

ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY MS QUENTIN BRYCE AC
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
ON THE OCCASION OF
RECEPTION FOR AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE OVERSEAS COURSE MEMBERS
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA
14 OCTOBER 2008

My friends,

I acknowledge the traditional keepers of the magnificent land on which we gather this evening.

And I express my warmest welcome to you.

As I do so, I reflect on the enriching and rewarding experiences I enjoyed and appreciated during my years as Governor of Queensland, in my interface with Australia's defence forces and my meetings with overseas forces.

And now I feel a great sense of honour to be Commander-in-Chief.

I look forward to this significant ceremonial role, which I know will deepen my understanding of our values and aspirations as a democratic nation, and our participation with others on the international stage: in combat, peacekeeping and the provision of humanitarian aid.

I feel privileged to witness the remarkable talents and abilities of the women and men who serve, their strong ethos of service and sacrifice, their skill and dedication in protecting the rights and dignity of human lives around the world.

How fortunate you all are for the opportunity to come together from across the globe, with so many unique and diverse experiences to share, in a rigorous and esteemed educational environment.

You are forging your careers at a time of unprecedented tension and challenge. On every front - economic, environmental, cultural and social - the world's nations have much to contend with.

The professional studies you undertake are vital in building your resilience, your intellect, your emotional intelligence, and your capacity to lead.

And there are the friendships that you form here that will endure and sustain you for a lifetime. Friendships that will be important for you, but also for your countries - underpinning cooperation and mutual trust and respect across nations.

We are proud to open the ranks of the Australian Defence College to you, knowing that we will be the richer for it.

I wish you well in the closing months of your studies, and every reward for your fine efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen, please have a wonderful evening.