

ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY MS QUENTIN BRYCE AC
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
ON THE OCCASION OF
RECEPTION
SANDAKAN
15 AUGUST 2010

Thank you for your generous welcome to Michael and me and our colleagues this evening.

And, on behalf of all Australians, I respond with affectionate greetings to you, our friends, fellows and partner.

I feel so privileged:

To join you here in Sabah on Sandakan Day - a special and moving day for Malaysians and Australians.

To take part in this morning's memorial service - 65 years on from:

the Sandakan-Ranau death marches

the final loss of life at Sandakan POW Camp

and the end of the Second World War.

To launch Blood Brothers, by Mrs Lynette Silver:

an expertly researched and thoughtfully written book

that will answer important questions and share previously unknown detail

of the local and personal impact of Sandakan and the death marches, and the enemy occupation of Sabah.

It is a book for all of us, and for all those who remain close to the needless human tragedy it recounts.

To lay a wreath at the Memorial to Chinese Martyrs, in remembrance of the persecution and loss that Chinese people experienced here.

To visit St Michael and All Angels Church, and take in the divine, healing light radiated by those magnificent and uplifting stained-glass windows.

To pay attention to the detail of what Australians and Sabahans went through here.

To see where our shared history was made, and where our human story began, and still today, continues.

And to celebrate the good that has come to us from such adversity and suffering:

the warmth and depth of our camaraderie so evident in people's faces and embraces

and the enduring, assuring bonds of two nations

neighbours and partners in a region

sharing and encouraging aspirations for our people and countries, and an immense respect for one another's capabilities and cultures.

There is a great deal Australia, Malaysia and our people can, together, feel proud of and inspired by:

our long-standing bilateral relationship that is the foundation of our partnerships and strategic outlook in trade, education, defence, law enforcement, and tourism

our united efforts in maintaining a secure and stable region

our significant investment and belief in the productivity and potential of one another's economies, markets, and of course people

our strong educational links that began in the 1950s with the Colombo Plan scholarships and have only expanded since through university twinning arrangements and sister schools programs

our tourism exchanges - Sabah being a vital area of growth

the dedication of our leaders and parliamentary delegations to promoting understanding and interest, so fundamental to sustaining our affinity and obligation to one another

and our abiding friendship.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are golden ties for us to celebrate, preserve and nurture.

I am grateful to have had an opportunity to honour them here today, in Sabah, on Sandakan Day.