

Speech by Ian Green for Opening Ceremony

MC's Introduction of Ian Green Ian Green and his wife Judy have been Buddhists for 35 years. Ian is Chairman of The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion and The Jade Buddha for Universal Peace Project. Ian is also Chairman of Dalai Lama Australia, which is the body that organises the visits to Australia by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Ian and Judy have just completed a 3 month visit to Vietnam where they oversaw the tour of the Jade Buddha.

Lord Mayor Campbell Newman, Honourable Annastacia Palaszczuk MP, Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs representing Anna Bligh the Premier of Queensland, representatives of the Bahai, Buddhist, Christian, Islam, Jewish, and Sikh faiths, honoured guests...Brothers and Sisters.

In the year 2000 an 18 tonne boulder of jade was discovered in Canada. Its massive size and gem-quality sparked intense interest in what was described as "the find of the millennium".

I was introduced to that boulder, which had been given the name "Polar Pride", in 2003. Today marks the culmination of over five years of dreaming, planning and hard work for my wife Judy and myself, as well as for the thousands of people around the world who have donated their money and their time to this project; to create the world's largest gem-quality Jade Buddha.

The Jade Buddha for Universal Peace is being taken on a tour of the world in the wish that it will inspire everyone who sees it to reflect upon peace; peace for the world; peace in their relationships; peace for their families and friends; peace at work; and peace in their mind.

So far, our visit has exceeded our greatest dreams. In just three months in Vietnam over 4 million people paid homage to the Jade Buddha. Today marks the first day of the Australian tour – after touring the capital cities of our country the Buddha then heads overseas again in 2011 to USA and Canada. And I am pleased that Brisbane is the city that put its hand up to be the first city in Australia.

We have a small recognition of our thanks to the Lord Mayor of the City of Brisbane. We also thank our benefactors who have helped pay for our costs... the teachers from Buddhist Education Services for Schools for involving students of Brisbane in making these doves of peace. And finally I thank Serene Loy and our small but dedicated group of volunteers who have worked very hard on this visit for the past six months. Thank you all and may peace break out around our world.