

ADDRESS AT OFFICIAL OPENING OF REFURBISHED ROYAL AUSTRALIAN MINT

CANBERRA

9 SEPTEMBER 2009

Good morning and welcome to Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and to His Excellency, Mr Michael Bryce.

I would also like to add my respects to those of the Governor-General for Janine Murphy, who passed away on Saturday.

As the Mint's Chief Executive Officer, she played a pivotal role in bringing this magnificent project to fruition, with her drive, talent and enthusiasm.

She would have been extremely proud of today's event.

Welcome and thank you to Agnes Shea for her Welcome to Country and welcome to everyone here today.

The Royal Australian Mint is the only factory in my portfolio – it makes millions of little things that are literally quite close to all Australians.

We are here today to celebrate a new chapter in the Mint's proud history – a new-look Mint that allows Australians to get even closer to its workings.

It's a total revamp of the building first opened by Prince Philip in 1965.

The refurbishment began in the basement, Circulating Coin Hall, Tool Room and other production areas, before moving to the mezzanine level - on which we are currently standing - and to other levels.

It is unrecognisable from the original, 44-year-old building. The \$65 million refurbishment has transformed this leading national tourist attraction into an architectural and engineering showpiece.

Everything about the new building brings the process of minting closer to visitors – it's virtually 'access all areas'.

About 200,000 visitors are expected this year and they'll take away with them a new perspective on its workings.

Glass has replaced walls, allowing an open view into the building's interior, with visitors able to look down onto the factory floor.

The refurbished building also allows the Mint to roll out new educational services, which will align with the national curriculum for schools.

And there is an important lesson here for all Australian taxpayers – the new high-tech facility brings economic benefits.

The Mint has won its first new international contract in five years as a direct result of the refurbishment.

The upgrade has secured the Mint's economic viability and ensures it will prosper as a world leading minting facility.

The Mint needs to be in the forefront of industrial progress in order to carry out its important role efficiently.

The refurbishment utilises space and energy much more efficiently and combines many environmental initiatives, such as intelligent lighting systems and water recycling, to achieve an Australian Building Greenhouse rating of 4.5 stars.

Three years is a long time to be under construction, but the wait and the efforts of all those involved have been worth it. I congratulate you all on your achievement – you have delivered a beautiful building.

As you arrived this morning and came upstairs you will have noticed the feature staircase, filled with a combination of blanks and 5c pieces in each step.

The cascading feature begins with blanks at the top, which turn into 5c pieces by the time you reach the bottom.

This feature is symbolic of how coins are made and turns the industrial process into a work of art.

There is a lot to take in ... please enjoy the visiting areas once the official proceedings are over.

Thank you.