

**EMBARGO - FOR RELEASE ON MONDAY, 30 MARCH 2009
MEDIA RELEASE**

Moree's newest Australian Citizens

Moree welcomed its newest Australian citizens last Thursday at a ceremony held at the Council Chambers.

Mayor, Councillor Katrina Humphries proudly conducted the ceremony which officially recognised Stella Bennetts, Rongoina Richards and her son, Ngatokorua Dawson (13) as Australian citizens.

Councillor Humphries said "I was pleased to welcome Stella, Rongo and Ngar as new Australian citizens; together with their family and friends."

"The ceremony is one of the highlights undertaken in the Mayoral role and reinforces what a great nation Australia is", she said.

The Mayor presented the trio with Australian flags and a native trees as symbols of new beginnings, new experiences and for a prosperous, happy and fruitful life in Australia.

Mrs Bennett remarked "The best thing about Moree is the celebration of culture. I feel valued here [in Moree] because of my culture. I love the community celebrations like Harmony Day and the Multi-Cultural Festival".

Mrs Richards said "I am officially a fair dinkum Aussie now and it is exciting to call Australia my home. Moree is a wonderful place for work, to raise a family and be involved in religious and cultural activities."

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evan's message to the naturalised family signified that 2009 marks the 60th anniversary of Australian citizenship is an opportunity for us to reflect on the changes that have shaped our nation over the past 60 years.

It is also an opportunity for all Australians, whether an Australian citizen by birth or by choice, to understand the role Australian citizenship plays in building a strong, harmonious and unified nation.

Mrs Bennett moved to Australia in 1999 from Fiji. She was enticed to Moree because of her family connections and the hot mineral baths.

Mrs Richards arrived in Sydney from the Cook Islands in 1991. She moved to Moree from Armidale in 2005, when she met her husband. Her son, Ngar is in Year 7 at Moree Christian School and embraces school life and sporting activities.

END

For further information contact:

Citizenship www.citizenship.gov.au/news/announcements/60th-anniversary.htm

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Photo: Mayor Councillor Katrina Humphries, Ngatokorua Dawson, Sid and Rongoina Richards, Andrew and Stella Bennetts

Photo: Ngatokorua Dawson, Sid and Rongoina Richards, Andrew and Stella Bennetts