



Speech by

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)

Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

*Swearing-in Ceremony*

*Monday, 1 July 2019, 5 minutes*

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***Dhawra nguna dhawra Ngunawal***

***Yanggu gulanyin ngalawiri, dhunayi, Ngunawal dhawra.***

***Wanggarralijinyin mariny balan bugarabang.***

*Having just made an acknowledgment in Ngunnawal language,  
I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we  
meet, the **Ngunnawal People** and pay my respects to their elders,  
past and present, emerging leaders and all Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islanders gathered here today.*

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- **The Honourable Scott Morrison MP**  
(Prime Minister of Australia)
- **The Honourable Tony Smith MP**  
(Speaker of the House of Representatives)
- **Senator the Honourable Scott Ryan** (President of the Senate)

- **The Honourable Susan Kiefel**  
(Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia)
- **The Honourable Anthony Albanese MP**  
(Leader of the Opposition)
- **Members of the Ministry**
- **Members of the Australian Parliament**
- **Members of the Diplomatic Corps**
- **Chief of Defence Force and senior Defence leaders**
- **Departmental Secretaries**
- **Distinguished guests**
- **My fellow Australians**

Sir Ninian Stephen, the 20<sup>th</sup> Governor-General of Australia, once described the role of Governor-General as ‘depicting a nation to its people’.

During the last five-and-a-half years as Governor of New South Wales, I tried to build on Sir Ninian’s theme to explain, in part, an important role that Governors, and the Governor-General play, that through their engagement with communities Australians can be provided with a reflection of themselves and their country.

Through speeches, supportive visits and the conduct of acts of events of encouragement and recognition, the Governor-General can highlight to all Australians their inherent strengths, their concern for the common good, their humanity and decency and their desire for a ‘fair go’.

We can be informed by many sources of the ills of our society—it is important that we are reminded of its goodness.

In my closing speeches as Governor, I highlighted the richness of our society, not a material richness, but a richness of spirit.

I have seen this richness of spirit at work in the people and organisations assisting our veterans, our rural communities under stress, asylum seekers who we have welcomed into our country and our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

There are countless organisations and people demonstrating how ‘rich’ this country is each day. As Governor-General I am absolutely committed to supporting these people in their work.

I know that in doing so I will build on the work of Sir Peter and Lady Cosgrove.

Driven by the timeless notions of public service and working for the common good they undertook a daunting program of engagements over the last five years.

I thank them on behalf of all Australians for their dedication, commitment and contribution to the nation and wish them well in the next phase of their lives.

My emphasis on community engagement will sit alongside the critical constitutional role performed by the Governor-General. Australia has an enviable record as a parliamentary democracy. The efficient and effective performance of my responsibilities is an essential element of our democracy and I take on those responsibilities with the greatest seriousness.

I thank the Prime Minister for providing me the honour of becoming Australia's 27<sup>th</sup> Governor-General. I look forward to working with him, the Government, all members of Parliament and our national institutions in serving the people of Australia.

I thank my wife Linda, for her support and companionship, both of which are absolutely necessary to enable me to fulfil my responsibilities and our joint responsibilities. I also thank my children, family and friends for their love, support and forbearance.

Along the shoreline of Circular Quay, Sydney, there are many large brass plaques honouring famous authors who had a literary association with Australia.

To me, one in particular sends a profound message to us today.

David Malouf, an Australian author, was the son of a Lebanese father and English born mother of Portuguese descent—a proudly diverse background that is reflected in so many Australian families.

Malouf's plaque reads:

'Australia is still revealing itself to us. We oughtn't close off possibilities by declaring too early what we have already become.'

Australia is not a finished product. I look forward, with Linda, in working with you in exploring our nation's future possibilities.

I am extremely proud of my country and greatly honoured to become its Governor-General today.

Thank you.

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