

**Public Holidays and NSW School Holidays in the Calendar itself (not in list of Significant Interfaith Dates)**

**Australian Public Holidays**

- Friday, 1 January 2010 ***New Year's Day***
- Tuesday, 26 January 2010 ***Australia Day***
- Friday, 2 April 2010 ***Good Friday***
- Saturday, 3 April 2010 ***Easter Saturday***
- Monday, 5 April 2010 ***Easter Monday***
- Monday, 26 April 2010 ***Anzac Day***
- Monday, 14 June 2010 ***Queen's Birthday***
- Monday, 2 August 2010 ***Bank Holiday***
- Monday, 4 October 2010 ***Labour Day***
- Saturday, 25 December 2010 ***Christmas Day***
- Monday, 27 December 2010 ***Boxing Day***

**School Holidays**

- Friday, 2 April 2010 to Friday, 16 April 2010
- Monday, 5 July 2010 to Friday, 16 July 2010
- Monday, 27 September 2010 to Friday, 8 October 2010
- Monday, 20 December 2010 to Thursday, 27 January 2011

**Significant Interfaith Dates on the Bar on the Side**

**The main "feature" with a picture and a description of the event**

<b>JANUARY 2010</b>
1-3 Shogatsu (Shinto)
1 Feast of St Basil the Great (Orthodox Christian)
5 Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikh)
7 Nativity of Christ (Orthodox Christian)
17 World Religion Day (Baha'i)
30 Mahayana New Year (Buddhist)
<b>FEBRUARY 2010</b>

DATES FOR COMMUNITY CALENDAR

3 Setsubun-sai (Shinto) 14 Chinese New Year (Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist) 15 Nirvana Day (Buddhist) 16 Shrove Tuesday (Christian) 17 Ash Wednesday (Christian) 26 Mawlid an Nabi (Islam) 28 Purim (Jewish)
<b>MARCH 2010</b>
1 Holi (Hindu) 13 February Day of National Apology (Australian Indigenous People) 17 St Patrick's Day (Christian) 21 Naw Ruz (Baha'i) 29 Mahavir Jayanti (Jain) 30 Magha Puja Day (Buddhist) 30-31 Passover (Jewish)
<b>APRIL 2010</b>
2 Good Friday (Christian) 4 Easter (Christian) 5-6 Passover – final two days (Jewish) 14 Baisakhi (Sikh) 21 First Day of Ridvan (Baha'i) 28 – 1 May Theravadin New Year (Buddhist)
<b>MAY 2010</b>
19-20 Shavuot (Jewish) 23 Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i) 27 Buddha Day (Buddhist) 29 Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i) 30 All Saints' Day (Orthodox Christian)
<b>JUNE 2010</b>
3 Corpus Christi (Catholic Christian) 16 Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Sikh) 21 First Nations Day (Canadian Native People) 29 17 <sup>th</sup> Tammuz (Jewish) 29 St Peter's Day (Christian)

DATES FOR COMMUNITY CALENDAR

<b>JULY 2010</b>
8 Lailat al Miraj (Islam) 9 Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i) 20 Tisha B'Av (Jewish) <b>26 Asalha Puja Day (Buddhist) – FEATURE</b>
<b>AUGUST 2010</b>
11 Ramadan Begins (Islam) 19 Jamshedi Noruz (Zoroastrian)
<b>SEPT 2010</b>
2 Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu) 9-10 Rosh Hashanah (Jewish) 10 Eid al Fitr – Ramadan ends (Islam) 12 Paryushana (Jain) 18 Yom Kippur (Jewish) 23 Sukkot
<b>OCT 2010</b>
1 Simchat Torah (Jewish) 17 Dasera (Hindu) 31 All Hallows' Eve or Hallowe'en (Christian)
<b>NOV 2010</b>
1 All Saints' Day (Christian) 5 Diwali (Hindu, Jain, Sikh) 16 Eid al Adha (Islam) 21 Guru Nanak Birthday (Sikh)
<b>DEC 2010</b>
2 Hanukkah (Jewish) 7 Al-Hijira (Islam) 25 Christmas (Christmas)

## DATES FOR COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### January

#### SHOGATSU

In Shinto practice, Shogatsu, or new year, is an opportunity to begin again. Prior to 1 January, duties of the previous year are to be completed, entrance gates are decorated with ornaments made of pine, bamboo and plum trees, and homes are thoroughly cleaned. Bonenkai (“year forgetting parties”) are also held before Shogatsu so that the old year’s worries and troubles can be left in the past.

Shogatsu is usually celebrated the first three days of January and is the most important holiday for the Japanese. Businesses and schools close in Japan and people return to their families to celebrate and be together.

On 1 January, it is traditional for people in Japan to view the new year’s first sunrise. The new year is also welcomed by the eating of toshikoshi-soba (“year-crossing noodles”) and western style clothing is replaced with kimono on new year’s day as people go for their first temple or shrine visit of the new year.



### February

#### CHINESE NEW YEAR

Chinese New Year starts with the new moon on the first day of the new year and ends on the full moon 15 days later. The 15<sup>th</sup> day of new year is the Lantern Festival, where people hang decorated lanterns in temples and carry lanterns to an evening parade

under the light of the full moon.

During Chinese New Year celebrations, people wear red, give children lucky money in red envelopes and set firecrackers. Red symbolises fire, which the Chinese believe drives away bad luck.

New year’s eve and new year’s day are celebrated with family and is a time of reunion and thanksgiving. The celebration is traditionally highlighted with a religious ceremony to Heaven and Earth, the gods of the household and family ancestors.

## DATES FOR COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Sacrifice to the ancestors is the most vital of all the rituals and unites the living with those who have passed away. Departed relatives are remembered with great respect because they were responsible for laying the foundations of the fortunes of the family.

### March

#### HOLI

Holi has been celebrated throughout India since ancient times on the full moon day in the month of Phalgun (March in the Gregorian calendar).

Originally an agricultural festival celebrating the arrival of Spring, Holi also commemorates various events in Hindu mythology and is a time for disregarding social norms and indulging in general merrymaking.



On the eve of Holi, people gather at important crossroads and light huge bonfires to demonstrate their devotion to God and to celebrate the triumph of good over evil. This ceremony is called Holika Dahan and is a means to giving thanks to Agni, the god of fire. Ash left from the bonfires is considered sacred and may be applied to the forehead for protection against evil forces.

The central ritual of Holi is the throwing and applying of coloured water and powders on friends and family, which give the holiday the name of “Festival of Colours”. In India, people from all communities come together for Holi to participate in the joyous and colourful celebration.

### April

#### BAISAKHI

Baisakhi is a religious festival, harvest festival and new year’s day all rolled into one. For the Sikh community, Baisakhi has a very special meaning. It was on this day that the tenth and last Guru – Guru Gobind Singh – organised the Sikhs into Khalsa or the “pure



## DATES FOR COMMUNITY CALENDAR

ones". By doing so, he eliminated the differences of high and low and established that all human beings are equal.



Sikhs visit temples where the Granth (Sikh holy scriptures) is read in commemoration of the day on which the Guru asked five volunteers to offer their lives. He then took them one at a time into a tent and emerged each time with a bloody sword. In fact, the Guru had sacrificed a goat and the Beloved Five became living martyrs, each given Singh (lion) as their last name.

In honour of the Beloved Five, a series of parades are held during Baisakhi in which five men walk in front of the Granth with swords drawn. When the ceremony is over, feasting, music-making and dancing begins.

### **May**

#### **ASCENSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

At 3am on 29 May, people of the Bahá'í faith around the world observe the anniversary of the death of the Bahá'í founder, Bahá'u'lláh.

The Bahá'í faith was founded in Iran in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by Mirza Hoseyn 'Ali Nuri, known as Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh died peacefully on the morning of 29 May 1892. He now lies buried in the Mansion of Bahji, in Acre, Israel, in a shrine surrounded by a stunning garden, which is designed to symbolise the order of the world of the future.

Pilgrims to Bahá'í shrines in Israel visit the tomb to pray there. This solemn anniversary is a day of rest, and is often observed by reading or chanting from the Bahá'í scriptures.

Pictured is the Bahá'í House of Worship in Delhi, India, which is popularly known as the Lotus Temple. It is open to all regardless of religion, or any other distinction, which is consistent with Bahá'í texts. The Lotus Temple was completed in 1986.

## DATES FOR COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### June

#### FIRST NATIONS DAY

First Nations Day was inaugurated in Canada in 1996 and is recognised each year on the northern summer solstice (21 June).

This day is dedicated to acknowledging the gifts of Indigenous people and giving thanks for the diversity of peoples in the world. The wisdom, spirit and vision of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are celebrated on this day.

First Nations is a term used in Canada to describe the Indigenous peoples of North American who are neither Metis nor Inuit in origin, and their descendants. Collectively, the Metis, Inuit and First Nations people are known as Aboriginal, First or Indigenous peoples, nations or bands.



### JULY

#### ASALHA PUJA DAY

Asalha Puja Day is one of the most sacred days in Buddhism. It is observed on the fifteenth day of the waxing moon of the eighth lunar month.



## DATES FOR COMMUNITY CALENDAR

This day commemorates the time when the Buddha delivered his first sermon to his five disciples at the Deer Park in Benares, India over 2,500 years ago. The day also marks the beginning of the worship of the Triple Gems which are the Lord Buddha, His Teachings and His Disciples.

Theravada Buddhists observe Asalha Puja Day by spending extra time reading the teachings of the Buddha and expressing gratitude for the Buddha and other enlightened teachers. It is also considered a perfect time to come together for celebration through readings and teachings from elder Buddhist students and teachers. Cleaning of homes, temples and monasteries also take place on this day. Sometimes called "Buddhist Lent", Asalha Puja Day, may be a time when some Buddhist followers consider making a resolution to behave strictly in accordance to Buddhist precepts.

### **August**

#### **RAMADAN**

Ramadan, the holiest month of the Islamic faith, is a time of spiritual and social rejuvenation and fellowship for Muslims around the world. Ramadan varies between 29 to 30 days each year, depending on the Islamic Lunar calendar.

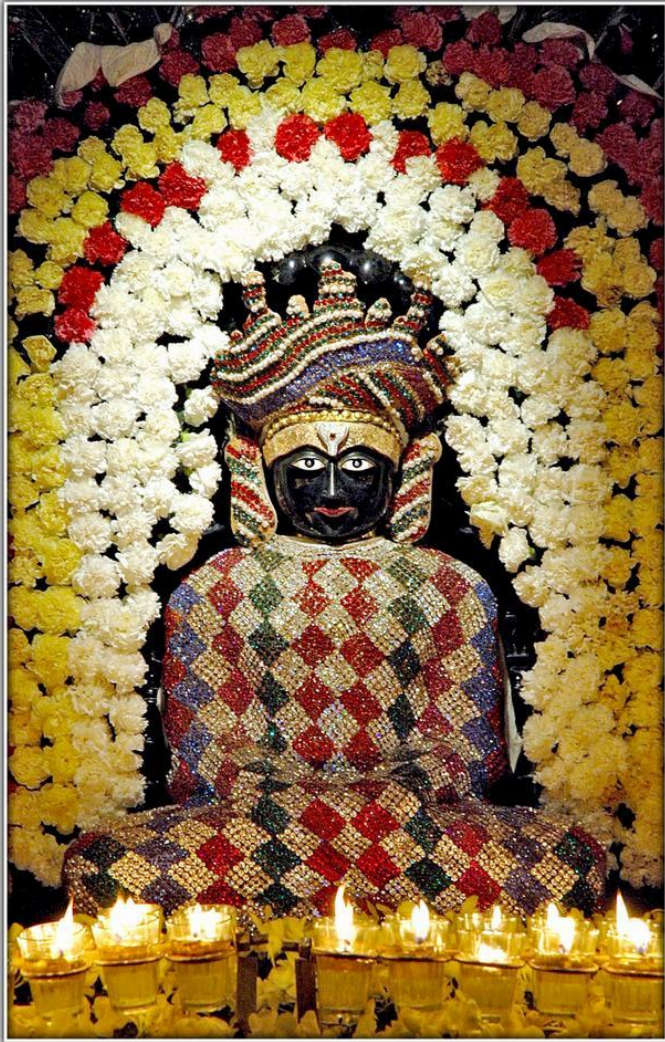
Muslims fast during this period, from dawn until sunset, refraining from eating, drinking, smoking and indulging in any activity to excess. The ritual of fasting is a practice of devotion and an opportunity to reaffirm faith. It is also a teaching in patience, modesty and spirituality as well as an opportunity to improve oneself.

Ramadan is time for reflection and worship of Allah and it allows followers to develop self-control, sacrifice and empathy for others who are less fortunate. The elderly, the chronically ill, pregnant women and others may be exempt from fasting and may endeavour rather to serve others who are in need during this time. The Islamic holiday of Eid al Fitr which is celebrated on the sighting of the new moon marks the end of the fasting period of Ramadan.

### **September**

#### **PARYUSHANA**

**(this a representation of the Jain God PARSHWANATH)**



The Jain festival of Paryushana originally grew out of the practice of itinerant monks staying in one place during the Indian monsoon. The word Paryushana has within it many meanings, including “to stay closer”, “to burn all” and “to overcome” and the festival period encompasses these meanings by dedicating the time to stay closer to oneself spiritually, shed or burn misdeeds and overcome passions, ego and desire.

Paryushana is the holiest time of the year for the Jains, consisting of 8 to 10 days of meditation, fasting and prayer. In Jainism, forgiveness is a central tenet and virtue that is cultivated. Therefore, the last day of Paryushana is celebrated as a day of universal forgiveness and the phrase Michhami Dukkadam is repeated, meaning “may all the evil that has been done be fruitless”. On this final day of Paryushana, it is traditional seek forgiveness from friends, family and all creatures and to ensure that no private quarrel or dispute carries on.

## DATES FOR COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### October

#### **SIMCHAT TORAH**

Simchat Torah literally means “rejoicing in the Torah”. It is a joyous celebration that follows the annual traditional readings of the Torah in the synagogues. On Simchat Torah, the last chapter of the Torah (Deuteronomy) is read aloud and then is immediately followed by a reading of opening verses (Genesis). The cyclical reading demonstrates the never-ending nature of the Torah.



As part of Simchat Torah, the scrolls of the Torah are removed from the ark for seven high-spirited processions around the synagogue. The Torah scrolls are carried and the processional is followed by singing children and adults, who may be waving banners and holding candles.

Simchat Torah is a celebration of the Torah in which singing, dancing and other forms of celebration may take place. It also a reverential occasion that earnestly exults in the Torah and the tenets of the Jewish faith.

### November

#### **DIWALI**

Diwali is one of the major festivals for Hindu, Jain and Sikh people and may signify different things for different cultural groups. For Sikhs, Diwali is of particular importance because it celebrates the release from prison of the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind Ji, and other royal persons, in 1619. The Sikhs may refer to Diwali as the day of the release of detainees.

The word “Diwali” is an abbreviation of the Sanskrit word “Deepavali”, which means “rows of lights”. Fireworks, candles and diyas – cotton string wicks inserted into oil-filled clay pots – are essential elements of Diwali. Lit diyas decorate gardens, rooftops, verandahs, windowsills and courtyards. People celebrate with feasts and gift-giving at this time.

At Diwali, light signifies the triumph of good over evil and throughout India, Diwali is seen as a joyous occasion that celebrates the renewal of life.



## DECEMBER

### Christmas in Mexico



Posadas are an important part of Mexican Christmas celebrations. The word posada means "inn" or "shelter" in Spanish, and these celebrations recreate Mary and Joseph's search for a place to stay in Bethlehem. Posadas are held on each of the nine nights leading up to Christmas, from December 16 to 24th.

The celebration consists of a procession through neighbourhoods with individuals or children selected to play the parts of Mary and Joseph. The procession makes its way to a particular home (a different one each night), where song is sung, asking for shelter. The family inside responds by singing the part of the innkeeper saying that there is no room. The song switches back and forth a few times until finally the innkeeper decides to let them in. The door is opened and everyone goes inside.

Inside the house there is a celebration which begins with a short Bible reading and prayer. Then the hosts give the guests food, usually tamales and a hot drink, and children play with the piñatas and have candy.