

ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY MS QUENTIN BRYCE AC
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
ON THE OCCASION OF
SUNSET CEREMONY, 67TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LOSS OF HMAS SYDNEY II
GERALDTON, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
19 NOVEMBER 2008

We gather at this special place, this sacred shrine, where:

- . the past and truth are anchored;
- . anger and grief, cast from their heavy moorings;
- . bows and shores, awash with promise and possibility.

We come here to remember; to not forget; to know for the first time, but never the last:

- . the shining, generous faces of our *Sydney* sailors;
- . their ready smiles, of sanguine youth, and camaraderie in troubled times;
- . the glisten of adventure and purpose in their sights,
- . their chorus of song and good cheer that endeared Geraldton town only weeks before their final farewell;
- . and this likely verse of the ship's Able Seaman Knight:

*Action has been sounded off
There's panic for a while
But soon the Aussies settle down
To face it with a smile.*

My friends, if there can be any fair and proper salvage for the sacrifice of those fine Australian men 67 years ago; and recognition for their wartime naval engagement, perhaps we can say that we are approaching our best efforts here this evening:

- . the extraordinary campaign by the directors of the Finding Sydney Foundation to locate the vessel;
- . their impassioned and selfless pursuit of answers to a mystery and controversy that have burdened our nation and prolonged the grieving of loved ones for nearly seven decades;
- . the dedication, rigour and professionalism of the survey team;
- . the efforts and support of Rotary, the City and Shire, the Federal and State Governments, and the local community in raising funds for the building of this memorial;
- . the haunting iconic beauty of its physical structures,
- . the allegories whispered in the wings of the gulls, the lips of the Waiting Woman, and the luff of our

standard high atop the stele;

. and our quiet presence here again on this day.

This place

a place of healing:

anguish and loss repaired with

joy, for love remembered;

thankfulness, for life given up;

forgiveness and letting go;

celebration of the freedoms we cherish.

This place

in our private souls and our shared humanity;

here, now, in the silence of our solitude, and the warmth of the space we occupy as one.