

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

Prof Michael Rosemann

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Willkommen zur Brisbane German Week 2019. My name is Michael Rosemann, I am the Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany and I like to welcome you to tonight's celebration of the German Day of Unity. To start the official proceedings, I ask you to please take your seats so we can enjoy the national anthems of Australia and Germany, performed by the newly formed German Youth Choir.

National anthems of Australia and Germany

Meine Damen und Herren, Ladies and Gentlemen,
please join me in thanking the German Youth Choir for this splendid performance. It was one of our objectives for 2019 to establish a German Youth Choir here in Brisbane and I am delighted that we have seen its very first public performance just now. The Choir is made up of students from the two German Immersion Schools in Kenmore and Ferny Grove as well as students from Hillbrook Anglican College. I like to thank every member of the Choir, their supporting parents as well as Ruth Schwarzenbeck and Paula Hay for their tremendous support over the last months.

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.

I like to acknowledge our distinguished guests of tonight

- the **Hon Yvette D'Ath**, MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, representing the Premier of Queensland tonight
- **Mr Scott Stewart**, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Queensland Government
- **David Crisafulli**, MP, Shadow Minister for Environment, Science and the Great Barrier Reef, and Shadow Minister for Tourism
- **Jennifer Howard, MP**, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Assistant Minister of State
- **The Hon Martin Daubney, Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland**
- **Councillor Vicki Howard**, the Councillor for Central Ward, representing The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Adrian Schrinner.
- Councillors **Ryan Murphy**, MP, and **Adam Allan**
- Mr **Ian Walker**, former Minister for Science and Education
- **Prof Peter Bertsch**, Qld Chief Scientist
- Mrs **Elfi Massey, President, Australian Council for Europe**
- The **Dean of the Consular Corps, Anthony Torbey** and my colleagues and friends from the Consular Corps Brisbane.
- My predecessors in the role of the Honorary Consul for Germany here in Brisbane, **Prof Michael Schuetz** and **Mr Detlef Sulzer**
- **Sonja Grigoschweski**, Director Goethe Institute Australia

Further distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, sehr geehrte Damen und Herren, welcome to Brisbane German Week 2019 and thank you so much for joining us to celebrate the Day of German Unity this evening. I feel honoured by the presence of each and every one of you.

Welcome to the beautiful facilities of the Autohaus, the first of its kind in Australia and the biggest Mercedes-Benz dealership in the Southern Hemisphere. It has been a pleasure working with the team of Mercedes-Benz Brisbane and LSH Property Australia, and I like to thank **Bianca Baron (MB)** and **Charlotte Hall (LSH)** for the wonderful collaboration over the last weeks and months.

Celebrations of this scale are only possible with the help of strong partners, and I like to thank

- Brisbane City Council
- the German Consulate General in Sydney
- the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and
- the German Australian Community Centre Queensland and its President Louise Moeller for their kind support to tonight's concert.

It was on **Monday, the 4 September 1989** that citizens in Leipzig started to demonstrate, just after the weekly Friedensgebet, the prayer for peace, and they did this initially under the protected roof of the St Nicolas Church. One month later, exactly 30 years ago on 2 October, the Church was by far not big enough anymore and the group of demonstrators had grown to 10,000 people and had moved from the church to the surrounding streets and

markets. Another month later, on 9 November the Berlin Wall and the inner-German border began to fall.

The 3 October was a year later declared as the official Day of German Unity. Since then the Unification of Germany has become a global symbol for what it means to fight for unification even if systemic, political and economic odds seem not be in your favour.

Move forward to today and we realise that **the period since the Berlin Wall is gone is now longer than the period for which it actually divided.** With this fact, however, does **not just come relieve, but also an important obligation.**

30 years between today and the Berlin Wall means that an entire generation has emerged without any personal experience with the wall and its suppressive power. Therefore, **while we destroyed the border to the extent that you could not find it even if you tried to, we also have to preserve what it meant to be divided.**

It is not just the **picture of smiling faces** that climbed over a wall, but also the **voices that were shouting against this wall** that we have to keep in our memories and inherit appropriately.

“Mut verbindet” – Courage Unites is the theme for this years celebration of the Day of German Unity and it was courage that drove citizens from the silent prayer out onto the streets of Leipzig. 10,000 on 2 October became 70,000 on 9 October and 120,000 on 16 October 1989.

Courage as the fuel of unification is much stronger than any centralised ambition and **power to the people** is the fundamental principle of every democracy.

Move forward to 2019 and we see what it means when “Mut verbindet” in a world that is no longer defined by what you read in the newspaper or what you can see, or not on a few media channels.

In 2019, we witness a world in which

- United Nations inform United Nations
- In which we unite around the globe and not just across local borders
- We do this not just to overcome a past separation, but rather develop the critical mass needed to target future challenges
- And we unite in the speed in which digital information travels and not in the frequency of weekly prayers.

We celebrate the Day of German Unity, but we now live world of ongoing unification. In an increasingly united world, do those who aim for accentuated Nationalism look like an inexperienced German tourist who tries to survive the Australian surf.

In conclusion, I encourage you to look back and reflect on your very personal memories that you associate with the 3 October, but even more I encourage you to look forward and to contribute to global unification where needed for two reasons.

On the one side, the development of a strong and growing bridge between Queensland and Germany most certainly needs such a contemporary, global view on unification, if it wants to be successful. Done well, we both,

Queensland and Germany together, have an opportunity to create a global benchmark for what it means to unite.

On the other side, and even more important, it is often **the walls you cannot see that are the highest to overcome**. We need to mobilise what is nowadays at our disposal to fight against these.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you and again a very warm welcome to the 2019 celebrations of the Day of Germany Unity.

The work of an Honorary Consul for Germany is made easy when you have a State Government that is highly supportive of the Queensland-Germany relationship. This year, our Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk travelled to Berlin and in previous years a number of Queensland Ministers visited Germany. I am therefore delighted to welcome the **Hon Yvette D'Ath, MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice**, on stage to address us on behalf of the Premier of Queensland tonight.

Speech by Yvette D'Ath

Thank you Attorney-General.

What is true on a state level, is equally true on a local level. Relationships are ultimately shaped and lived by people, and hardly anyone is closer to our citizens than our Councillors. One of them is a true and long-standing supporter of the German community and I am delighted that she, like last year, can again join us tonight. Meine Damen und Herren, ladies and

gentlemen, please welcome **Cnr Vicki Howard**, representing Brisbane's inner northern suburbs and in particular the Hon Lord Mayor tonight.

Speech by Vicki Howard

Thank you Vicki for your kind words and your tremendous support.

Meine Damen und Herren, I have now the great pleasure to kick-off the musical program of tonight.

Let me start by welcoming back on stage the **Adina String Quartet**, four musicians from the QSO. The Quartet has performed for over 15 years now and are widely known for their dynamic performances of quality chamber music covering a period from the early baroque to contemporary pieces. We are a strong supporter and fan of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and it is with pleasure that I also welcome **Craig Whitehead, Chief Executive of the QSO** who is with us tonight.

Ladies and Gentlemen, finally, I am delighted that one of my long-lasting ambitions is coming to fruition tonight. We tried to secure her already last year, so we are even more excited to welcome her on stage tonight. I have seen and met **Sally Walker** for the first-time last year when she performed with the QYO and put the concert hall on fire. And once you have enjoyed her talent, you want to do it again and again. Sally Walker is a Lecturer in Classical Woodwind at the Australian National University, regular Guest

Principal with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Principal Flautist with the Omega Ensemble and Artistic Director of the Twilight Musical Dialogues Chamber Music Series. Upon receiving a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Scholarship, Sally moved to **Germany and studied in Hannover and Munich**. She remained in Germany for ten years in which she was Principal Flute of the Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss and a member of the Kölner Kammerorchester before moving to Leipzig to play with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. Sally calls Germany her second home, and we are delighted that the Mercedes Benz Autohaus is your first home tonight Sally.

The first piece you will hear will be Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Kleine Nachtmusik*. After this piece, Michael Sterzinger, Manager – Artistic Administration for the QSO who curated the musical program for tonight will introduce the next pieces.

Meine Damen und Herren, please enjoy tonight's concert and make Sally Walker and the Adina String Quartet feel welcome with a big round of applause.