

ADDRESS BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL JEFFERY AC CVO MC  
**GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
**INVESTITURE OF AUSTRALIAN HONOURS AND AWARDS**  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA  
14 AUGUST 2008

May I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today; their wisdom, enduring history and culture.

Marlena and I are delighted to welcome you to Government House for this morning's special occasion.

One of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of my appointment is having the opportunity to meet diverse and splendid groups of citizens - each with their own aspirations, motivations and ideals.

Today, we host a gathering of one such group of Australians in order to recognise their magnificent achievements and contributions to our nation.

It is 33 years since the Australian honours system was introduced to provide formal, national recognition to Australians who perform outstandingly, in a diverse range of endeavours, that enrich our way of life.

Each year the Honours and Awards Secretariat at Government House, Canberra, mails out more than 5,000 nomination forms, deals with around 100,000 phone calls, and attends to 65,000 pieces of correspondence.

This leads to the pleasing conclusion that there is a broad understanding and acceptance of the Order as an important component of our national ethos - a genuine reflection of our development and maturity as an independent nation.

At the core of our honours system is its capacity to unify, by embracing and rewarding the efforts of citizens from all walks of life, regardless of political, religious, cultural, educational or economic background.

Recipients are role models, whose selflessness and ability can inspire all of us to give of ourselves for the greater community good.

We should be proud of the political independence and impartial administration of the Australian honours system.

It is held in the highest regard by many other countries - including those that seek to emulate and model their own honours systems on ours, whether they be newly created systems or those that may have been in being for centuries.

Among those whom we honour today for their dedication and achievements are: those who have given eminent service and leadership in the law, the parliament, the trade union movement, scientific and social research, public administration and in strengthening the community; those who have given a lifetime of volunteer service to not-for-profit organisations; defence and emergency services personnel involved in operations overseas or in demanding activities here in Australia; and brave Australians who have put themselves in grave danger to help others in urgent need.

The common thread linking our recipients is their sense of service to our country and to their fellow citizens.

We are privileged to have such role models among us, and we delight in being able to recognise and thank them publicly for their superior contribution to making Australia and indeed our planet, a better place in which to live.

Your families - who have supported you - along with friends, workmates, colleagues and the people of Australia, are rightly very proud of you and your achievements.

Marlena joins with me and all present in congratulating you, and wishing you every success for the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a final acclamation of our recipients honoured today.

Thank you.