

ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY MS QUENTIN BRYCE AC
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
ON THE OCCASION OF
SWEARING-IN CEREMONY AS GOVERNOR-GENERAL
PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA
5 SEPTEMBER 2008

Prime Minister
President of the Senate
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Chief Justice
Members of the Ministry
Leader of the Opposition
Members of the Australian Parliament
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Distinguished guests
All Australians

I acknowledge:

- . the traditional keepers of this land on which we gather in our nation's capital;
- . their successors: the custodians of this magnificent building, and our fine democracy;
- . and those who have come before me: their dignified service; their diligence and pledge; their important efforts in recognising, encouraging, and unifying Australians.

Ladies and gentlemen, I feel deeply the gravity of the role bestowed on me today as I stand before you in this Senate Chamber:

- . warmed and muted by the hues of our vast inland;
- . it is a place of representative assembly, of rigorous review and debate;
- . the physical bounds of the Upper House of our Australian Parliament;
- . an institution enshrined in our Constitution and central to our country's parliamentary democracy.

It is my greatest pleasure now to be part of that institution:

- . to serve as Australia's 25th Governor-General;
- . to perform my responsibilities according to law and convention;
- . and to reflect the ideals, values, expectations, and achievements of the Australian people.

We are an evolving and maturing society, our collective expression drawn from our passage, and our hopes for the future.

Since Australian colonies first federated to form the Commonwealth of Australia over a century ago, every dimension of us has been touched:

- . our social, cultural, intellectual, economic and political environments;
- . our independence as a self-governing nation;
- . our special sense of what it is to be Australian.

Our experience of the privilege and duty of suffrage over many years - belatedly for our indigenous

people - has made Australians savvy participants in our democratic system, and careful scrutineers of its performance and value.

We are informed and not afraid to question.

We intuitively know what serves us well, and what therefore deserves our protection.

Equally, we embrace change as a natural and necessary consequence of our evolution.

Our growing capacity to balance tradition with renewal is a sure and uplifting sign of our standing as a sophisticated and highly functional civilised society, and member of the global community.

Underpinning that capacity are:

- . our respect for the dignity, worth, and human rights of every individual;
- . our insistence on equality of access to justice and opportunity;
- . our belief in each other's ability to contribute to our enrichment and endurance;
- . and our abiding commitment to a fair and inclusive society

These are exciting times for Australia: for Australians and our leaders.

I want you to know that I take on this role with solemnity, impartiality, energy, and a profound love for the country we share.

I undertake to do my very best to observe, sustain, and uphold the principles, conventions, and rule of law that are our foundation.

And, as I travel:

- . over our rich and testing country,
- . into the vibrant and struggling sectors of our community,
- . to our rural and remote places, forever deep in my heart,

I promise to be alive, open, responsive, and faithful to the contemporary thinking and working of Australian society.

Australians, you have entrusted a great deal to me. I will honour your trust wholeheartedly.