

Vietnamese New Year Tet Festival

Address by Barry O'Farrell MP, NSW Leader of the Opposition
Fairfield Showgrounds, 7 February 2009

Chúc mừng năm mới! - Happy New Year!

I am honoured to be present to celebrate this Tet Festival with you.

I am pleased to be here with my colleague, Charlie Lynn, who fought in support of the freedom and liberty the Vietnamese cherish. Charlie is the only Vietnam veteran serving in any Australian Parliament.

As Leader of the Liberal Party, I want to reiterate my commitment – and that of my party – to represent the many voices within our culturally diverse society.

The presence of so many Federal, State and local representatives at this event not only highlights the respect we have for the Vietnamese-Australian community, but acknowledges your growing political significance.

I am pleased Dai Le is with me today. Dai's story is like that of many Vietnamese-Australian families: escape, sacrifice and determination to seize the opportunities available in Australia.

But Dai's story also reminds me of the three things I always associate with the Vietnamese community – family, education and enterprise.

- You demonstrate the importance of families – spanning grandparents to children – and how the family unit can be maintained in changing times.
- You understand the importance of education to a person's future opportunities and success.
- And, as the achievements of so many members of your community attest, you work hard, not only seizing the opportunities offered in this country, but now providing opportunities to the wider community.

As a representative of State Parliament, I understand the importance of the basic services we are responsible for – transport, health, education, and safe communities – to your ability to seize the opportunities this State and nation offers.

I am proud to be part of the Liberal Party that has encouraged cultural diversity in our society.

I am proud of Malcolm Fraser's Federal Government for standing up, ignoring opposition – including from organised labour – and opening our doors to Vietnamese refugees.

I want to acknowledge and thank Mr Tri Vo, President of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, NSW Chapter and his committee. Despite your full-time jobs you find

times in your busy lives to organise this magnificent occasion to ensure your heritage and culture is celebrated.

It is an honour to be here, and to be celebrating this New Year with you.

In the year of the Buffalo, we are reminded to work hard and strong. It's not a reminder the Vietnamese-Australian community needs as your continuing success, across many fields, in this nation demonstrates.

Chúc mừng năm mới!