradition with unstoppable passion, energy and obvious enjoyment. Ladies and gentlemen, please thank the Brisbane German Choir Liedertafel/Liederkrantz under the leadership of Leo Keller for signing the national anthems.

Willkommen zur Brisbane German Week and to tonight's celebration of the German Day of Unity.

Let me start by respectfully acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which this event is taking place and pay my respect to their elders - past, present and emerging.

Today is the highlight not just of Brisbane German Week 2018, but also for me in my young and humble career as the Honorary Consul in Brisbane as I like to welcome our Guest of Honour for tonight.

MR MICHAEL MÜLLER, President of the German Bundesrat and Governing Mayor of Berlin. The entire German-Australian community in Queensland is delighted that after 16 years we have another visit of a Bundesratspraesident to Australia and that you selected Brisbane as your

very first stop of your journey. I very much understand that travelling to Brisbane from Berlin is a substantial effort and we are very appreciative that you made this visit a priority during your period of serving as a Bundesratspraesident. Praesident, Herzlich Willkommen in Brisbane.

I am very grateful to also welcome the strongest possible supporter of the Queensland-Germany relationship, THE HONOURABLE CAMERON DICK MP, Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning representing the Premier of Queensland with us tonight.

Thank you to the Honourable DR ANNA PRINZ, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany and Peter Silberberg, the German Consul-General for celebrating with us and for coming up from Canberra and Sydney.

The Bundesratspraesident arrived last night with his political and scientific delegation and we are delighted to welcome

- Mr Ralf Wieland, President of the House of Representatives, Berlin
- Dr Ute Rettler, State Secretary and Director of the Bundesrat and
- Mr Steffen Krach, State Secretary for Science and Research.

I like to welcome all the other distinguished members of the delegation and hope you enjoy your time in Brisbane

I like to welcome COUNCILLOR ADRIAN SCHRINNER, MP, Deputy Mayor of Brisbane representing The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Councillor Graham Quirk and MR SCOTT STEWART, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Queensland Parliament.

I also like to welcome Karen Williams, Mayor Redland City and the following councillors, Angela Owen, Peter Cumming, Ryan Murphy, Steve Toomey and Norm Wyndham.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome my colleagues and friends from the Consular Corps Queensland.

Further distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

Thank you for joining us to celebrate the Day of German Unity together. However, unity does not come to fruition in all its facets in a single day. Unity is not a state.

Unity is an ongoing endeavour, as it requires ongoing ambition and attention. This ambition needs to be passed on from generation to generation and it needs to be multi-dimensional covering economic, political, educational, cultural and broader social considerations. This is what we learnt not only during the German unification, but we also witness it in the ongoing process of striving towards a higher sense of unity in Europe.

The 3 October 1990 was without any doubt the milestone in the process of a unified Germany. It resulted out of the unconditional believe in the benefits of unification and integration. This unconditional believe unlocked extra energy, and additional energy leads to an extended set of possibilities which ultimately allowed reaching the desired goal. On the way towards this goal, we were sensitized to respectfully learn from each other when values, habits and aims differed and to carefully unite when differences and not similarities were found.

The Day of German Unity is not just a milestone representing a tremendous achievement. It also serves as an ongoing inspiration into the future. And as such it is an ongoing and by now global inspiration for a greater sense of unification, of capitalising on the benefits of integration and learning from each other. As such, the German Day of Unity is also an inspiration for the ongoing development of the German-Australian relationship.

We have an unconditional believe in the benefits of uniting German and Australian activities and ambitions, and this believe will provide the energy needed to create possibilities we could not achieve on our own.

We learnt from the 3 October that successful unification needs more than just a political, economic or scientific narrative. It needs to be desired and lived by the respective societies. Here we have fertile ground in the Australian-German relationship.

In fact, it is often a surprise when you recognise the extent of similarities at the end of a long journey to the other side of the world. We have complementary strengths in many areas, and there is an unconditional commitment in both countries to a rule-based international order and open markets.

But probably even more important are the societal value we share. Simply put, Germans love Australia, Australians love Germany.

Unification occurs at the interplay of opportunity and obligation.

It is the result of the careful identification of the value of unifying capabilities and capacities, people and ambitions under a greater, shared ambition. But the pure existence of an opportunity, of recognised potential is not

sufficient. Rather, we are obliged to demonstrate activities and show continuous commitment in the process of unifying and jointly growing the combined Australian and German strengths. Since the G20 in Brisbane in 2014 and the initiation of the Australian-German Advisory Group in 2015, we have demonstrated on both sides that we take this obligation seriously. The efforts of the current delegation visiting Australia are one more tangible sign of this commitment, and we are grateful to all members of the delegation for their related efforts.

Unification never comes easy.

The German Day of Unity was a sign that you can have a second chance; that if you fight hard, you can successfully fight and overcome history.

Uniting activities and objectives in the German-Australian relationship is of course less of a fight against history. In fact, history is on our side. The recent German History Day has shown that since the arrival of the first German settlers in 1838 in Queensland we have a track record in creating a successful combined history. No, the future of a united German-Australian relationship is not a fight against history. It is a fight against distance.

However, the digital economy eliminates any related excuses to let distance be a barrier in progressing our shared ambitions. In fact, done well, a German-Australian partnership will be able to activate 24 hours factories and supply chains and a combined brainpower that is 'always on'. This requires converting geographical and time differences into the benefits that come with the extended availability of a unified system on both sides of the globe.

The 3 October 1990 has been an inspiration and its lessons learnt continue to inspire the German-Australian relationship.

Our Bundestagspraesident Wolfgang Schaeuble referred in his recent Day of German Unity speech to being self-confident, but also to being relaxed and optimistic as the *Dreiklang eines zeitgemässen Patriotismus*.

I strongly believe that these three characteristics are the pillars of those many political, economic, cultural, scientific and other bridges we are building between Germany and Australia.

In summary, I encourage each and everyone of you to look back, back to those very individual memories you affiliate with the 3 October 1990 and to conduct your own, personal celebration.

But even more, I like to encourage all of us to jointly look forward, with relaxed self-confidence and optimism and to see the 3 October 1990, its benefits and lessons learnt as an inspiration and a rich source of insights to further build a stronger German-Australian.

Thank you.