

ADDRESS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY MS QUENTIN BRYCE AC  
**GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
**CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY**  
COMMONWEALTH PARK, CANBERRA  
14 SEPTEMBER 2008

I acknowledge and pay tribute to the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and I thank the Wiradjuri Echoes for your very moving welcome to country.

All Australians are enriched by the wisdom, enduring history and culture of our Indigenous people. I am always mindful of the debt of gratitude I owe to those women elders who have taught me across a generation of my life what dignity and determination mean.

My friends, in the midst of these glorious spring blooms, I welcome you to this citizenship ceremony today.

A day that is special in all our hearts.

The beautiful flowers surrounding us remind us that spring is a time of rebirth and renewal.

A season which  
. encourages us to set fresh directions  
. and brings with it rich associations and experiences of our past.

Experiences which guide us as we chart a new course together.

I recognise with admiration, the physical, emotional, and spiritual journeys you have made in leaving the land of your birth, and joining us to live in this country.

As with other significant steps in life, the decision to become an Australian citizen involves commitment and an acceptance of responsibilities as well as privileges.

You are demonstrating your loyalty to our nation, and your recognition of the importance of showing respect  
. for others  
. for equality of opportunity and  
. for the values and principles that underpin our vibrant democracy  
. and that concept so precious to every one of us - indeed we are passionate about it - the notion of fairness  
. that whoever we are, whatever the circumstances, whatever we may have done, everyone is entitled to a fair go

Each of us might explain what it means in different words but we know what it is - it's about fair go, mate.

. Our indigenous heritage,  
. our history of the early settlers - the pioneers  
. our constant pattern of immigration has enriched our diversity, making us what we are today  
. a place of many cultures and languages

. inclusive, welcoming, sharing our futures with confidence

We are united as Australians, and stand together to face the challenges and triumphs that lie ahead. The Scottish Theologian Carl Bard wrote these words: *"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending."*

May your new start as an Australian citizen bring you all you hope for.

I am proud to welcome you and I do so with that generosity of spirit I know Australians across this great country share.