

Vice Chancellor's and Principal's Welcome and Inaugural Address

**22 July 2008
The Great Hall
The University of Sydney**

**HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR MARIE BASHIR AC CVO
CHANCELLOR**

Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Sydney, Dr Michael Spence
Fellows of Senate
Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Don Nutbeam
Other Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Deans, Registrar, Colleagues, Officers and Staff of the
University
Distinguished Guests and Friends

It is indeed a great pleasure to welcome each one of you at this historic gathering to acknowledge Dr Michael Spence's appointment as Vice-Chancellor and Principal of our great University — Australia's First.

May I at this point record my deep respect for the traditional owners of this land upon which we gather, the Eora-Cadigal people, their ancestors and their descendents, indeed for all Australia's indigenous people who have nurtured our great land for tens of thousands of years.

Dr Spence, an alumnus of this University, has returned to lead his Alma Mater after 20 years of study, of teaching, and then of leadership, at the University of Oxford. I welcome him most warmly on behalf of the Fellows of the Senate, — the University's governing body, — on behalf also of the whole University community, and indeed on behalf of the people of New South Wales.

The critical dual role of Vice-Chancellor and full-time Chief Executive Officer, came into existence in 1924 when the University of Sydney Senate decreed that such a comprehensive role would, and I quote, "take over the whole working of the University and be styled Vice-Chancellor following the precedent of Oxford and Cambridge".

Sidere mens eadem mutato

The Vice-Chancellor in his own right and as a member of the Senate and *ex officio* of all Boards, Faculties and Committees, holds a unique position from which to inform and advise the Senate, and to guide the destiny not only of this University, but that of higher education in this nation.

There is a true sense of joy in the knowledge that Dr Michael Spence, distinguished alumnus, Honours First Class in Arts and in Law, has undertaken to accept these challenges at a most important time in our nation's history, as Australia extends and deepens its involvement across many parameters — (including higher education) — with its neighbours, its region and beyond.

Prior to his departure for the University of Oxford, Michael Spence lectured in Law at the University of Sydney and also served on the staff of the Australian Copyright Council, which perhaps provided an early stimulus for his commitment to this day, of issues of intellectual property.

At Oxford Dr Spence attained his Doctorate of Philosophy, became a Fellow of St Catherine's College, a Lecturer in Law, — and three years ago, earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Theology.

It is during his time at Oxford, that Dr Spence became internationally recognised as a leader in the field of intellectual property theory. His work includes articles and books on both intellectual property law and the law of obligations, with a critical focus on suggested ethical and economic justifications of the existing regimes.

He has lectured on intellectual property-related topics around the world, and held a number of visiting appointments in Boston, Munich and Siena. He has twice been a Parsons Fellow at the University of Sydney Law School.

In addition to his formidable academic qualifications, Dr Spence brings to his new role equally impressive administrative achievement. He served as head of the Law Faculty at the University of Oxford and in recent years was Head of the Social Sciences Division, one of the four Divisions that comprise that University. In this capacity, he reported to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford as part of the small team that serve the University as a whole, and was a member of its Council.

In the university world ratings of the Social Sciences, Division 4 of Oxford was rated above all others.

Among his many achievements at Oxford, Dr Spence oversaw significant growth of research activity and funding in the Social Sciences, and the strengthening of links between those departments, and the University more broadly.

One of Dr Spence's priorities at Oxford was actively to encourage fundraising and substantial sponsorship from benefactors and corporate groups.

Indeed, he was a driving force behind the establishment and financial support of a number of Oxford's new research centres and institutes, such as the Oxford Centre for Educational Assessment and the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment. His responsibilities included oversight of some of that University's most innovative research units, including the James Martin School for the 21st Century and the Oxford-Man Institute for Quantitative Finance.

In the brief seven weeks prior to his official assumption of the Vice-Chancellor office on July 11, Dr Spence has engaged with the student groups, the faculties and departments and the infrastructure nerve centres, acquainting himself with the achievements, the aspirations and also the frustrations of this complex but inspiring University community.

I am aware of the high mutual respect which this has engendered as well as providing important considerations for the way ahead. Academic colleagues in Great Britain, speak unsolicitedly not only of Dr Spence's high intelligence and high integrity, but of his capacity to bring those working with and around him into a loyal and dynamic team, driving and sharing achievement.

I have no doubt that this will be the culture he inspires at the University of Sydney. We all look forward with optimism to our participation.

Dr Spence we welcome you — and your dear family — back to Sydney, to your University — and to Australia.

May it be a fulfilling and happy new chapter in your lives and in the life of the University of Sydney.

May I now invite you to address us.

Professor Marie Bashir
22 July 2008