

OPENING OF NEW LAW SCHOOL BUILDING THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Thursday, 30 April 2009

Your Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Governor-General of Australia and
His Excellency Mr Michael Bryce

Professor Gillian Triggs, Master of Ceremonies, and Dean of the Faculty of Law
The Hon Justice James Spigelman, Chief Justice of New South Wales
The Hon John Hatzistergos, Attorney-General of New South Wales
The Hon Justice Robert French, Chief Justice of Australia
The Hon Robert McClelland, Attorney-General of the Commonwealth
The Hon Malcolm Turnbull, Leader of the Federal Opposition
Vice Chancellor and Principal Dr Michael Spence
Ms May Samali, President, Sydney University Law Society
Mr Michael West (Indigenous Elder)
Many Distinguished Guests, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a very great pleasure to add my appreciation to all who have gathered here this evening to celebrate the opening of the new Law School Building. And in particular to thank Her Excellency the Governor-General Ms Quentin Bryce and the Commonwealth Attorney General Robert McClelland for their gracious presence and beautiful words in officially opening this very fine building which symbolises a new chapter in the history of a great University.

As already noted, many eminent Australians are graduates of the University of Sydney Law School, individuals whose contribution to the greatness — and the goodness — of our nation is incalculable. And certainly this tradition will continue.

Certainly, one of our most illustrious law graduates was Edmund Barton, first Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. In expressing his joy as Federation approached, Barton declared, “*For the first time in history, we have a nation for a continent, and a continent for a nation*”. Perhaps on a slightly smaller geographic scale, this reflects our pleasure and our gratitude today in the establishment of the Law School, its scholars and its teachers, here within the University of Sydney.

The decision over 100 years ago to isolate the Law School geographically from the University campus had been carefully considered, appreciating the practical advantages for the law undergraduates to the Courts and to the senior legal professionals of the city. But this new building now will enable all our students of Law to partake more fully of the rich student experience for which the University of Sydney is justifiably acclaimed — drama, music, sport, collaborative cross disciplinary research and endless intellectual and social enrichment.

More than ever before in its history, the University Campus is a dynamic, internationally attuned community, with rich representation from nations across the world, particularly from the Asia-Pacific region. Important friendships will be made and strengthened which will not only be personally enriching, but which will strengthen significantly the building blocks for peace and justice in our region and beyond.

So today, we rejoice in welcoming the Law School, and thank all who made this possible.

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO
Chancellor