

Macarthur's one but many

FOR some, Australia Day is nothing more than a public holiday highlighted by Triple J's hottest 100.

But for others, January 26 means much more.

Macarthur is made up of people from a myriad of cultures.

For Thirlmere's Flora Connellan, who moved to Australia from the Philippines in 1986, Australia Day was a chance for reflection.

"Australia Day means a lot to me," she said.

"It reminds me that I live

in a beautiful country.

"A country of great diversity, richness and colour that's blessed with great opportunity for the taking of anyone willing to give their all.

"I personally attend and join in the celebration of the events year after year with friends and acquaintances carrying the flag of Australia."

The mother of two was naturalised in 1992.

She said Australia Day in Wollondilly was a particularly big celebration for herself, her family and her friends.

“

We celebrate how blessed we are to call Australia home and how blessed we are to be in this beautiful country.

Mal Fruean

"It is a great event to encourage and show the resident of the Shire to rejoice for we are all Australians," she said.

Campbelltown's Mal

Fruean, who migrated from New Zealand 31 years ago, said she also used Australia Day as an opportunity to reflect.

"We celebrate how blessed

we are to call Australia home and how blessed we are to be in this beautiful country," she said.

"It's a chance to celebrate everything that Australia offers for all cultures."

Each year there is double the reason for Mrs Fruean to celebrate as her birthday also falls on January 26.

"My kids always say, "Mum, we put on the fireworks for you," she said.

One of Macarthur's newest citizens is Mount Annan's Leila Mehrabi.

Mrs Mehrabi, migrated from Iran two and a half years ago.

The local art teacher said she and other ladies at the Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative celebrated by creating decorations or other works to mark the occasion.

She said for her, the theme of the day was "happiness".

"In Australia there are many cultures that live together in happiness," she said.

"We celebrate Australia Day because we are happy."

IT 'SEEMS LIKE A PARADISE'



THE concept of Australia Day is still relatively new for Leila Mehrabi, who migrated from Iran two and half years ago.

For her, Australia Day is a chance to recognise the "paradise" she now calls home..

"I came here and I felt safe," she said.

"We had some problems because everything was different.

"But for me, Australia seems like a paradise."