

ADDRESS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY MS QUENTIN BRYCE AC  
**GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
**2008 SYDNEY PINK RIBBON BREAKFAST**  
WESTIN HOTEL, SYDNEY  
27 OCTOBER 2008

I acknowledge the traditional keepers of the land on which we gather, and thank you for your warm welcome to me this morning.

My friends, I'm so thrilled to join you for your Sydney Pink Ribbon Breakfast on Pink Ribbon Day - in October, the month of breast cancer awareness throughout the world.

What an extraordinary global movement: founded in compassion and care, and marked by a simple and powerful signature - a symbol of awareness embraced by men and women everywhere.

It's a movement underpinned by:

- . rigorous clinical and translational research,
- . informing evidence-based education and best practice;
- . and a continuing commitment to improving diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

At the heart of it all is the expert and multi-disciplinary work:

- . of the finest of scientists, clinicians, researchers, and health professionals,
- . the people I remember with such admiration, respect and fondness from the early days of what was then, the National Breast Cancer Centre, when I chaired the Women's Advisory Network.

They were heady, pathbreaking days - so challenging and rewarding.

I felt enormously privileged to work with Professor Sally Redman, Dr Helen Zorbas and their colleagues: their remarkable intellect and talent, their diligence and humanity.

And the women from all walks who so generously gave their time and skill to promoting the improvement of breast cancer outcomes for Australian women.

They were women who never once hesitated in pledging their support:

- . high-profile women in the media;
- . breast cancer sufferers and survivors;
- . their mothers, their daughters;
- . rural women, city women;
- . women who had a strong sense that this disease can profoundly touch us all.

It was networking at its best and bravest and most inspired.

It affirmed for me my unfailing belief in women's capacity for solidarity and resourceful action, at the grassroots and across vast territory.

Since then of course, the Centre has:

- . broadened its work to include a national ovarian cancer initiative,
- . and changed its name to reflect its eminence and influence as an exemplar in women's health.

Ladies and gentlemen, the view from the leading edge is as charged with exhilaration as it is with responsibility.

The community in turn look to you for innovation, lateral thinking, and hope:

- . in tackling the complex and evolving issues surrounding prevention and treatment of breast and ovarian cancers;
- . decoding the scientific data;
- . and empowering women so that we may act, with confidence, in our own lives.

How critical it is for women:

- . to know their bodies well;
- . to be alert to changes;
- . to distinguish the unusual from the usual,
- . and to seek help that, above all, endeavours to preserve their long-term health and wellbeing.

These are behaviours we learn over time, often only driven by the experiences of those close to us - a reason in our midst to take more care.

This is especially true of younger women who are enjoying a time of freedom and growth in their lives that leaves the possibilities of cancer far from their minds.

My friends, I sincerely praise your public information campaigns that send clear and positive messages of breast health and early detection.

And I know that you are focused right now on women in their 20s to 40s who can gain so much from learning to take control of their health, and developing good breast health habits for life.

I wish you a record number of pink-ribboned lapels today, and offer my greatest support and encouragement to your vital work.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you.