

Acknowledgements

I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which this event is taking place and the Elders past, present and emerging.

- Michael Müller, Governing Mayor of Berlin and President of the Bundesrat
- Distinguished members of the Berlin House of Representatives
- Her Excellency
- Dr Anna Prinz, German Ambassador to Australia
- Peter Silberberg, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Prof Michael Rosemann, Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Professor Michael Schütz, Director of the Jamieson Trauma Institute Brisbane and former German Honorary Consul
- Other distinguished guests
- Ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted to be here tonight representing the Premier the Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk to join with you in the commemoration of a highly significant event – not just for Germany, but for the world.

The reunification of Germany in 1990 was, in many ways, the signature event of its time.

The Berlin Wall was the material manifestation of the ideological conflict of the Cold War: in that bleak structure, all the divisions, all the friction, all the differences of the age found their blunt expression.

And then the wall came down, and the world was flooded with hope.

For a while, anything seemed possible.

Of course, there were difficulties – reunification was not merely the merging of one people, kept separate for so long, but of two economic systems.

Common heritage and a shared language can only carry you so far when confronted with the reality of the incorporation of millions of people whose way of life has been markedly different.

And yet, due in no small part to the resilience of its people, Germany persevered and prevailed.

Today, Germany stands not only as a united nation, but as the touchstone of a united Europe.

The ideals and economic dynamism of modern Germany were founded in the economic revival driven by Konrad Adenauer, a recovery often referred to as the German miracle, rising from the ashes of war.

That extraordinary transformation has shaped modern Germany, which today stands as a model of the democratic system and a champion for human rights.

It is a nation that looks outward – particularly valuable when so many nations are turning away from the international model, where open collaboration is being subjugated to sectional interest and jingoism marketed as patriotism.

It is a nation setting new benchmarks in green and renewable energy, in workers' rights and industrial relations, in finding fresh ways to distribute the bounty of prosperity.

And it has shown the world that it is possible to infuse compassion and humanity into your national character if they inform your national policy.

The democratic promise of 1990 has regrettably, not resonated as we might have hoped around the world, and the sad reality is that the democratic project is in retreat in many of the nations in which it had established a tentative foothold.

A new wave of isolationism and accentuated nationalism is a cause for concern for those nations who back the rule of international law and the institutions that support it – and who recognise that the pathway to a more peaceful and prosperous world lies in more engagement, not less.

Nations like Germany and Australia.

It is becoming increasingly important for those of us with shared values and a common purpose, who believe in more open trade and the promotion of democratic principles, who support a rules-based system and evidence-based policy – including on climate – to stand together, to find our voice, and to keep arguing for reason to prevail.

The relationship between Queensland and Germany has never been stronger – as evidenced by Rheinmetall's success in securing the \$5 billion Australian Army contract to build over 200 of its Boxer CRVs right here in Brisbane.

We look forward to working with Rheinmetall in support of the LYNX, the company's solution to the Army's needs in the \$15 billion third phase of the project.

Earlier this year I had the pleasure of visiting Rheinmetall's headquarters in Untertürkheim – a trip which also included Hamburg and Berlin.

That visit reinforced to me the great enterprise and adventurousness of the German people – particularly among the young.

Keep sending us your backpackers, your secondary school students and your university scholars – for when they come to Queensland they are not only ambassadors of cultural exchange, but emissaries of the civilised ideal, and a reminder that we are bound by the things we believe in: individual liberty, the free movement of people, the common understanding fostered by human contact.

The reunification of Germany stands as one of the great moments in the modern calendar.

I am honoured to have had the opportunity to share in its commemoration tonight.