

**SPEECH by Dr Juho Looveer, President AESL,  
at close of XXIX Eesti Päevad in Adelaide, 30 Dec 2024**

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*Nii ajaratas ringi käind . . .*

*Me kaunid päevad mööda läind . .*

The words of our *Lahkumise Laul*, the last song sung by our choirs, are beautiful. It is one of the songs, like *Emä Süda*, that I can not sing, because the emotions it evokes send me to tears. It is an appropriate and perfect way to end our Festival.

And today it was sung so beautifully by our combined choirs – Thank You to all singers!!

*Kaunimad Laulud . . .*

I can't remember hearing our choirs any better than they were today – a great thank you to the singers, and also to the conductors who have developed these groups, and the organisers behind them.

And now might be an appropriate time to announce a couple of things . . .

Kooskõlas has members from across Australia – Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide – and even Perth! The choir has sung at the last two Lalulupidus. We have now heard, in the past ten days, that they have passed the first round of auditions and are shortlisted for the coming Laulupidu in 2025.

At the same time, the Melbourne Ladies choir has also auditioned. And they have also passed their audition - for the **Elite** womens' choirs section of the Laulupidu.

And all of our rahvatantsijad – the dancers. WOW!!

New dances, new choreography, new repertoires – so much energy from all groups, and across all ages. So delightful to see. We must all thank the dancers, and especially their leaders, who have led this.

We have seven dance-couples who are also auditioning for the 2025 Tantsupidu, but unfortunately they won't find out till late March.

*Me kaunid . . . . .*

As we think back to the dancing, the singing, all the youngsters and Mudilasringid, the handicrafts, and other activities, I am confident in saying that our Estonian culture in Australia is looking good and really positive. It augurs well for the future!

*Ajaratas . . .*

We are at the end of the year. And seventy years ago today, the first Australian Eesti Päevad were ending. This festival started because our early community leaders wanted a gathering for Estonians across Australia, where we could share our culture, demonstrate it, showcase it, and enjoy it, together. Eesti Päevad is the most important event for our diaspora, and we have maintained this festival for 70 years.

We need to thank all the people who have organised these events; in this case, Martin Kurvits, President of the Adelaide Estonian Society, and all the people who have helped.

*Me kaunid päevad . . .*

As one Eesti Päevad ends, we look forward to the next festival.

I would now ask the chief organiser of the XXIX<sup>th</sup> Eesti Päevad to bring the Eesti Päevad flag forward . . .

Most Eesti Päevad in Australia have been held between Xmas and the New Year; a few have been held at easter or other times. That suited our diaspora in the past.

However we note comments from many, about the expense of travel and accommodation at peak times. And many young families say that Xmas and Easter, for them, is family time.

**So, the next Austraalia Eesti Päevad will be . . .**

**. . . held in Sydney**

**. . . in 2027**

**. . . from 8-11 April**

This covers the common weekend for school holidays across Australia, and hopefully should suit more families.

I now invite the project leader for the XXX<sup>th</sup> Eesti Päevad, Ms Ave Nukki, to come forward to take the flag. Ave is accompanied by the Treasurer for the organising committee, Elen Ellervee.

*[Take flag from Martin; hand over to Ave & Elen]*

And now,

*Nii ajaratas ringi käind . . .*

I thank all participants, and declare the XXIX<sup>th</sup> Eesti Päevad CLOSED !!

See you all in Sydney in April 2027 !!