

ADDRESS BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL JEFFERY AC CVO MC  
**GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
**MORNING TEA TO THANK THOSE INVOLVED IN THE REFURBISHMENT OF  
ADMIRALTY HOUSE**  
ADMIRALTY HOUSE, SYDNEY  
16 JULY 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to you all and welcome back to Admiralty House to celebrate the successful refurbishment of the house and grounds.

Marlena and I have taken great pleasure in using Admiralty House as a beautiful and botanic venue to welcome and thank many people from this State devoted to the support of others and by so doing making a very positive contribution to New South Wales and indeed the nation.

It is a tremendous pleasure to see the house and grounds looking so magnificent after all your hard work.

This establishment is a significant element of the history and character of Australia's national life.

The house dates from the mid 1800s, and was built by the Colonial Collector of Customs, Lt. Colonel J.G.N. Gibbes.

The name of this house dates from the late 1800s when it served as the residence for the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Navy's Australian Station.

In 1913, despite the objections of the New South Wales Government, Admiralty House was taken up by the Commonwealth Government as a residence for the Governor General when in Sydney.

And with a few exceptions and minor bumps along the way, that is how it has remained.

One of the bumps was illustrated by the description of the house in 1934 as 'stripped of its glamour with no furnishings but a few fine mirrors, its garden wild and overgrown'. No-one could describe it in those terms today!

I want to pay tribute to the fine work of the Official Establishments Trust and the Australiana Fund in supporting the continuing conservation, development and furnishing of this House and the three other official residences.

In particular, Richard Griffin, Peter Watts and Lainie Lawson, as well as Penelope Seidler from the Australiana Fund, representing Donald McDonald, the Chairman of the Fund, who is unable to be with us today.

The most recent prior works were undertaken between 1989 and 1996, with the drawing room, dining room, entrance hall upgraded.

All work now occurs under a ten-year Heritage Management Strategy for property works released in 2006, which provides a strategic management and planning tool for scheduling future works and a clear

vision for managing the conservation of Admiralty House.

Marlena and I were consulted about the current refurbishment once the major works were identified and working drawings were made available.

As a result of the current works, it is a great delight to see the main state rooms, including the dining room, reception, study and bedroom looking so well.

The voice and data cabling in the main house has been replaced and the transformation of the gardens in our term is quite remarkable, with a good plan in place for their continuing improvement.

The landscape projects include the pergola, water tank paving, main drive bookleaf wall installation, the summer house and upgraded pathways. Air conditioning is soon to follow.

In all, the complete establishment of house and grounds is now brought to a level of beauty and excellence, which not only reflects great credit on all here today, but also makes me very proud to pass it on to Her Excellency Quentin Bryce and Mr Michael Bryce in a few months time.

I thank the many experts, craftsmen and women, and gardening staff who have brought these improvements about and Matthew McDonald, the Custodian and the staff here who have overseen and managed the transformation.

In particular, I should like to make a special mention of: George Phillips of Tanner Architects; Matthew Taylor of Taylor Brammer Landscape Architects; Ignite, who replaced the communications equipment; Peter Carlino and the team from Sydney Building Projects; Peyton Butler, our Property and Services Manager; and Lee, David, Michael and Norm - our gardeners.

Well done to you all and thank you from Marlena and me.